



# **DMO review LVEP accreditation scheme**

Guidance & criteria *(Version 2: December 2022)*



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# **Recap: Review Recommendations and Government Response**

# What does the de Bois review recommend?

- Bring coherence to England's DMO landscape using an accreditation process to create a national portfolio of DMOs
- The national portfolio should then be split into two tiers – a top tier of 'Destination Development Partnerships' ('hubs') and a second tier of accredited Tourist Boards acting as members ('spokes')
- The Government should provide core funding to each DDP
- The role of the DDP would be to develop and oversee the delivery of a Destination Development Plan and lead on advocacy, partnership working, funding bids, major events, data and business support.
- Funding to ensure the destination remains sustainable, competitive and responsive to strategic challenges identified by Government (e.g. sustainability, skills, inclusive tourism and levelling up)
- DDP to pass down some funding to accredited Tourist Boards and work collaboratively with them to deliver a shared vision

## What does the de Bois review recommend? (2)

- DMOs that do not meet accreditation criteria considered as part of a ‘third tier’ and government should minimise its engagement with them
- VisitEngland responsible for creating, maintaining and supporting this new tiered structure
- Introduce Tourism Data Hub as a matter of urgency to allow for better decision-making
- DMOs should:
  - Be more collaborative and share best practice
  - Seek to diversify their income streams
  - Develop the skills of their staff
  - Have more diverse boards
- LEPs and local authorities to recognise the importance of visitor economy and that DMOs are best placed to deliver
- Local Authorities to recognise that DMOs need to be public-private partnerships

# What does the government response say?

- England's DMOs have an important role to play in recovery and Levelling Up
- Necessary to transform the DMO landscape at a local level to allow DMOs to harness their potential to grow visitor spend
- Need to address long-running concerns about the structure, funding models and fragmentation
- Accepts the majority of the de Bois recommendations
- Agrees with the tiering approach, with the accreditation process to be introduced in 2022-23
- VisitEngland receiving new funding (up to £4 million over 2022-25 period) to develop and administer the scheme and pilot the DDP concept in one area
- Includes provision for VisitEngland to establish a regional team to support and account manage the national portfolio
- Accredited tier 2 DMOs to be called Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEPs) to capture the wider focus on the visitor economy

## What does the government response say? (2)

- Agrees VB/VE and government should have minimal engagement with ‘third tier’
- Pilot for multi-year core funding for one DDP; Tourism Minister will decide
  - The response sets out the criteria for the pilot:
  - visitor offer that encompasses rural, urban, coastal tourism
  - Includes a number of accredited LVEPs, but there should be gaps in coverage that need filling
  - Alignment with devolution deal
  - Able to demonstrate a growing business and events offer
  - Able to evidence visitor economy growth potential, including opportunities for improvement in tourism products such as attractions and transport links, wider product development and increase in visitor numbers and spend
  - Needs to prove the concept for a future national roll-out of DDP model including case for funding
- No nationwide DDP roll-out at this stage
- Agrees in principle with Tourism Data Hub but notes that this is unfunded and that other solutions are being looked at

# What does the proposed future structure of the DMO landscape look like?

**DDPs**  
**Destination Development**  
**Partnerships (tier 1)\***

15-20 in total - eventually, but only 1 pilot DDP in current CSR period

**LVEPs**  
**Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (tier 2)**

c. 40 in total, accredited and supported by VisitEngland

**Non-accredited DMOs (tier 3)**

NB: Language of 'tiers/non-accredited' to be reviewed for launch

No or very limited support from VisitEngland

\*Please note that DDPs are partnerships of LVEPs, with each DDP led by one LVEP as the accountable body. TBC if an LVEP and DDP could be one and the same



# **LVEP Accreditation: Principles, Benefits and Criteria**

# Principles

- VisitEngland to take a **leadership and enabling role** with this new landscape but emphasis on collaborative and supportive approach between national and local level (particularly in the absence of LVEP funding)
- Recognise that all LVEPs will be at **different stages in their development** - it should be about **progress and growth over time** in key priority areas (whilst demonstrating they meet core criteria)
- LVEPs should **align with national visitor economy priorities** (VisitEngland and Government) as well as supporting local visitor economy development
- **Pragmatic approach** (stretching in key growth areas but not onerous; clear articulation of benefits, expectations and support)
- LVEP landscape will foster **peer to peer networking, sharing of best practice and learnings** (as well as national via VisitEngland) e.g. sustainability, accessibility, commercial
- Status will be awarded: **officially recognised partners**
- Create a **logo for LVEP use** (with guidance) and **publicise LVEPs on VE website**
- **DDP pilot and accreditation of LVEPs in that area** will provide essential learnings and develop tools and templates to be used

