



**Local Visitor
Economy
Partnership**



Background

The LVEP will provide a strengthened and more targeted business support offer to visitor economy businesses across the region. It will call on external support agencies as well as delivering targeted training and business support via existing partnerships. The objective is to ensure consistent, high quality business support is available and that businesses are aware of how to access this.

Business support is already delivered by each local authority with involvement from the destination organisations of Cotswolds Tourism, Marketing Cheltenham, Forest of Dean & Wye Valley Tourism Ltd and Visit Gloucester. Visit Gloucestershire has also organised specific training workshops focussed around sustainability, experience led workshop and accessibility audits. The Covid pandemic saw each local authority supported by their DMO's offer a range of engagement with businesses from signposting grants, virtual meetings and data gathering to review the impact of the pandemic.

Each district in Gloucestershire contains a Growth Hub which is delivered by local providers with central involvement from GFirst LEP and funding from UKSPF to 2025. A Growth Hub is a place where businesses can gain informed and targeted free and impartial advice about their business. The Growth Hub network is replicated across the country and provides invaluable support to businesses from all sectors with established resources, experts, finance finders and local centres enabling businesses to access information. For Oxfordshire there is a strong relationship been established with the OxLEP team providing [business support toolkit](#), [webinars & events](#) and more recently a visitor economy grant scheme to support businesses & has provided funding support to Cotswolds Tourism which is part of Oxfordshire's wider [Visitor Economy Renaissance programme](#).

There are also a wide number of business associations engaged with local businesses, including Chambers of Commerce, FSB, BIDs, and networking groups, alongside various existing sector groups providing support. In addition, Visit England has an extensive business advice hub focussed purely on visitor economy and hospitality. Partners within the LVEP refer businesses to access these resources, promoting this via

existing networks and communications and the LVEP offers the opportunity to collate these referrals and ensure consistent information is provided across the region.

Industry insights & trends

The 2023 Deloitte Hospitality Industry Outlook highlighted the lack of economic growth and rising costs, the inability to raise prices, and challenges related to climate change are all perceived as key risks for the hospitality / tourism industry in the near future. Recruitment and disruptions due to labour shortages are expected to increase and last beyond 2025.

Feedback from businesses highlights key issues in recruitment, retention, access to finance and increasing costs.

Businesses need to embrace technology to remain competitive in the ever-changing digital landscape. Much work needs to be done to encourage businesses to understand and maximise these opportunities.

Local, regional and national support

Each DMO has an individual offer in regards marketing support allowing businesses to reach more consumers & has dedicated local resources online for businesses.

Cotswolds Tourism already has a business support section <https://www.cotswolds.com/trade/business-support>, and works closely with the economic leads, market towns officer and growth hubs as well as business groups across the region to encourage product development, and training.

VisitEngland has a dedicated business advice hub <https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice> promotes VisitEngland / VisitBritain training and support opportunities and works closely with economic leads who liaise directly with the local Growth Hub and OxLep.

Marketing Cheltenham is one of the lead partners in the delivery of the local Growth Hub ensuring a focus on cross-sector support for businesses, and promotes VisitEngland / VisitBritain training and support opportunities.

Each local area has an individual approach on engaging with local businesses with Tewkesbury in particular having a strong focus on business support via its local Growth Hub and economic team.

Values of the LVEP

A **COLLECTIVE** that works for each other for shared benefit

SUSTAINABILITY is at the heart of our approach to solutions

We **ADVOCATE** for all of our partners and for the visitor economy

We **ALIGN** our practices to achieve exceptional standards across all areas of our work

We bring **OPPORTUNITY** to businesses across our region

Objectives

- Clear audit of what is already provided and by who and until when
- Understand business needs following pandemic and preferred ways to access
- Develop useful training information for visitor economy businesses that helps make a difference
- To encourage 'cross authority' shared training – making use of virtual to broaden the reach
- Clear signposting and communication of all business support including funding available across the LVEP region
- Supporting the growth of the visitor economy
- Link across to the other work streams of skills & training and research and data
- Bridging the gap between businesses and policy makers

Activities to be carried out 2023/2024 LVEP led & delivered

For Led and Delivered activities plans should highlight the value(s) that are linked to them. They should also describe a method of success measurement/KPI, and describe the proposed visitor economy impact.

