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Local Visitor Economy Partnership Programme

**Building Collaboration,
Enabling Growth**



VisitEngland

Introduction

Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as to visit. If they have strong leadership and governance, and are well-managed, they are more likely to generate sustainable growth in the local visitor economy.

They can drive place-shaping, shift local and wider perceptions of the place, contributing to local pride, as well as attract new investment and increase income.

The best managed destinations can create value-added jobs, bring in new talent and stimulate innovation.

VisitEngland's LVEP Programme is creating a portfolio of nationally supported, strategic and high-performing Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs). LVEPs are local tourist boards that have been accredited by VE to deliver regional

growth in the visitor economy. LVEPs lead, manage and market destinations, setting out a strategic path to improve the tourism offer in their area, attract inward investment, and ensure positive contributions to their communities. They will deliver robust destination management and planning, ensuring all key public and private sector partners are well integrated into the development of the plan and its implementation. VisitEngland will collaborate across this new LVEP landscape on a shared ambition for visitor economy growth and provide targeted support, advice and guidance to enable successful delivery.



Background

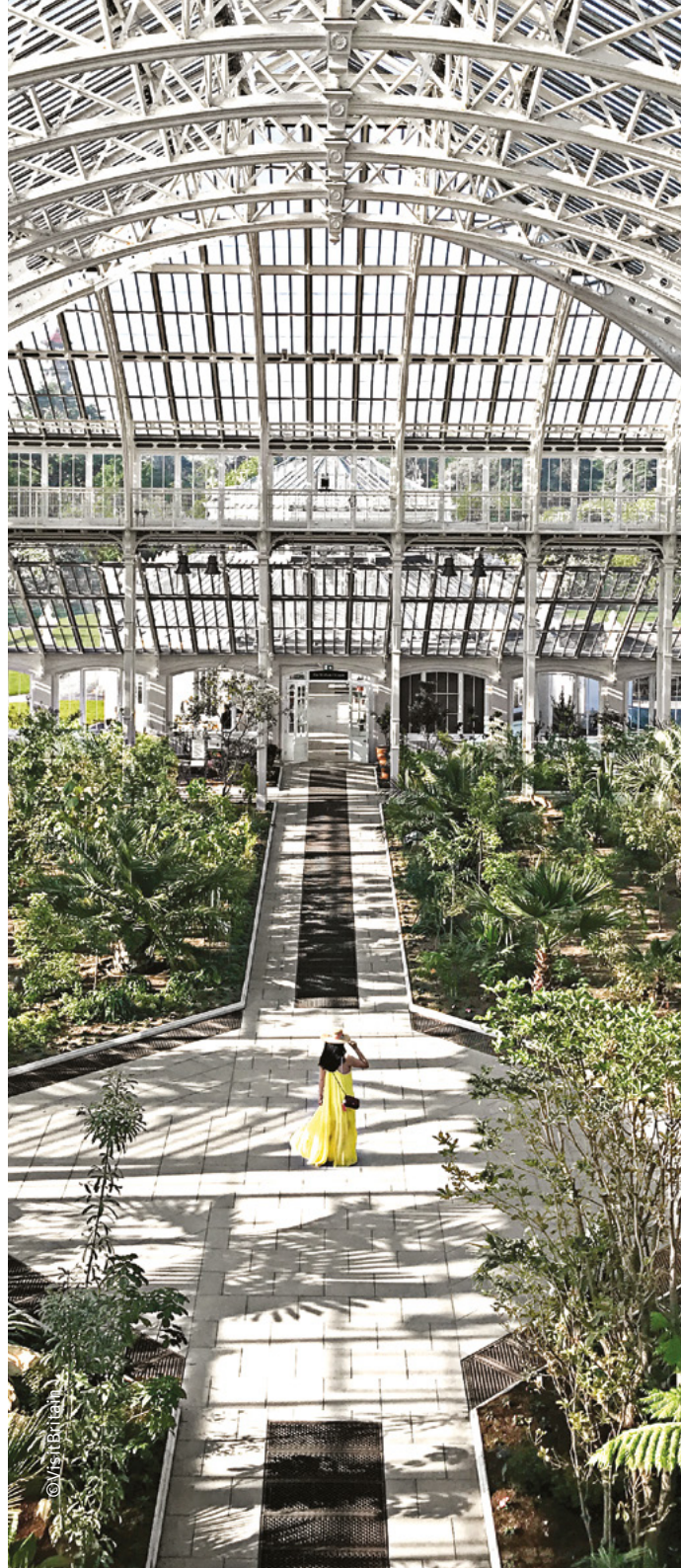
VisitEngland are leading a transformation in the English tourism sector to grow sustainable local visitor economies by implementing the recommendations of the DMO Review.

