

England's Destination Management Forum: Terms of Reference

Background

The landscape for the delivery of tourism has changed significantly in the past 18 months: the establishment of VisitEngland; the evolution of the Strategic Framework; the development of the Government Tourism Policy; the abolition of RDAs; the emergence of Local Enterprise Partnerships; the focus on the greater future role of local destination management organisations and the strengthening of their relationship with VisitEngland; and the principal ways that the structures and roles and responsibilities have changed and continue to change.

The Government's Tourism Policy places an onus on VisitEngland to engage and support destinations. In doing so it is recognised by the Minister for Tourism that VisitEngland needs to connect effectively with destinations and that effective collaboration is essential if growth is to be achieved.

VisitEngland is based in London but it is not a London-centric organisation. The nature of its work means frequent travel around the country meeting partners and businesses, but it is clear, that as a small organisation it is not able to engage individually, with all of its partners, all of the time.

In addition, VisitEngland recognises that all destinations have their own stakeholder pressures and differences; that their delivery structures are tailored to meet these specific local needs that require VisitEngland to tailor its engagement to different types of structures. However VisitEngland has identified that there are a sufficient number of destinations that have a commonality of approach that makes it viable for VisitEngland to meet with them collectively.

These organisations are directly responsible for either delivering or coordinating delivery of a range of destination management activities. They have a status and remit locally that places them in an advantageous position to drive forward the strategic framework and its actions plans at the local level.

Purpose of Destination Management Forum

- Provide an opportunity for the exchange of information on national and local tourism issues of strategic importance between destinations and between VE and destinations.
- Enable the sharing of different approaches to destination management, partnership working and identify activities where economies of scale can be achieved by working together and with VisitEngland.
- Provide an opportunity to share experience and good practice between destination organisations to encourage effective tourism growth through the adoption and implementation of the Strategic Framework action plans.

Membership

The forum will be constituted of invited senior representatives from organisations responsible for *managing and running* destinations. VisitEngland may also invite representatives from organisations that have a role to play in the management and promotion of destinations but who are not necessarily from a destination specific management organisation. It is recognised that in many cases destination management is a function of more than one organisation, each of whom play a different role, e.g. managing the public realm, promotion or product development, specified in a destination management plan that the DMO is responsible for coordinating and driving forward.

Criteria to attend

As outlined above the destinations invited to attend have a degree of commonality. Invitations to attend are not based on their historical partnership with VisitEngland, their track record of marketing destinations or because they have a tourism function. Destinations will be required to meet the following 'commonality criteria' to qualify for forum membership.

- Meet the Government's **Tourism Policy criteria on Governance** (or working towards it).
 - They must be partnerships between the public and private sector, including newly-formed Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) where they exist. This partnership should be representative of the local tourism and visitor economy stakeholders.
- Organisations should have a **status and remit locally to manage tourism**. This should be recognised and acknowledged by the Local Enterprise Partnership(s) (where one exists). In some regions more than one destination will be within the LEP jurisdiction, in which case all lead destination organisations will be invited. However, where there is more than one organisation for a destination (or there is overlap) and where there is any duplication of responsibility, the LEP may be approached to nominate the appropriate body to represent the destination.
- Have an established (published) **destination management plan**, or be in the process of developing one (with a detailed completion/ publication date). The plan should be a shared statement of intent between public and private partners and include the priorities for growing, developing and managing the destination, identifying clear actions and the roles & responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Committed and actively working to **deliver the strategic framework** and national marketing strategy, e.g. be working to develop and promote attract and disperse brands.

VisitEngland will nominate and invite destinations based on the criteria above.

Membership of this forum will not be static and it is expected to fluctuate as organisations develop to meet the criteria.

It is VisitEngland's expectation that all Destination Organisations attending accept a responsibility for representing the different destinations interests at the forum and disseminating information to key local stakeholders.

Beyond the forum VisitEngland will continue to develop two way communications with destinations as required. In particular proceedings and outcomes of the forum will be posted on the VisitEngland

website to encourage a wider understanding of its work and to further develop effective destination management.

Governance

A VisitEngland board member, with a portfolio for destinations, will be appointed to chair the forum.

Frequency of Destination Management Forum

The forum will meet twice a year, typically early spring and autumn.

Relationship with VisitEngland Board

[Appendix 1](#) sets out VisitEngland's engagement structures with industry and how they relate to one another.

VisitEngland is the custodian of the entire Strategic Framework and has a responsibility to drive forward industry wide implementation and communicate this as widely as possible with the industry.

The Destination Management Forum provides VisitEngland and its Board with a key communication and engagement mechanism with destinations on relevant issues, developments and best practice.

The Chair of the Destination Management Forum will be on the VisitEngland Board to ensure effective and consistent communication is maintained.

The VisitEngland Board is responsible for setting VisitEngland's corporate strategy and VisitEngland's delivery against the Strategic Framework.

Relationship with Strategic Industry Advisory Group

The Destination Management Forum will work with VisitEngland's Strategic Industry Advisory Group to provide guidance on issues affecting destinations. Particularly due to the important implementation role of Destination Organisations at the local level and their engagement with Local Authorities, LEPs and businesses

The Chair of the Destinations Forum will be represented on the Strategic Industry Advisory Group to ensure the appropriate links are being made.

Relationship with Visitor Economy Forum

All members of the Destinations Management Forum will be eligible to attend the Visitor Economy Forum due to its broad and inclusive nature. The Visitor Economy Forum will, however, focus on strategic issues affecting the entire industry. Destination Organisations and are important to implementation and would be encouraged to attend the Visitor Economy Forum to share lessons and successes with a broader spectrum of visitor economy stakeholders (and vice versa).

Appendix 1 - England Tourism Industry and Stakeholder Engagement Structures

