

Report to Scrutiny Commission

Scrutiny Commission: Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism

Date of Commission meeting: 1 March 2022

Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 Progress Update

Lead executive decision maker:
Assistant Mayor for Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport

Report of the Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward
Investment



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle Ward
- Report author: Sarah Harrison, City Centre Director
- Author contact details: 0116 454 2481

1. Summary

This report provides the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission with a progress update on the actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025.

2. Recommendations

To note and comment on the progress with delivery of actions within the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025.

3. Report/Supporting information including options considered:

Attached PowerPoint presentation as an appendix

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from this report. However, the costs of any new initiatives not already included in the budget should be identified and considered as they arise.
Stuart McAvoy – Acting Head of Finance x 37 4004

4.2 Legal implications

Any proposed works or services identified in this report may be subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015- (“Regulations”) and the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and as such the Council’s Procurement team and Legal services will need to be engaged to provide advice and ensure such works or services are procured in accordance with the Regulations.

Legal advice should be sought as and when required.

Seema Patel, ex 1406



4.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

As this is a progress update, there are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. However, more widely, the tourism sector is a significant source of carbon emissions within the city. This includes emissions from travel and transport, and those from tourism businesses such as their energy use and buildings and the products they buy and use. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, and its aim to achieve carbon neutrality within Leicester, addressing these emissions is a vital part of this work, particularly in areas where the council has the most influence.

As such, the various plans and projects relating to tourism in the local area should consider opportunities to tackle carbon emissions and reduce environmental impacts as relevant and appropriate. This could include supporting and encouraging businesses to reduce emissions and improve their energy efficiency of their buildings, encouraging the use of low carbon and sustainable transport, and using festivals and events to communicate with visitors on the climate emergency. This report includes a number of programmes that are already actively contributing to this agenda, for example within transport such as the e-bike hire scheme. In addition, the development and promotion of sustainable tourism opportunities could potentially provide positive economic and reputational impacts for the city.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

4.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report provides an update in relation on the actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025, there are no direct equality implications arising out of it. The tourism sector, along with the arts, entertainment and recreation, has been one of the sections of the economy hardest hit by COVID-19.

Culture presents an opportunity for authentic cultural exchange between locals and visitors and for destinations it encourages local communities to embrace their culture and boost economic growth. Thus, providing an opportunity to foster good relations between different protected characteristics.

One in five people in the UK has an impairment and those with health conditions, and their travelling companions, are estimated to spend £12 billion on trips in England each year. Half a million British adults cited 'lack of accessibility provision' as the reason they did not take a domestic trip in the last 12 months. It is important to consider inclusive design principles in relation to accessibility for people from across all protected characteristics.

Efforts to promote equality and diversity and to engage people from across communities should have a positive impact on visitors from across all protected characteristics. Having accessible safe and inclusive places to visit that helps to create an environment that encourages as many people to access services and participate fully, helps to advance equality.

Equalities Officer Surinder Singh Tel 37 4148

4.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None.

1. Background information and other papers:

None

2. Summary of appendices:

None

3. Is this a private report?

No

Report

1. Purpose

This briefing provides an update on progress to date with delivery of the actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025

2. Background

Coronavirus and the impact on the UK travel and tourism industry – Source ONS

- Monthly air passenger arrivals to the UK fell from 6.8m in February 2020 to 112,300 in April 2020, a fall of 98.3%
- Greater London saw the largest fall in room occupancy of any English region from 2019-2020 with just 20% of rooms occupied in July 2020 compared with 90% in the same month in 2019.
- Accommodation and travel agency businesses saw the sharpest decline in turnover during the first national lockdown, falling to 9.3% of their February levels in May 2020
- The proportion of businesses in travel and tourism industries trading peaked at 85% in October 2021 before declining in response to increasing restrictions in November.
- In the three months to June 2020 employment in accommodation for visitors fell by 21.5% compared with the same three months of 2019.
- In travel and tourism industries overall the number of people age 16 to 24 years saw the largest fall in employment of any age groups between Q3 2019 and Q3 2020.

Tourism Matters

Since 2010, tourism has been the fastest-growing sector in the UK in terms of employment. It had been predicted to grow faster (at 3.8% per year) than the overall UK economy (at 3% per year) – and much faster than sectors such as manufacturing, construction and retail. It was estimated that Britain would have a tourism industry worth over £257 billion by 2025, just under 10% of UK GDP, supporting almost 3.8 million jobs, approximately 11% of the total number of UK jobs.