Following a thorough assessment of the structure, funding and function of DMOs across England, the review recommended a more efficient and effective model for supporting English tourism at a regional level to maximise the potential of the visitor economy.

The government's response recognised that DMOs were a vital part of England's tourism landscape, but that transformation was necessary to improve their structure, funding models and fragmentation.

As a result, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) tasked VisitEngland to lead, develop and administer a programme to establish this new destination structure in England.

The LVEP programme aims to simplify and strengthen the tourism landscape across England, transitioning from over 200 Destination Management Organisations to 40 high performing LVEPs.



“VisitEngland welcomes the opportunity to play our part in implementing the recommendations from the de Bois review of Destination Management Organisations in England in line with the UK government’s response.”

“Destination Management Organisations are a vital part of England’s tourism landscape, connecting with local businesses and government agencies to attract investment and visitors across the regions, boosting the visitor economy. We look forward to implementing the LVEP Programme and the Destination Development Partnership pilot, ensuring we have the right national and local infrastructure to enable England to continue to be a compelling destination for domestic and international visitors.”

Andrew Stokes, England Director

The New Structure



Visitors

Destination Organisations

Might deliver: marketing of local destinations, contact with tourism businesses, products, services and infrastructure for visitors



Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (c. 40)

Strategic and high-performing, recognised by VisitEngland
Lead, manage and market destinations, collaborate locally and nationally



Destination Development Partnerships (c. 15–20)

Strategic objective-setting in line with national priorities and regional programme delivery



VisitBritain VisitEngland DCMS

Government policy and national strategy and priorities



The de Bois review recommended, and the Government response confirmed, that the new destination structure should be organised as follows:

Destination Development Partnerships (DDPs)

These should set regional priorities for the visitor economy in their geography in line with England's visitor economy strategy and government policy. They would receive government funding to focus on strategic objectives where greater impact can be achieved through a joined-up approach, such as tourism sector skills, sustainability and accessibility, levelling-

up, inward investment, business and major events, product development and data collection and analysis. The DDP would be a partnership of LVEPs across a geography, with one taking the lead (or could, where there is a strong case in a large enough geography such as a city region, be comprised of one LVEP).

The DDP model is being piloted in the North East of England and

in the West Midlands to prove the concept and the impact the model can have on growing the visitor economy. If the pilots are successful, Government will consider setting up (and possibly funding) 15-20 DDPs across England. These will be a "coalition of the willing" i.e. LVEPs who choose to come together to deliver strategic priorities and drive visitor economy growth.

Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs)

Recognised by VisitEngland through the LVEP Programme. These will be strategic, high-performing and represent the destination at local and national level. They will commit to working with

VisitEngland and government on a set of growth ambitions over an agreed time period. They will lead, market and manage the destination in their geography, working in partnership with other

destination organisations, local government and businesses. We expect there will eventually be circa 40 LVEPs across England. They will benefit from dedicated support and national collaboration.

Destination Organisations

These organisations are likely to be operating below county or city region level. They play an important role locally through contributing to the management and marketing of destinations, maintaining close

contacts with businesses and providing products, services and infrastructure to support the delivery of a positive visitor experience. They will need to work closely with their LVEP to ensure local needs and

priorities are represented in the destination management plan and activities. LVEPs will also need to engage and support these organisations as part of the programme.

