

Destination Marketing and International Relations Plan

Date: 19th October 2022

Report of: Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

This report seeks the approval of the Destination Marketing and International Relations Plan 2022-2025, *Connecting the Local to the Global*. It is part of ongoing work to reset and renew our work in the current challenging economic environment and to reflect changes which have taken place regionally with the election of the first West Yorkshire Mayor in May 2021 and the closure of Welcome to Yorkshire in early 2022.

The plan sets out a clear ambition for Destination Marketing and International Relations for the next three years in the context of limited resources and has set the following objectives for the period:

- **To Build Leeds' profile as a Global City** by deepening partnerships with external stakeholders such as the Local Enterprise Partnership the Universities, Nexus, City of London, Core Cities, Eurocities, Leeds United Football Club and our other major sporting clubs, LEEDS 2023, Visit Britain, and Travel Trade to increase trade, drive inward investment, build soft power and promote Leeds as a leading European, tourist destination, within the context of economic recovery.
- **To Promote the city internationally as a beacon of best practice**, supporting the inclusive growth, health and wellbeing, climate emergency and child friendly city agendas; , helping Leeds to be globally recognised as a city of innovation, at the cutting edge of new thinking, policy and practice, thereby providing a bedrock for Business and Leisure Tourism and Inward Investment.
- **To Collectively identify and develop key sectors/markets**, participating in relevant trade missions and exhibitions, as identified in the Inclusive Growth Strategy, creating a welcoming and nurturing environment for businesses and partnerships to flourish.

To deliver a proactive marketing and communication strategy that positions Leeds as a global City leading destination for Business & Leisure Tourism, Culture, Major Events and Inward Investment, and a leading City in Europe to visit, live, work, invest and thrive

Recommendations

Executive Board is requested to:

- a) approve the Destination Marketing and International Relations Plan
- b) delegate to the Director of City Development to implement the Plan

What is this report about?

- 1 The strategic direction for Destination Marketing was last set in 2016 and for International Relations in 2015. This report seeks the approval of a new Destination Marketing and International Relations Plan 2022-2025, *Connecting the Local to the Global* which follows the coming together of the two functions in 2019.
- 2 The plan sets out the city's ambition to be globally recognised as energetic, exciting, and welcoming; a leading destination to visit, live, work, study, invest and thrive in; demonstrating significant contribution to the sustainable and inclusive growth of the Leeds economy.
- 3 The economic landscape has changed profoundly over the past few years as we recover from the pandemic, live with Covid, experience geopolitical impacts including higher inflation, high energy costs, supply chain problems and businesses adjusting to the post Brexit operating environment. We have also seen the acceleration of longer-term changes, including the move to net zero, the growing importance of digital in all sectors, the growth in online retail and the impact of changing working and shopping patterns on footfall. Despite the current challenges, we continue to focus on building long-term resilience in the economy including through the review of the Inclusive Growth Strategy.
- 4 Despite the challenges, there are grounds for optimism. Leeds City Centre night time footfall has returned to pre-pandemic levels and our occupancy rates in Leeds hotels are showing strong signs of recovery. The latest edition of the Leeds Crane Survey showed 2021 was a record-breaking year with 10 new residential developments. Leeds remains the largest base of finance and professional services outside London, we're leaders in Health and our strong Digital sector continues to grow.
- 5 In September we launched our Future Talent Plan, developed to help the city respond to a rapidly changing labour market, address employment and skills demands of the transition to Net Zero, as well as new responsibilities and policies arising from West Yorkshire Devolution and a changing national skills and training policy landscape.
- 6 This plan seeks to reset and renew our Destination Marketing and International Relations Plan within this challenging operating environment. The plan also reflects changes which have taken place regionally with the election of the first West Yorkshire Mayor in May 2021 and the closure of Welcome to Yorkshire in early 2022. The regional Destination Marketing Organisation landscape is currently under review, but we will continue to work with our neighbouring cities throughout Yorkshire on campaigns utilising our major events to promote both Leeds and Yorkshire in line with the inclusive growth strategy and we will work closely with any Yorkshire wide destination marketing solution that may come forward.