Activity	Align to values	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Priority (1 Key to 5 low)	Cost of Activity	Provider(s)	Start date	KPI	Actual Completion Date
Business communications on what LVEP is & benefits Bring together a clear communication plan for all partners to work to ensuring businesses understand the value of the LVEP while retaining the local partner engagement/support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add section to trade site on LVEP Coordinated approach with information in each partners newsletters Use #CotswoldsPlus for any comms via social media done by partners Encourage business participation in the advisory groups 	KEY FIRST STEP AS LVEP Collective Advocate Align standards Opportunity	Clear understanding by businesses and strategic players across LVEP region of what LVEP is and its benefits longer term to be established over this year. Get additional businesses involved in local DMO's & LVEP advisory panels/sector groups longer term Coordinated messaging	Cotswolds Plus LVEP / LVEP Management Board/chair All DMO's	1	Officer time	All strategic partners LVEP Cotswolds Tourism team Each workstream lead	July 23 & ongoing	Page views on LVEP section of website Min of 10 Businesses engaged with workstream by March 24	

<p>Audit of what business support each LVEP partner currently offers including growth hub/Oxleap activity</p> <p>Understand who is providing what, when and business take up & involvement to avoid duplication, utilise resources and signpost business support that can make a difference to businesses.</p> <p>Review how each LA partner/DMO/economic leads currently responds to business support requests including planning letters of support, training, start-ups, accreditation</p> <p>Review what training has taken place in past two years & learn from those businesses that participated. Eg Unmissable England training, VE webinars</p> <p>Audit of what is already provided and by who and until when/costs including business journey (start up, business survival, growing business and succession planning) being mindful that training providers / Growth Hubs / VisitEngland will be the main delivery partners</p> <p>EG In Gloucestershire the growth hubs hold a wide range of events and offer one to one support. For Oxfordshire there is a business support toolkit, webinars & events and more recently a grant scheme which is part of a wider Visitor Economy Renaissance programme.</p>	<p>Align standards</p> <p>Collective</p> <p>Advocate</p>	<p>To bring together a clear understanding of what is being offered, gaps in the offer and enable the LVEP to build a robust business support approach that signposts clearly who does what & enables businesses to develop and thrive.</p> <p>Ensure visitor economy businesses have access to training</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP / LVEP Management Board</p> <p>Each LA</p> <p>Growth Hubs</p> <p>Economic Leads</p>	2	Officer time	<p>All strategic partners LVEP</p> <p>Cotswolds Tourism team</p> <p>Each workstream lead</p>	Autumn 23		
--	---	--	--	---	--------------	--	-----------	--	--

COTSWOLDS PLUS LVEP BUSINESS SUPPORT WORKSTREAM ACTIVITY PLAN SEPTEMBER 2023 – DECEMBER 2025

Activity	Align to values	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Priority (1 Key to 5 low)	Cost of Activity	Provider(s)	Start date	KPI's	Completion Date
Business support and training needs assessment Conduct a full Business survey to gather evidence & understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a business would go as a start up What training services visitor economy businesses already use, and gaps, improvements needed How they train their front line staff on visitor welcome & knowledge of wider region Awareness of VE business advice hub, LEP/Growth hub events, courses 	Collective Advocate Align standards Opportunity	To understand from businesses what they need. To identify any gaps in customer journey Ensure a warm welcome happens across the region Businesses confidently promote the area keeping visitor spend in the region Improving digital use	Cotswolds Plus LVEP with support from strategic partners, LEPS & Growth hubs	3	Officer time	All strategic partners LVEP Cotswolds Tourism team Each workstream lead	Winter 23	Min of 100 biz responding to survey	
Tourism forum Plan a tourism forum to update about LVEP, work done locally and bring in specialist speakers to enthuse businesses. Look to widen access by offering online / digital attendance to ensure new businesses attend. Tie this into ETW as major event for LVEP for 2024	Collective Advocate Sustainable Opportunity	Help gather information from businesses Highlight who is doing what Meet LVEP management board Key speakers eg VisitEngland / sustainability National profile for Cotswolds LVEP Raise profile of visitor economy Lobbying opportunity	Cotswolds Plus LVEP / LVEP Management Board Each LA Whole of LVEP team	2 2	Officer time Cost to hire venue/ catering etc Min £5k Officer time	All strategic partners LVEP Cotswolds Tourism team All strategic partners	Plan from Sept 23 Event to be ETW MARCH 24	Min of 100 biz attending event in person & 30 virtually Min 1 media article	

COTSWOLDS PLUS LVEP BUSINESS SUPPORT WORKSTREAM ACTIVITY PLAN SEPTEMBER 2023 – DECEMBER 2025

Activity	Align to values	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Priority (1 Key to 5 low)	Cost of Activity	Provider(s)	Start date	KPI's	Completion Date
English Tourism Week Bring together a coordinated approach for English Tourism week 2024 to include: MP & Cllr visits to local businesses Tourism Forum Radio interviews	Collective Advocate Opportunity	Raise profile of visitor economy Lobbying opportunity	Cotswolds Plus LVEP / LVEP Management Board Each LA	2				All MP's involved Cllr & LA internal comms Min 1 radio & 1 media article	
Bring forward a business support plan for 2024/2025 to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism awards – promotion potentially linked to VisitWest Training programme tailored to local businesses Coordinated network opportunities Opportunities working with others to increase shared training and business support Link to sustainability and accessibility workstreams 	Collective Advocate Align standards Opportunity Sustainable	More local businesses entering awards & national profile Better educated businesses & local knowledge Managing resources efficiently							