North East of England DDP Pilot

The first regional tourism pilot is receiving £2.25 million from government covering a period to March 2025. The partnership will be led by NewcastleGateshead Initiative on behalf of the region, working alongside Visit Northumberland and Visit County Durham. The aim is to develop the region as a must-visit destination whilst attracting private investment and driving growth.

This is a regional collaboration and an opportunity to unlock growth and the untapped potential in the North East of England, attracting more visitors, developing new experiences, targeting new markets as well as creating jobs and opportunity.

The region will act as a potential blueprint for the rest of England, and will help shape the future landscape, delivering economic growth through the visitor economy across all seven local authorities in the region.

“Destination Management Organisations are a vital part of England’s tourism landscape, connecting with local businesses and Government agencies to attract investment and visitors across the regions, boosting the visitor economy. We are now implementing the LVEP Programme and the Destination Development Partnership pilot in order to ensure that we have the right national and local infrastructure to enable England to continue to be a compelling destination for domestic and international visitors.”

Andrew Stokes, England Director

The LVEP Programme acknowledges that some areas of the country are more complex. They will need more time and support from VisitEngland to work towards becoming a recognised LVEP. The process has been designed to encourage applicants to come forward when they are ready.

LVEPs are unlikely to cover all destinations across England; we expect there will be gaps. This might be because some DMOs don't yet meet the criteria and will need support to work towards meeting it, or there might be gaps where there is no DMO. VisitEngland will review these gaps and work with relevant DMOs and other partners in the region on solutions. We will also be testing, as part of the pilot, how the DDP model can help to plug such gaps.

The Importance of the LVEP Programme

VisitEngland's strategic, high-performing Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) will be at the heart of transforming the visitor economy landscape, working collaboratively on shared priorities and targets to enable the visitor economy to grow and thrive.

Partnership working across all aspects of the visitor economy and between the public and private sectors is a key ingredient to creating thriving destinations and driving local growth. LVEPs will need to secure the full support of their local public and private sector partners to succeed. They will also need to work closely with other DMOs within their destination geography and beyond. The LVEP Programme is fostering local partnership working for the benefit of the destination and all its

stakeholders, generating better outcomes for visitors, businesses, the environment and local communities.

As custodians of place-shaping through economic development and regeneration, infrastructure and transport, local government is integral to visitor economy growth. The LVEP must have the ability to ***influence decisions impacting on the destination and local visitor economy*** through a strong relationship with its local

government. The LVEP also needs to ***represent a wide range of local businesses and partners*** in the destination that make up its visitor offer (for example, accommodation, experiences, attractions, heritage and cultural organisations) and provide advice, support and activities to secure future resilience and growth opportunities. These strong local connections will help LVEPs secure long-term resources, funding and support to realise their ambitions.

A transformed visitor economy landscape that is committed to ongoing development to drive future growth will only be achieved through a ***collaborative, transparent and supportive*** approach. The pandemic demonstrated the impact the sector can have when it works together on a shared goal. The programme is building on that

experience and ***driving connectivity between local and national strategy, priorities and targets***, including sustainability and accessibility. It is embedding a strong national strategic relationship between LVEPs, VisitEngland, DCMS and wider Government and national agencies, brokering new partnership and funding opportunities for the visitor economy.

The programme recognises the positive action already taking place across destinations in England to collaborate and drive local visitor economy growth. VisitEngland is working with LVEPs to harness, capture and share best practice, for the benefit of the wider landscape and its stakeholders and will provide a range of national support, including skills development, to enable LVEPs to succeed.





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The LVEP Programme Goals:

Develop a **strong national strategic relationship** between LVEPs, VisitEngland, DCMS and wider Government and national agencies.

Ensure **stability and resilience** through increased income generation, diversifying funding streams, robust destination management and diverse governance.