To what extent and speed the travel and tourism industry will recover post-pandemic is unknown. However, the UK has seen an encouraging growth in staycations as visitors chose to holiday at home rather than run the risk and expense of travel abroad due to unpredictability of Covid restrictions during the pandemic.

Leicester and Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan 2020-2025

The framework of the five-year Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire developed by the jointly-funded Place Marketing Team has helped focus effort, reduce duplication, inform, guide and influence decisions on investment and bring individual partners together to increase impact. By visualising the area as a single, integrated visitor destination, the sector can achieve more growth, more visitors, more economic value and more jobs. By working collaboratively with the city, county and districts councils, a more joined up approach to developing tourism across the sub-region can be achieved. The Plan is supported by a region-wide Tourism Advisory Board.

[Leicester Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan](#)

Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025

Leicester Tourism Action Plan has been developed closely in parallel with the Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire. Both plans are designed to complement each other. The city plan helps to deliver priorities for the wide area, for example product investment, improved productivity and in particular it will support the strategy for creating a strong, distinctive and visible destination through the campaign brand entitled *Uncover the Story*.

The plan has also been influenced by the broader strategic priorities and actions set out within the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), Local Industrial Strategy, Leicester Smart City Strategy, Leicester Economic Action Plan 2016-2020 and the city council's Place Marketing activities.

[Leicester Tourism Action Plan](#)

STEAM Data

The Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM) is a tourism economic impact model used throughout the UK and overseas by tourist boards, local authorities, national park authorities and many other public and private sector organisations. The city and county have been using STEAM to track change across a wide range of economic measures, sectors and visitor types since 2009.

The value of tourism to Leicester and Leicestershire in 2018 was £1.88 billion. The number of people who visited the region was 34.93 million. 23,076 jobs were created and safeguarded.

The value of tourism to Leicester has grown by 48% over the last ten years to £651 million in 2018. The number of people visiting the city was 11.5 million. 7,911 jobs were created and safeguarded.

Pre-Covid, the projected growth by 2025 was forecast to increase the value of tourism to Leicester to £792 million with a projected 2.5 million increase in visitors and 1,260 more jobs created and safeguarded. The city's ambitious product development projects, marketing plans, resident engagement schemes and focus on hospitality and tourism training, skills development and business advice, places Leicester in a strong position to continue to grow.

Tourism performance projections will be reviewed in the future as part of economic recovery plans for the city.

Aims and Objectives – Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025

The aims and objectives for the Leicester Tourism Action Plan set out the city's ambition to attract more leisure and business tourism first-time visitors, increase repeat visits and overnight stays. A £100 million investment programme in new and existing tourism offers to improve quality, diversification, productivity and profitability, will help position Leicester as a sought-after tourism destination.

Growing the city's visitor economy will also bring sustainable economic, cultural and social benefits to investors and residents.

3. Summary Progress Report

Summary of delivery progress to date against the objectives and actions outlined in the Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025.

There has been considerable progress made despite the challenging Covid environment the country and particularly Leicester has faced. Projects have moved forwards and marketing plans have benefitted from an unexpected European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) budget boost to support the reopening of the high street and welcoming visitors back.

4. Four themes

The Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 is organised around four themes : **Product – Place – Positioning – People.**

Theme 1: Product

Objective 1 : Improving the tourism product offer in terms of quality, diversification, productivity and profitability

Jewry Wall – Roman Leicester

The new museum will connect both floors of the former Vaughan College and will include a café, shop, meeting rooms and a stunning new exhibition, all overlooking the historic site of the baths. The exhibition will use immersive technology to bring to life the stories of everyday Roman Leicester. The development is on site but has been hindered by the contractor for the first phase of building work going in to administration.

[Jewry Wall](#)

Leicester Cathedral Revealed

The project is also now underway and will restore and renew Leicester Cathedral so that it can be its very best as a place of worship, heritage, pilgrimage, hospitality, learning, sanctuary and celebration.

A new visit and learning centre, The Chapter House, will be housed in an extension to the cathedral on the footprint of the Old Song School. The centre will provide an exhibition gallery with immersive interpretation, a flexible learning space for school children and community groups and new toilet facilities. The scheme will complete and be open to the public in early 2024.

