

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services
Date:	23 January 2025
Title:	Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board
Report From:	Director of Hampshire 2050

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to give approval for Hampshire County Council to form a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for Hampshire and the Solent in Partnership with Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council following the recommendation from the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board meeting on 6 January 2025.
2. The report also seeks approval for the allocation of £5,000 from the Economic Development reserve (funding that has transferred to Hampshire County Council following the closure of the two Local Enterprise Partnerships that covered the area prior to April 2024) for the 2025/26 membership fee to Tourism South East to support the setting up and running of the LVEP for the first 12 months whilst the longer-term model is developed, including, but not limited to, being part of a future Strategic Authority.

Recommendations

3. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services supports the recommendation of the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board and agrees to submit an application to Visit England for the creation of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) for Hampshire and the Solent, made up of Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council.
4. That the Executive Member for Hampshire 2050 and Corporate Services approves £5,000 from the Economic Development Reserve for the Tourism South East membership fee for the year 2025/26 to support the set-up and running of the LVEP for the first 12 months.

Executive Summary

5. This paper seeks approval to submit an application for a joint Hampshire and Solent LVEP following recommendation from the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board at its meeting of 6 January 2025.

6. An LVEP is a local visitor economy partnership that sits under Visit England. Visit England aim to have LVEPs covering the whole of England to simplify and target their marketing support. As Hampshire is not covered by a LVEP currently, Visit England have withdrawn all support, marketing and funding to the area (including the areas covered by the Districts and the two cities).
7. Whilst an LVEP does not come with any direct funding, not being covered by a LVEP means that Hampshire and the Solent are not able to bid for any funding streams or benefit from any other support from Visit England. This means the region, and the individual visitor attractions in the area are not benefiting from targeted marketing and funding for specific projects.
8. Tourism South East has agreed to submit a LVEP application on behalf of the three Upper Tier Authorities in Hampshire (the Isle of Wight already has LVEP status and therefore this proposal is for Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council and Southampton City Council only). Tourism South East will act as the accountable body for the LVEP if the application is successful. Approval is sought to continue with the Council's membership of Tourism South East at a cost of £5,000 a year, for another year in order to facilitate the set up and running of the LVEP for the first 12 months. Tourism South East has agreed to act as the accountable body for an interim period whilst other longer-term options are explored, including the possible formation of a combined authority for the area which the LVEP could become part of in the future.

Contextual information

9. The Business Case for the Hampshire and Solent LVEP (attached as Appendix A) states the following vision and high-level objectives for the LVEP:

Vision

- the LVEP's vision is to create a thriving visitor economy that supports sustainable growth, enhances the visitor experience, and benefits local communities

Objectives

- Enhance Visitor Experience: Develop and implement strategies to improve the quality of visitor experiences in Hampshire
- Promote Local Attractions: Increase the visibility and attractiveness of local tourist destinations
- Support Local Businesses: Provide support and resources to local businesses in the tourism sector
- Sustainable Tourism: Promote sustainable tourism practices to preserve Hampshire's natural and cultural heritage.

10. The main deliverable for the first year is the development and adoption of a Destination Management Plan (DMP). This plan identifies the opportunities for growth of the visitor economy and identifies where investment may be needed to realise this growth. The DMP will also include a detailed action plan and a marketing strategy for the area.

