

Agenda Item No 9  
 Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Title: Annual update of the Destination Management Organisation – Shakespeare’s England

Lead Officers: Martin O’Neill

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Liam Bartlett

Wards of the District directly affected: All

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	20/2/2023	Liam Bartlett
<b>Finance</b>	20/2/2023	Andrew Rollins
<b>Legal Services</b>	20/2/2023	Ross Chambers
<b>Chief Executive</b>	20/2/2023	Chris Elliott
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	20/2/2023	Philip Clarke
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	20/2/2023	Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	14/2/2023	Andrew Jones
<b>Leadership Co-ordination Group</b>		
<b>Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?</b>	No	
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	

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## Summary

This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the activities of the District's Destination Management Organisation (DMO), Shakespeare's England, over the last 12 months in relation to the tourism sector.

## Recommendation

- (1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the update report.
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### 1 Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 There are no specific recommendations as part of this report. The details in relation to the activities of the DMO are contained in sections 10 and 11 below.

### 2 Alternative Options

- 2.1 This is an update to Overview and Scrutiny committee, there are no alternative options to be considered.

### 3 Legal Implications

- 3.1 There are no legal implications of this report.

### 4 Financial

- 4.1 At its meeting in July 2022, Cabinet approved funding of £100,000 per annum for the period September 2022 to August 2024. This was on the basis that a revised set of grant conditions were agreed and that the long-term future arrangements for Shakespeare's England be made by December 2024. This is in line with the funding being provided by Stratford District Council.

### 5 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 5.1 Shakespeare's England is actively exploring green tourism and the conditions of the grant seek to mandate and expand this approach.

### 6 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 6.1 This update report has no impact of itself on equality and diversity matters.

### 7 Data Protection

- 7.1 There are no data protection implications of this update report.

### 8 Health and Wellbeing

- 8.1 There are no direct implications for health and well-being as part of this update report.

### 9 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 There are no risk implications as part of this update report.

## **10 Overview on DMO and current tourism activities**

- 10.1 Shakespeare's England's 2 Year Business Plan was delivered and circulated at the end of November 2022, in accordance with WDC's Grant Funding requirements. The plan has been shared with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture as well as relevant officers at WDC.
- 10.2 The DMO will shortly embark on a significant project alongside the West Midlands Growth Company and Destination Coventry in respect of the Global Destination Sustainability Movement Index (GDMI), from which the DMO hopes to attain Green Tourism accreditation.
- 10.3 The DMO continues to work in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce to deliver the Warwickshire County Council's Tourism & Leisure Business Support programme entitled Project Warwickshire. Take up has been strong in South Warwickshire.
- 10.4 The Research Solution has been commissioned to carry out the latest How's Business Survey. This will be circulated w/c 6 February. The findings will be discussed as an Agenda item at the next SE Board Meeting, 25 April. The specific area we are looking for feedback on are, though not limited to,
  - Business over spring/summer 2022
  - Business during the 2022 Festive period
  - Overall business confidence for 2023
  - 2023 challenges & mitigations
  - Impact of industrial action especially rail strikes
  - The Commonwealth Games effect
  - The Coronation effect.
- 10.5 In July 2022, the Government published its formal response to the Independent Review of DMOs which was undertaken by Nick De Bois and published in September 2021. The government plans to introduce a new structured system for England, whereby DMOs that meet specified requirements will become part of a 'national portfolio' of accredited DMOs.
- 10.6 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport, VisitEngland and other government departments and agencies will only then engage with these accredited DMOs - they are to be renamed Local Visitor Economic Partnerships (LVEPs).
- 10.7 Decisions on DMOs qualifying for LVEP accreditation and being added or removed from the national portfolio list will be made by the tourism minister, on the advice of the VisitEngland Advisory Board. As a result of the above, there will be significant changes to regional tourism delivery, with the current 180+ DMOs being replaced by approximately 40 LVEPs.
- 10.8 Subject to a successful pilot currently taking place in the North East, the ambition is for a national roll, however this is dependent on future funding.
- 10.9 In response to this national review of DMOs, Shakespeare's England will be working with its public and private sector stakeholders to decide:
  - Whether to apply for independent LVEP status
  - Whether to partner with other DMOs – Destination Coventry/North Warwickshire Tourism/Cotswold Tourism
  - Where would the governance of the LVEP sit if this is an entirely new body
  - What geographic area will 'our' LVEP might cover

## **11 Performance against the Conditions of the Grant agreed in July 2022**

- 11.1 As stated above, at a meeting of Cabinet in July 2022, a set of grant conditions were agreed by both Stratford and Warwick District Councils to be measured over the period of the current funding (September 2022 to August 2024).
- 11.2 There are 13 conditions in total and an update has been provided by Shakespeare's England as to current progress against these which is included in Appendix 1 to this update report.
- 11.3 In summary, of the 13 conditions, there are 6 which are on target or target has been met (signified as Green in the appendix), 6 are not yet on target but are expected to be on target by the end of the funding period as stipulated in the conditions of grant (signified as Amber in the appendix.)
- 11.4 One of the conditions is currently significantly off target and signified as Red in the appendix. The tourism sector and particularly the overseas tourist market is still in recovery from Covid. That, together with the fact that the figures being quoted are 12 months in arrears, means that at this point in time it is difficult to project how these visitor numbers and spend will improve over the next 12 months, not only for the DMO but also the national figures produced by VisitBritain. That said, as the figures quoted in this report in respect of this condition relate to 2021 (the first year after the Covid outbreak and subsequent lockdowns and travel restrictions), it is anticipated that the 2022 figures and in turn the 2023 figures will show year on year improvements.

### **Background papers:**

N/A

### **Supporting documents:**

N/A