[Leicester Cathedral Revealed](#)

Phoenix 2020

Construction has started on Phoenix cinema and art centre's exciting £8.7m expansion project. A fourth screen, new art gallery, bigger Café Bar and roof terrace and more space for making and learning will be unveiled in early 2023. The project has funding support and investment from Arts Council England, Leicester City Council and the British Film Institute.

Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

The creation of new galleries and improved learning facilities is underway at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. Funding for this large-scale scheme will come from the council's capital programme, and an intended Heritage Lottery bid. An application decision is also pending on a bid to Arts Council England for £750k towards urgent roof repair works. The first part of the scheme, the Leicester Stories Gallery is due to open in May 2022.

[LMAG](#)

Leicester Market

A plan for a comprehensive redevelopment of the current outdoor market will be revealed soon. This will include upgraded lighting and stalls, facilities to attract new permanent traders with a wider range of commodities whilst protecting the traditional fruit and veg heart of the market.

A link between Market Place and Cank Street will be created and a new development scheme will use shipping containers to create a hub of small independent traders.

Relocation of Visit Leicester Information Centre

Following the discovery of the remains of KRIII and the opening of the KRIII Visitor Centre it was decided to relocate the Visit Leicester Information Centre in 2020 from Gallowtree Gate to the foyer area of the King Richard III Visitor Centre. This now places the service in the heart of the city's Old Town in close proximity to the cathedral and showcasing the considerable public and private investment that has transformed the Old Town area.

Deliver new visitor accommodation

The city has experienced unprecedented investment from the private sector in new hotels which include the aparthotel concept for longer stays. The additional rooms will support the establishment of Leicester's first business tourism service for conferences and events and the focus on creating weekend breaks aimed at leisure tourists.

Plans for a new hotel as part of the King Power Expansion project would add a further 220 rooms. There is currently further interest from other hotel developers/operators in the city centre and neighbouring area locations.

The recent opening of the hotels in the city has increased the service accommodation offer by 45 %.

Previous serviced accommodation offer in the city: -

Name	Location	Products
Hotels		
Belmont Hotel	DeMontfort Street	75
Campanile Hotel	St Matthews Way	93
Castle Park Hotel	Millstone Lane	13
Holiday Inn	St Nicholas Circle	188
Hotel Maiyango	St Nicholas Place	14
Holiday In Express	Filbert Way	110
Ibis Hotel	St George's Way	94
Mercure Grand	Granby Street	104
Premier Inn	St George's Way	135
Ramada Encore	Charles St	115
Travel Lodge	Vaughan Way	95
College Court	Knighton	123
Winstanley House	Braunstone Park	19
St Martins Lodge	Peacock Lane	28
Total		1187

New serviced accommodation opened since

Name	Location	No of Rooms
Novotel	Great Central Square	150
Adagio Aparthotel	Great Central Square	100
The Gresham Aparthotel	Market Street	121
Travelodge	Humberstone Gate West	67
Brooklyn Hotel	Tigers – Granby Halls site	191
Total		539

Animating public spaces programme to deliver high quality events

The city centre has seen a substantial step change in the quality and scale of festivals and events. Examples include **Bring The Paint** the award-winning international street art festival returning in May 2022. The festival brings together internationally acclaimed painters to transform the city centre with world-class mural paintings. Supported by Arts Council England, BID Leicester and Leicester City Council among other organisations.

Light Up Leicester The city centre will be lit up with extraordinary illuminated artworks as part of a brand new international festival in early March 2022. Three new pieces have been especially commissioned for Leicester.

Summer in the City Held for the first time in August 2021, this festival's programme included family-friendly activities such as roller skating on Jubilee Square which was just one of the many free events on offer.

Additional new large scale events for 2022 include **The World Reimagined** a ground breaking, national art education project to transform how we understand the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its impact on all of us. **Tour De Moon** celebrates night-life and the tour of the UK starts in Leicester in May 2022. The live and virtual experiences, supporting youth, nightlife creators, scientists and digital creators comprises eight different programming strands.

Programme calendar of events on Green Dragon Square

The multi-functional space is ideal for specialist markets, festivals and other events that drive footfall to help regenerate the market area. The square was officially named Green Dragon Square, a link to an important murder story from Leicester's history, in February 2020 during the visit of HRH The Prince of Wales and HRH The Duchess of Cornwall.