- 7 The Destination Marketing and International Relations team will play an important role in driving the economy forward by promoting Leeds, driving footfall, supporting businesses to relocate to the City and positioning the city globally.
- 8 The Destination Marketing and International Relations Team, comprises of four different functions, Visit Leeds, Conference Leeds, Invest Leeds and International Relations, which will be amalgamated under one umbrella of Destination Leeds in 2022, following extensive branding work across the four elements, allowing for greater brand recognition.
- 9 The team promotes Leeds as a leading destination to visit, work, live, thrive, study and invest. The inward investment function, with significant support from the LEP, supports organisations considering relocation to Leeds and is currently supporting over 3,000+ jobs across a diverse range of sectors ensuring Leeds remains one of the top UK cities for foreign direct investment and capital investment. Acting as the interface between multiple agencies including the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA), Department for International Trade (DIT) and Leeds City Council Asset Management and Regeneration, Employment and Skills, and the Growth Service, to support organisations relocating to Leeds. This work includes assisting with talent pipelines, funding options and introducing them to the wider Leeds ecosystem. The LEP and DIT provide significant support in terms of promotion and introductions.
- 10 The International Relations function ensures that Leeds international exposure remains high on the agenda, which is more important now than ever, recent disrupted flows of international trade and travel on an unprecedented scale. Over the last thirty years, the function has created a number of civic links with partners across the globe and continues to push the City's global agenda via its Eurocities and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) platforms. Eurocities is a network of more than 200 cities in 38 countries, representing 130 million people. It is a political platform enabling the Council to both influence and learn from other European cities and share best practice regarding a number of topics including culture, economic development, environment, knowledge society, mobility and social affairs. For example, more recently Leeds has chaired the Children and Young people's group and Leeds Museums and Galleries were shortlisted for the European Museum Academy Children in Museums Award 2022 for the Leeds Curriculum highlighting the excellent work the team has delivered on a European platform.
- 11 The Visit Leeds and Conference Leeds functions promote Leeds as a key business and leisure tourism destination through strategic marketing activity, PR and online, playing a pivotal role in the marketing for LEEDS 2023.
- 12 There are six outcomes driving activity, using three pillars, Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sport; Partnerships; and City Promotion. Working closely with partners across the city, in 2019 the Visit Leeds team welcomed over **30 million visitors** to the city worth **£1.89 billion** to the local economy, the Inward Investment team supported over **1000 jobs** in conjunction with the LEP, Conference Leeds welcomed **50,100** conferences & events, **3.5m** delegates and contributed **£560m** to the local economy with the International Relations team continued to share best practise and promoted the city globally.

- 13 Notwithstanding extraordinary macro-economic factors the six outcomes of the plan for the next three years concentrate on how the team **will drive up footfall and change the visitor perception of Leeds (Outcome 1)**, ensuring Leeds is positioned as a leading European city-break destination, where people and companies want to invest, live, work, study and thrive, supporting the inclusive growth strategy by promoting Leeds and Yorkshire.
- 14 **Secondly, the plan highlights how the city will increase its national and foreign direct investment (Outcome 2)** as the City continues to welcome multiple Whitehall departments, the BBC Learning department, the British Library and the Bank of England as part of the levelling up agenda, playing our role as the Leeds City Region's Global City., as well as welcoming private sector operators such as Snowflake, Iwoca, Reed Smith LLP and Burberry. The team is currently supporting the LEP to deliver a strong active investment pipeline across a number of sectors with enquiries representing over **3,000 jobs** over the next 3 years, across multiple sectors, thereby supporting the inclusive growth strategy with creating better jobs and building a federal economy creating jobs closer to communities.
- 15 **Thirdly, the plan builds the profile of Leeds using Arts, Culture, Heritage and Sporting assets (Outcome 3)**, detailing how the council will play an instrumental part in the delivery of LEEDS 2023 marketing and international programme for our Year of Culture, this year and next, looking towards 2024 to establish a legacy for the City.
- 16 The fourth outcome is around **strengthening civic partnerships and profile, sharing best practice** and looks to build on the Eurocities and OECD activity, enabling Leeds to showcase its sector strengths through the sharing of best practice, as well as continuing to build on civic relations and developing relations with sister cities.
- 17 **By 2025, the plan aims to position Leeds as a leading conference destination (Outcome 5)**, through partnership working and by improving the delegate experience. The team will support the Major Events team (part of Arts, Events and Venues) in bidding for events, targeting federations, associations and sporting bodies. Furthermore, the team will explore strengthening the conferencing asset base, for example, redeveloping the former Yorkshire Bank site as an additional multi-events space.
- 18 **Finally, the plan outlines how the city will drive sustainable tourism (Outcome 6)** otherwise known as slow tourism, which promotes longer dwell times, encourages the use of local independents in the supply chain, as well as the use of sustainable travel across the city, engaging the hotel and venues sector with an aligned Net Zero agenda. We intend to work with partners across the city including our hotel sector, our visitor attractions and LEEDS 2023 to deliver ISO21401:2018 (The ISO standard for Tourism and related services – Sustainability management system for accommodation establishments) as a city by the end of 2025.

What impact will this proposal have?