# Benefits of Becoming an LVEP

- Strategic direct relationship with VisitBritain/VisitEngland DCMS (engagement/support will target Tiers 1/2) e.g.
  - Strategic support and advice from VisitEngland Regional Development Leads
  - Access to VisitBritain/VisitEngland expertise in key areas (distribution, accessibility, sustainability, commercial etc.)
  - Involvement in VB/VE activity (& support) e.g. Marketing and Business Events (as appropriate)
  - Access to VisitBritain/VisitEngland grant funding programmes
  - Involvement in the development and delivery of England's sustainable visitor economy strategy and consumer brand proposition (and other key initiatives)
- Accreditation by a national body sends a clear signal to local organisations and businesses on who to engage with:
  - LEPs/Local Authorities/Combined Authorities and Mayoral Authorities will have the confidence to actively engage/partner with LVEPs, as part of levelling up and place agenda (as credible and sustainable organisations)
  - Government to influence Devolution Deal commitments and Mayoral priorities to support local visitor economy (in LVEP geographies)
  - Empowering LVEPs to be positioned as the tourism delivery partners for local investment and to be consulted on wider decisions impacting the local visitor economy (linked to above)
  - DCMS officials to explore how LVEP status can be used when bidding for funding from DCMS and other government departments – and will assist in identifying funding streams

## Benefits of Becoming an LVEP (2)

- Be a part of a national network of strategic and strong performing LVEPs that can work together (and with VisitEngland) to solve issues affecting destination management e.g.
  - Creation and sharing of key tourism data to inform a robust national picture (new and improved models)
  - Best practice and peer-to-peer support and networking across key areas (virtual and face to face).
  - Help provide a coherent and joined-up policy voice
  - LVEP strategy day (1 or 2 x per year) and working groups to influence and shape national VisitBritain/VisitEngland (and local) activity

NB: For benefits to your stakeholders and partners, please refer to the “Key Messages” document

# Headline Guidance

- LVEPs will be expected to meet all the core criteria in order to be considered for accreditation
- At the point of application, LVEPs will be expected to demonstrate their plans for meeting the development criteria (with the support of VisitEngland) over an agreed time period – and outline any current activity/baselines
- Individual LVEP commitments to achieve the above (and how VisitEngland will enable and support) will be outlined in an MoU on receiving accredited status
- Some development criteria e.g. business support could be delivered by your partners but you would need to evidence your involvement in shaping this and working with them
- There will be opportunity in the application for you to demonstrate your wider role and achievements i.e. what your priorities are outside of the core criteria – e.g. business events, domestic and/or international marketing
- There will be a rolling monthly assessment panel and a monthly application deadline as we work through the process

# Draft criteria for LVEPs – core

Criterion	Proposed evidence
Covers an important geography (such as county or city region) that avoids overlap with other LVEPs and is an area that can demonstrate the importance of its local visitor economy	Information on geography covered and provision of local data (including visitor numbers (and spend) bed capacity/occupancy, number of tourism business and number of tourism related jobs); plus national assessment using key data sources
Should have a destination management plan or tourism strategy developed with local partners (including local government)	Active DMP/ tourism strategy and implementation plan that involves all key stakeholders
Engaged in destination 'management', as well as marketing	Evidence of business support offer, product development and commercial activity such as distribution
Should be well integrated with other important local and regional actors such as key attractions and local government/LEPs	Board make-up, evidence of involvement of stakeholders in DMP/tourism strategy, stakeholder engagement programme
Demonstrable commitment from Local Government (local authority/ies / Combined Authorities/Mayoral Authorities) that DMO is lead body in the area (incl. public funding where possible)	Letter detailing how Local Government will support the LVEP which could include evidence of inclusion/implementation of e.g. Devolution Deals/UKSPF/other funds; evidence of partnership (e.g. Local Authority board representation / DMO representation on Place Boards)
Demonstrate an ability to raise funding from the private sector	Evidence of private-sector funded activity
Can demonstrate organisational stability and resilience, and can administer public funding with probity	Outline of current income and funding streams; evidence of management of government funding streams (inc. VB/VE where appropriate)
Capacity of organisation needs to be reflective of the size and importance of the destination	DMO assessment of capacity in relation to geography covered and taking into account the importance of the visitor economy to the local area
Are working in partnership with unaccredited DMOs in their LVEP geography (as appropriate) and beyond with other LVEPs	Evidence of partnership structure and activity (within LVEP geography and beyond)

# Draft criteria for LVEPs – growth

Criterion	Proposed evidence
Commitment to expanding their income (including their commercial strategy), such as growing their membership, and diversifying funding streams (public and /or private)	Current funding streams and plans for developing future income. Evidence of current membership structure and size and future plans
Commitment to staff skills development – including digital, international travel trade, bid writing and distribution	Identification of LVEP staff training needs and a training plan for the next year and beyond which includes commitment to putting staff through any VisitEngland LVEP training
Governance should reflect the visitor economy it represents (businesses and consumers) and show diversity	Overview of current governance structures, assessment of how representative they are and plans to expand structure/address any lack of diversity
Should have a comprehensive business support offer or commit to developing one	Evidence of current business support offer and future plan (NB: could be delivered by others but need to demonstrate influence and role in shaping)
Willing to support central government initiatives, incl. accessibility, sustainability, local research and data models	Evidence of current support and plans for future support
Ability to track their local visitor economy through a local data model, and willingness to share insights and work closely with LVEPs and VE/VB on new data models/approaches	Evidence of local data model and how the data is being used by the DMO