The new square created by the demolition of the indoor market has a projector screen on the back of the Corn Exchange. The inaugural event, **Always and always facing the light** using the new projector was in 2019 to celebrate Leicester's Alice Hawkins and 100 years of Votes for Women. A projection mapping show was staged in the square.

Since then there have been a growing number of successful events including **Pop Up Picnic** and **Dine in the Square** both providing support to hospitality businesses during Covid 19 restrictions. **Santa in the Square** was an important part of the Christmas in Leicester celebrations offering children a free visit with Santa whilst, **BrewBeat** a new real ale music event and **Luminarium** in 2022 were both managed and funded by BID Leicester.

Theme 2: Place

Objective 2 : Developing the place and connectedness

Connecting Leicester continues to be central to the vision of creating and providing a connected, safe and family friendly city centre. There have been a number of significant improvements to enhance the connections between shopping, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities in Leicester for the good of the city.

St Martins

The full pedestrianisation of St Martins between Loseby Lane and Cank Street was introduced in August 2020 using the Government's emergency Covid-19 emergency powers that permitted local councils to close roads at short notice.

The measures were designed to help local restaurants and café to reopen with the option of providing additional pavement seating areas. The businesses were able to apply for a street café licence and outdoor café furniture council grants to help

them offer outdoor seating as a substitute for loss of indoor seating due to social distancing requirements.

European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Reopening High Streets grant paid for some beautification of the area which included floral displays, bunting and planters painted by local artists to bring character to the area. It soon became a popular meeting place and businesses traded particularly well over the summer months.

Dolphin Square and Cank Street Links

The creation of the new Dolphin Square pedestrian link between the Market and Town Hall and upgrades to the roads and footpaths surrounding the market area are now complete. The new link between Market Place and Cank Street in 2022 will further improve the connectivity between the market area and the city centre as noted above

Savoy Street, Haymarket, Belgrave Gate, Clock Tower and Church Gate

Following the opening of Savoy Street which provides a new route for buses serving the north and west of the city, the city centre pedestrian zone has been extended to include Haymarket and a section of Church Gate. The project also includes the provision of a new taxi rank on Belgrave Gate near the Haymarket Theatre steps. The work on Church Gate is due for completion in Spring 2022.

The Belgrave Gate and Mansfield Street link road is part of the North City Centre Accessibility Improvement Programme of linked transport and public realm improvement works. The programme is supported by a £8.96m allocation from the government's Local Growth Fund.

Transforming Cities Fund programme

Leicester City Council is also carrying out an ambitious £71m citywide programme of investment in sustainable transport, backed by £32.5m from the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). The aim is to deliver a transformational programme to support the city's growth and deliver on the council's climate emergency, air quality and healthy living commitments. Match funding is being provided through the city council, Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LEEP), local bus operators and other partners.

Forthcoming TCF projects that are currently being developed include

- Theme 1: City Centre Hubs and links
- Theme 2: Park & Ride Hubs and links
- Theme 3: Green Growth Corridor
- Theme 4: City Connectivity.

[Transforming Cities Fund](#)

Electric Bike Share

The Santander Cycles Leicester was launched in June 2021. The scheme will eventually see 500 electric bikes available to hire from 50 locations across Leicester city centre making it the largest docked e-bike hire scheme in the UK.

The £600k partnership project is being funded by the council's Transforming Cities Fund, sponsorship from Santander UK and investment from the operator, Ride On and their delivery partner Enzen Global.

[Santander Cycles Leicester](#)

Theme 3: Positioning

Objective 3: Developing a strong identity to position Leicester as a desirable destination attracting first-time visitors

Action	Status	Comment
Commission hero photography	Ongoing	Photographic library established with Place Marketing Team
Engage PR company to secure national coverage	Ongoing	Sandstar PR engaged by Place Marketing Team. Successes to date include VisitBritain magazine editorial and a series of journalist visits
New signs, lampposts banners and street name plates	Ongoing	Legible Leicester maps and totem signage. Cultural Quarter banners. Citywide strategy being developed by LCC Marketing and Comms team. New street name plates being installed in Old Town
Package and promote summer and winter festivals	Completed	New Summer in the City Festival introduced in 2021. Diwali, Bonfire, Christmas festivals grouped. This successful approach will be continued.
Old Town brochure	In progress	ERDF Welcome Back funded. Completion Spring 2022
Food and Drink guide	In progress	ERDF Welcome Back funded family of sector guides. Restaurants, cafes, retail, health and beauty, leisure and culture, bars and clubs, hotels. Print and online meeting accessibility requirements. Available Spring 2022
New museum branding and website	Completed	Leicester Museum and Art Gallery
Uncover the Story brand campaign	Ongoing	Campaign for Leicester and Leicestershire launched July 2021. Uncover the Story
BID Leicester Independent campaign	Ongoing	Campaign for independent retail and food and drink businesses in the city centre. Website set up. Independent Leicester