Join up local visitor economy growth priorities and activities with those at national level,

setting clear targets and driving high performance. There will be a strong emphasis on embedding **sustainability and accessibility, growing business support** and working on **approaches to data.**

Provide a significant **role in place shaping** and economic development, generating better outcomes for visitors, the environment, communities and businesses, through building influential relationships with local government and businesses.

Develop **skills and expertise** in LVEP teams through access to training opportunities, and the wider sector and SMEs through a more targeted business support offer.



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LVEPs will be at the heart of transforming the visitor economy landscape.



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Programme Benefits

For programme participants

LVEPs recognised through the programme are the official local destination partners of VisitBritain/VisitEngland, with the opportunity to help shape and deliver national strategy and priorities. In addition, the role of LVEPs is being promoted and understood across government and national agencies, ensuring the local visitor economy is an active and valued contributor to Levelling Up and the wider economy.

The DMO Review and response set out the potential for the development and national roll-out of government-funded Destination Development Partnerships (DDPs). The North East and West Midlands DDP pilots are a major opportunity, and being recognised as an LVEP is an important early step in future DDP development. LVEPs will learn from the pilot and work with VisitEngland and the North East and West Midlands regions to shape and advocate the model.

LVEP Programme participants benefit from a direct, focused relationship with VisitBritain/VisitEngland via a team of five Regional Development Leads who are on-hand to provide strategic advice and support. LVEPs receive support, training and resources from VisitEngland as well as opportunities to access funding and be part of VisitBritain's international marketing campaigns

Through the programme, LVEPs are able to:

- Participate in VisitBritain/VisitEngland initiatives, such as 'always on' marketing activity, press trips, trade missions and business events.
- Apply for any relevant VisitBritain/VisitEngland grant funding programmes.
- Access VisitBritain/VisitEngland expertise and support in key areas such as distribution, accessibility, sustainability, business support and marketing.
- Contribute to the development and delivery of England's sustainable visitor economy strategy and consumer brand proposition.
- Collaborate with other programme participants to solve issues affecting destination management, share learnings and best practice.
- Benefit from a nationally recognised official status to strengthen the relationship with local and regional bodies and Government Departments. This includes use of a logo to show recognition by VisitEngland as an LVEP.

Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership

Recognised by



VisitEngland



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For local government and LEPs

The new LVEP structure means:

- Joined-up strategic thinking, development and management of the local visitor economy across the public and private sectors, ensuring it directly contributes to creating thriving places and communities.
- A clear strategic link from the local to the national level (government, VisitBritain/VisitEngland and other key national bodies) on all visitor economy related issues, with the LVEP the delivery partner for the local visitor economy.
- Strong and stable partnerships between Local Authorities/ Mayoral Combined Authorities / Local Enterprise Partnerships (as appropriate) and the LVEP to drive forward local priorities and investment.
- The ability to demonstrate the value of the local visitor economy. This will help local government make the case for supporting their LVEP and the local visitor economy.
- Structure and support for other DMOs and local tourism teams in the LVEP geography (for example, those not qualifying as LVEPs) to benefit from national initiatives (via the LVEP) while reducing fragmentation and duplication.

For businesses (plus other organisations forming part of the local visitor offer)

The new LVEP structure brings:

- Access to a strengthened and more targeted business support offer through the LVEP.
- A strong commercial strategy with increased opportunities for engagement and benefit from LVEP and national activity.
- Opportunities to collaborate with, and learn from, other businesses and organisations across the local visitor economy.
- Access via the LVEP to national initiatives including:
 - VisitEngland business support, training programmes and Excellence Awards
 - VisitBritain/VisitEngland digital, PR, marketing and travel trade activities
 - VisitBritain/VisitEngland business events support (where appropriate)
- A clear port of call via the LVEP.
- The confidence of investing in – and supporting - a nationally recognised and resilient LVEP.