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# **National LVEP Roll-out/ Coverage Process & Governance**



# National rollout of LVEP accreditation

- VisitEngland will accredit those DMOs that meet the criteria quickly (a number will be ready for this now and can meet all criteria)
- It is acknowledged that there won't be a blanket coverage of LVEPs and that there will be gaps across the country. There will be those that don't meet the criteria and need support to work towards accreditation, or there will be gaps where there is no DMO. VisitEngland will review these gaps and work with the relevant DMOs/partners in the region on solutions (if and where appropriate). They will also be testing how the DDP model can support plugging gaps as part of the pilot
- Some areas of the country are more complex and will need more time to get organised and therefore there will be a rolling accreditation process to support them coming forward when they are ready (supported by VisitEngland as above)

# Approach

- Expressions of interest will be opened prior to launch to enable VE to get a sense of who is considering LVEP accreditation and target support – December 2022
- Guidance and online application form for those who have submitted an expression of interest and are ready for application – from February 2023
- Rolling application process with monthly deadlines for applications and decisions
- Awards panel making decisions on LVEP status, incl. VisitEngland Advisory Board members and DCMS representatives
- Appeals process to be established for those that are unhappy with the outcome of their LVEP application
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between VisitEngland and the LVEP on relevant/achievable KPIs and mutual support
- Officially recognised LVEPs to be published on vb.org
- Light-touch monitoring and review framework to be established working closely with LVEPs to help assess progress (against KPIs/growth areas) and achievements and evidence barriers and identify solutions

# **VisitBritain/VisitEngland Services and Support**

# How will VE/VB support the new structure (Tiers 1 and 2 only)

- Strategic and development support via VisitEngland regional development team / subject expertise
  - Regular catch-ups plus an annual review of KPIs and challenges – based on a review framework
- National networking and best-practice sharing opportunities for LVEPs
- Best practice for LVEPs including board Terms of Reference (ToR) and membership models
- Central thought leadership and tools:
  - Accessibility
  - Sustainability
  - Data and research
  - Distribution
  - Marketing and brand
  - Business events
  - Bid support: identifying funding streams, toolkit and training on accessing funds
- Training programme e.g. Taking England To The World, digital and commercial skills
- Support for engagement with Local Authorities via DCMS, DLUHC, Local Government Association where required

# Role of the VE regional development team

- Based in the regions and spending significant time meeting DMOs/LVEPs
- Support for engagement and partnership with Local Authorities, Combined Authorities and DLUHC<sup>1</sup> and LGA<sup>2</sup> **where required**
- Support for engagement and joint working with ALBs (Arms-Length Bodies of Government such as Historic England or the Arts Council), DCMS and other government departments
- Enable funding opportunities for LVEPs across the region and provide advice and guidance
- Regular catch-ups, attendance at key meetings in the region
- Broker access to national tools, advice, expertise and targeted support
- Support monitoring of KPIs, achievements and challenges – based on a light touch review framework to be worked up with LVEPs

# VisitEngland Regional Development Team

Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us via the [destination@visitengland.org](mailto:destination@visitengland.org) email address or speak to your Regional Development Lead:

- **London and South East** – Claire Ford ([claire.ford@visitengland.org](mailto:claire.ford@visitengland.org))
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- **West Midlands and North West** – TBC. Contact Anke Monestel in the meantime ([anke.monestel@visitengland.org](mailto:anke.monestel@visitengland.org))

# **LVEP and VisitEngland engagement with local stakeholders (incl. Tier 3 DMOs)**

- LVEPs will be expected to work with their local stakeholders incl. BIDs, tier 3 DMOs and local business groups where appropriate
- **VE will provide limited support, focused on one-to-many approach for Tier 3 DMOs and other local stakeholders including:**
  - Research and intelligence via website
  - Access to Business Advice Hub and resources
  - Industry e-news and web resources

# Timeline

Month	Activity
October	Regional DMO roundtables
November	Further develop accreditation criteria and process Announce the Destination Development Partnership (DDP) pilot area VE regional development team set-up
December	Set up Destination Development Partnership (DDP) Pilot Open LVEP Expressions of Interest
January	Finalise LVEP accreditation process and guidance Begin accreditation for LVEPs in DDP area (to test and refine)
February	Launch of applications for LVEP accreditation programme Commence assessment
March	Ongoing assessment and notification of accreditation
Mid-2023	VB/VE activity, support and engagement to start aligning to new LVEP landscape

Throughout: Support and advice from our regional development team