11. In years two and three the following activity is expected:
 - delivery of the DMP action plan
 - implement marketing campaigns and promotional activities
 - Quarterly and yearly reporting to Growth Boards (for the County Council this the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board) and Visit England
 - develop new tourism products and experiences
 - enhance visitor services and infrastructure.
12. The impact of tourism on the area is greater than that delivered directly through visitor attractions. This has led to the use of the term visitor economy as the visitors that come to the area's local tourist attractions have a positive impact on local hotels, restaurants, cafes, shops, car parks and other local income streams. Visitors increase GVA and create employment in the area, in fact total visitor spend in Hampshire amounts to almost £2 billion, and there are estimated to be around 41,000 'direct' tourism jobs in Hampshire (and 119,000 indirect jobs).
13. The LVEP objectives align with the Hampshire Economic Strategy through the Strategy's six capitals. The LVEP will have an impact on the County's Physical Capital by attracting investment for infrastructure from the government and private sector; Human Capital, by providing employment and training opportunities, but also physical and mental health as the many of the visitors to attractions in Hampshire are local residents; Social Capital by providing events and activities for local people; and Institutional Capital through the creation of a new public/private partnership.
14. For Visit England to consider a LVEP to be viable it must include resource to deliver tourism marketing and associated activities across its designated area. These resources do not need to sit in the LVEP itself but need to be made available to it. Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils have pledged their current tourism teams as resource to support the LVEP. Hampshire County Council does not have a dedicated revenue budget to support tourism activities from 1 April 2025 and therefore any activity must be delivered on a cost neutral basis or through the core work of the recently established Economy and Skills teams. In the absence of revenue raising powers associated with tourism that may be available through new devolved powers under a Combined Authority (e.g. Tourism Taxes, Mayoral Precepting), any additional resourcing may therefore need to be drawn through reserves until a sustainable resourcing model has been developed.

Finance

15. The LVEP will be funded by Tourism South East by allocating the membership fees paid by Hampshire County Council, Portsmouth City Council, Southampton City Council and participating Hampshire District Councils to this work. In addition, existing staffing resources from the partner authorities will also provide support.
16. The Budget for year one is as follows:
 - Hampshire County Council - £5,000
 - Southampton City Council - £5,000
 - Portsmouth City Council - £5,000

- Boroughs & Districts - £2,000
- **Total - £17,000**

17. Planned expenditure for year one is as follows:

- DMP - £9,952
- Staffing (TSE) - £8,048.

18. The budget for years two and three will be determined by the DMP. Funding for the delivery of the DMP will be sought from a number of sources including Visit England, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, local prosperity Boards (such as the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board and the Solent Growth Board), private sector partners and income generation. No funding is sought from Hampshire County Council's revenue fund to support this work.

Performance

19. Performance of the LVEP will be measured against the DMP once adopted.

20. The Business Case (Appendix A) references a governance structure for the LVEP which includes a LVEP Advisory Board with an independent private sector Chair, and an Executive Delivery Group (made up of representatives from the local authority partners) which will oversee the work of the LVEP. In addition, this governance structure also includes the Hampshire Prosperity Partnership Board and the Solent Growth Board who will have a role in monitoring outcomes from the LVEP.

21. In addition, the LVEP will need to report directly to both Visit England and the Tourism South East Board.

Consultation and Equalities

22. No consultation is required regarding the decision.

23. There are no equality impacts from the decisions in this report as the report seeks agreement to set up a partnership. The DMP and individual activities and investments will require their own equalities impact assessment.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

24. The Climate Change decision-making tools are not relevant to this report as it is not seeking to agree any individual action. In the future the DMP and individual projects will need to be assessed for any impact on climate change through the LVEPs internal governance processes. However, increasing the number of visitors to the area is likely to have an impact on the local environment unless action is taken to mitigate this such as through the use of public transport. The DMP will consider the environmental impacts of any actions included in it and a full impact assessment will be carried out before it is adopted.

Climate Change Adaptation

25. There will not be any direct impacts from climate change on this decision as the decision is to set up a partnership and not about specific interventions and actions.

Carbon Mitigation

26. There is no requirement for carbon mitigation as a result of this decision as the agreement is sought to set up a partnership only and does not identify specific actions or interventions.

Conclusions

27. The establishment of the Hampshire, Portsmouth, and Southampton LVEP, with TSE as the accountable body, presents a strategic opportunity to enhance the region's visitor economy. By focusing on the development and implementation of a robust DMP in Year 1 and targeted activities in Years 2 and 3, the LVEP will drive sustainable growth and deliver significant economic benefits.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

There are no equality impacts from the decisions in this report as the report seeks agreement to set up a partnership. The DMP and individual activities and investments will require their own equalities impact assessment.