The main objectives of this plan are to:

- 19 **Build Leeds profile as a globally recognised City** by deepening partnerships with external stakeholders such as the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Universities, Nexus, City of London, Core Cities, Eurocities, Leeds United Football Club and our other major sporting clubs, Leeds 2023, Visit Britain and Travel Trade to increase trade, drive inward investment, build soft power and promote Leeds as a leading European, tourist destination, within the context of economic recovery.

- 20 **Promote the city internationally as a beacon of best practice**, supporting the inclusive growth, health and wellbeing, climate emergency and child friendly city agendas, helping Leeds to be globally recognised as a city of innovation, at the cutting edge of new thinking, policy and practice, thereby providing a bedrock for Business and Leisure Tourism and Inward Investment.
- 21 **Collectively identify and develop key sectors/markets**, participating in relevant trade missions and exhibitions, as identified in the Inclusive Growth Strategy, creating a welcoming and nurturing environment for businesses and partnerships to flourish.
- 22 **Deliver a proactive marketing and communication plan** that positions Leeds as a global City leading destination for Business & Leisure Tourism, Culture, Major Events and Inward Investment, and a leading City in Europe to visit, live, work, invest and thrive, as we continue to support the economy and more specifically, retail and hospitality businesses across the city.
- 23 A screening form for equality, diversity and inclusion is also available at Appendix 2, documenting the approach to market research and campaigns across Destination Marketing and International Relations.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 24 The Council's three pillars provide a framework for the Destination Marketing and International Relations plan 2022-2025. Tourism, inward investment and International Relations play a major role in supporting and stimulating the Leeds economy, supporting job creation for local residents, and positioning Leeds on the global stage, enabling recovery in a post-Covid and post-Brexit context. This is directly linked to our ambition to deliver Inclusive Growth across the City, whilst striving to be the best city for Health and Wellbeing and tackling the Climate Emergency. Leisure tourism and inward investment play a major role in delivering the quality of life for residents across the city and sustainable tourism will play a key part in ensuring the city achieves its net zero ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 25 Extensive consultation has taken place through one-to-one meetings with; the Leeds Hotels and Venues association (LHVA); Leeds Business Improvement District; the Local Enterprise Partnership; Leeds Bradford Airport; and, the cultural consortium, which comprises of 17 of the city and region's key cultural venues including Harewood House, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Opera North, Leeds Playhouse, Leeds Heritage Theatres, Leeds Museums and Galleries, Leeds Arts and Venues, Thackeray Medical Museum and HE institutions. Consultation has also taken place with colleagues across the council that are involved in Economic Policy delivery, Education, Major Events and Culture. All institutions were receptive and in broad agreement with the plan.
- 26 The Destination Marketing and International Relations plan presents a cohesive outward looking plan for the city that encourages the continuation of partnership working to drive footfall and expand Leeds global positioning.
- 27 The plan will provide clear direction and confidence against a backdrop of economic uncertainty. It highlights the actions that will be taken around city promotion, partnership working and how the city's sporting and cultural assets will be utilised to elevate visitor perception and grow global brand recognition over the next three years.

What are the resource implications?

28 Resources to deliver activity are constrained. There are only 10FTE to deliver across Visit Leeds, Conference Leeds, International Relations and Inward Investment. Furthermore, there have been a series of in year cuts, year after year to the operational budget, meaning this level of activity requires greater reliance on greater digital delivery.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

29 There are no significant risks relating to the recommendations in this report.

What are the legal implications?

30 There are no significant legal issues relating to the recommendations in this report.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

31 Our work considering this Destination Marketing and International Relations plan has been built on research collated from other core cities and their published related strategies and plans. We have used the findings of this work, together with the stakeholder discussions to present actions in this report, which we feel are achievable, reliable and impactful.

How will success be measured?

32 There are a series of KPIs accompanying the Destination Marketing and International Relations plan, which will be monitored annually internally to ensure progress is being made and targets achieved.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

33 All outcomes will be delivered by 2025.

Appendices

34 Appendix 1 - Connecting the Local with the Global' – Destination Marketing and International Relations Plan 2022-2025.

35 Appendix 2 – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Screening.

Background papers

36 None.

Related Information

37 EY Attractiveness Survey 2021

https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/en_uk/topics/attractiveness/ey-uk-attractiveness-survey-2021.pdf?mkt_tok=NTIwLVJYUC0wMDMAAAF9iWVjKSAkDdMwaX7Ek4u2g2aoVTuGGJ3zt9jyVgdOOt5mTXvQ1_lpldEb_pkipv63lSLdwPBvSxt6nySPLNd4YoRlr5awt-HhLFIYMokzAD7eLeA