Activities being undertaken where LVEP has an influencing role

Note these activities are not delivered directly by Cotswolds Plus LVEP but delivered by strategic partners

Activity	LVEP VALUES	Expected Outcome	Responsible
Local Connections events across region Cotswolds Tourism will look to build on the success of the pilot local connections event and look to hold a local connection speed dating event annually in different locations to help connect accommodation providers with local producers	ON GOING PROJECT Cotswolds Tourism Opportunity Sustainable	Connecting local suppliers with accommodation providers. Build on success of pilot held March 23	Cotswolds Tourism
Business support as usual Promotion of what is already planned Eg climate workshops for CNL Promotion of VE business advice hub & webinars Promoting Growth hub plans & training events Raise awareness of the importance of the visitor economy. Training to be provided for existing business support organisations, e.g. local BIDs, Growth Hub, Chamber of Commerce Utilise existing partner networks and meetings to share information about business support available to visitor economy businesses & build awareness of LVEP	ON GOING PROJECT Cotswolds National Landscape, growth hubs & VisitEngland Opportunity Sustainable	Better educated businesses Better local knowledge for staff to signpost visitors in region	Each DMO / Strategic partner Growth Hubs / GFirst OxLep Bids / chambers

Business research & insights Continue to deliver Volume & Value research Encourage attractions to enter data into national VE attractions survey Conduct how's business survey or similar on local levels communicating with partnership Review options for data capture / perceptions in line with local priorities & LVEP data plan	Collective Advocate Align standards Opportunity	Impact of visitor spend & numbers/jobs Attraction data & how regions attractions compare	Each strategic partner
Review business support sections on the strategic partner websites Look to adopt a standard approach and share best practice / introduce businesses Bring together a clear signposting of all information that can be communicated clearly to businesses across the LVEP Build awareness of LVEP to ensure the Growth hubs/FSB/Chambers signpost LVEP & DMO biz resources	Collective Advocate Align standards Opportunity	Better educated businesses & business journey easily identified Wider awareness of business support available, promoted by whole network with increased participation from visitor economy businesses	Each strategic partner Business chambers/FSB/Growth hubs
Increase bookable product/experiences Linking with the travel trade action plan conduct a bookable audit across the LVEP region. Work with the travel trade group to encourage businesses to become direct bookable via TXGB / polling / OTA's Look to hold a training sessions from TXGB either at the forum or separately on line.	Opportunity	Keep website current and relevant alongside increasing new products. Look to add a min of five new products onto the trade website in first year & then ongoing.	Cotswolds Plus LVEP Each strategic partner

<p>Coordinated networking for businesses with local DMO's</p> <p>Continue to hold local networking events. Including sector support sessions such as attractions, hoteliers / work stream specific meetings such as MICE & trade to ensure purposeful for businesses.</p> <p>Look at existing meetings already happening - chambers & get regular update for LVEP highlighted in these meetings</p>	<p>Align standards</p> <p>Opportunity</p>	<p>Sharing best practice in a joined up collaborative approach while maintaining local tourism organisations individuality</p>	<p>Each strategic partner</p>
<p>Look to influence training & business support</p> <p>Work with VisitEngland to highlight local business training needs & signpost opportunities available to visitor economy businesses</p> <p>Work with LA economic leads, growth hubs and OxLep/GFirst / CNL/County councils to ensure training and business support works to enable visitor economy businesses across the Cotswolds Plus region</p>	<p>Collective</p> <p>Advocate</p> <p>Align standards</p> <p>Opportunity</p>	<p>Training aligned to local business needs and increased participation from businesses.</p> <p>Joined up approach that enables businesses to thrive, diversify and adapt to trends in visitor requirements.</p>	<p>Cotswolds Plus LVEP with VisitEngland regional contact</p> <p>Each strategic partner & economic leads at LA/County councils</p>

LVEP Related activity to monitor LVEP Monitored activity should be a simple list describing who is delivering it and where.

Activity	Delivered by
<u>Made in Gloucestershire</u> resources, business liaison – how is this to be maintained	GFirst LEP – Check who from April 24 – Note being transferred to Glos CC
Chambers and local business groups training, support & networking	
Local authority UKSPF business support projects	Each local authority