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Criteria

To be recognised as an LVEP, applicants have to fulfil two sets of criteria.

Core Criteria

Ensure recognised LVEPs are stable and high-performing, with experience of operating at a strategic level. LVEPs will need to demonstrate they meet all of these criteria and provide evidence in support of their application:

- Covers important geography (such as county or city region) which avoids overlap with other LVEPs and can demonstrate the importance of its visitor economy.
- Has a Destination Management Plan or tourism strategy, developed in consultation with local public and private partners.
- Is engaged in destination 'management', as well as marketing.
- Is well integrated with important local and regional actors.
- Can demonstrate commitment from local government.
- Has the ability to raise funding from the private sector.
- Is stable and resilient and can administer public funding with probity.
- Works in partnership with other DMOs in its own geography - and beyond with other LVEPs.
- Its capacity reflects the size and importance of the destination.

Growth Criteria

Are set to strengthen organisational performance and resilience going forward and enable local visitor economy growth. They align with national strategy and priorities to build collaboration and achieve greater impact.

When becoming part of the programme, LVEPs commit to:

- Expanding income and diversifying funding streams.
- Developing the skills of their team.
- Ensuring governance reflects the visitor economy and shows diversity.
- Developing a comprehensive business support offer (directly or through partners).
- Supporting national and government initiatives and priorities, such as accessibility and sustainability.
- Developing the ability to track the local visitor economy through research and data, gathering and sharing insights and working with VisitEngland on new data models and approaches.

The programme will capture the activities currently being delivered across these criteria to inform joint working and support. Recognised LVEPs will work with VisitEngland to produce a brief joint action plan on an annual basis which sets out delivery against the criteria, how they plan to measure it and how VisitEngland will support.

LVEPs will all be at different stages and with varying levels of capacity and resource; they will not be expected to deliver all growth criteria immediately.



Tracking Progress, Measuring Success

Setting KPIs and measures is important to track progress within individual LVEPs and the success of the programme as a whole.

LVEPs set out how they will measure their agreed activities in their annual growth action plan. This initial bottom-up approach will be good insight on how the local landscape is measuring its success at present and where there are synergies across LVEPs and with VisitEngland. This will feed into the development of a light-touch KPI framework during 2024. Measures could include increased commercial income, more diverse funding streams, number of businesses receiving support, level of stakeholder engagement,

number of LVEP staff trained and an increase in product being distributed.

There will be light-touch quarterly reviews and an annual review of the growth action plan where priorities and KPIs will be set for the year ahead. If the LVEP is not able to deliver agreed actions or KPIs, this can be discussed with the VisitEngland Regional Development Lead to agree the best way forward. In extreme cases, a performance management process would be initiated and could result in the removal of LVEP recognition.

The insight gathered can provide valuable evidence to help advocate for LVEPs with local and national stakeholders and provide evidence of challenges to delivery that need solutions.

Advice and Support

VisitEngland provides advice and support as part of the programme. This is tailored to individual LVEPs needs and requirements and will evolve alongside the programme.

It includes:

Advice and support on strategic development through the VisitEngland Regional Development Team. They also hold LVEP progress updates and manage the annual review based on the growth action plan and KPI framework (to be developed). They broker access to subject expertise as required to support delivery.

National networking opportunities for LVEPs both virtual and face-to-face.

Best practice sharing across LVEPs on important topics including membership models and governance.

Thought leadership and tools linked to growth criteria and opportunities:

- Accessibility
- Sustainability
- Data and research
- Distribution
- Marketing and brand
- Business events
- Bid support and identifying funding streams

Targeted training programme for example, the 'Taking England To The World' trade education programme and new topics such as digital marketing, commercial skills and accessing funding.

Support for engagement (where required) with Local Authorities, Mayoral Combined Authorities, Department for Level Up Housing and Communities (via DCMS), Arm's Length Bodies and the Local Government Association.



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For background information:

[DMO Review](#)

[Government Response](#)

[DDP pilot announcement](#)

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