Objective 4: Defining our existing and new target markets to focus the marketing activity to secure first-time visits

Action	Status	Comment
Create awareness of art galleries displaying permanent and temporary exhibitions	Ongoing	Includes Uncover the Story: Art in the city centre. LMAG marketing and temporary exhibitions at Highcross. LCB Depot newsletter promoting creatives
Promote the city's theatres and music venues	Ongoing	'It's Showtime' Christmas campaign funded by the council and BID Leicester. City has been awarded Purple Flag accreditation for night time economy, Marketing planned from 2022 funded by BID Leicester and various grants.
Introduce short-break family packages to secure overnight stays	Ongoing	Place Marketing Team working with Leicestershire Promotions on Stay, Play and Explore packages for the city
Improve the awareness of cycling routes and activities	Ongoing	Cycle training, maps, secure cycle parking, cycling events organised by Leicester City Council cycling team

Objective 5: Ensuring the visitor experience is memorable and encouraging repeat visits

Action	Status	Comment
Provide visitor information and transport hubs	In progress	City centre guide under development. To be made available at the new St Margaret's bus station, Haymarket and railway station. Park and Ride tbc
Promote food and drink experiences e.g. chocolate workshops	In progress	Strategic Tourism Manager providing platform for visitor experiences to increase visitor numbers and engagement
BID Ambassadors engaging with visitors to provide information	Ongoing	BID Ambassador team will be increased from 3 to 4 in 2022
BID Leicester Loyal Free App	Ongoing	Downloads of app continue to increase. Users can access special discounts and city centre trails

Objective 6: Promoting the city as a conference and event destination of choice offering excellent accessibility and value

Action	Status	Comment
Set up of business tourism support service	Completed	Team of two in Place Marketing Team manage Meet Leicester. New website established with over 50 venue members, sales and marketing campaign implemented.

Event bidding for conferences and events	Ongoing	Attendance at trade shows, training for businesses.
Set up a city business tourism forum comprising senior representatives from the hotel and hospitality industry and main venues	Ongoing	Regular member meetings take place to update the membership on current work programme and for feedback
Develop an integrated approach across Leicester and Leicestershire for business tourism event bidding	Ongoing	Free and impartial venue finding service established and promoted for lead generation

Objective 7: Supporting our new accommodation supply by increasing overnight stay

Action	Status	Comment
Create a series of itineraries and trails to encourage visitors to explore the city and stay for longer	In progress	Trails and itineraries being developed to complement the Uncover the Story brand campaign. Itineraries for a half day, full day and weekend break have been created by the Visit Leicester Information Centre team. Launch in Spring 2022 on Visit Leicester website. Heritage interpretation panel trail and printed guide is currently under development.
Collateral to promote the city to encourage visitors to plan, explore and stay for longer	In progress	Family of guides being created including a city tourism guide. See Objective 1 above.

Objective 8 Embracing the increasing role of technology

Action	Status	Comment
Install more on-street heritage panels in the city and historic villages and make use of technology to tell the Story of Leicester	Ongoing	165 panels were installed during the period 2014-2019. 53 new panels have been installed since 2020 with a further 135 planned up to 2023.
Use the data from the BID's city centre footfall counters to inform investment, event planning and funding bids	Ongoing	In 2021 a third counter was installed in Gallowtree Gate. The footfall trend data has been particularly important to track the impact of Covid restrictions on footfall. The data is used to inform highways, festivals and events, city centre operations group and city centre businesses..

Install digital on-street advertising panels to regularly promote events and services	Complete	A new contract with Clear Channel has provided on street digital screens. BT has installed 22 9ft high BT Link digital screens in the city at a cost of £35m. Around 5% of screen time is available free to the council to use.
Use social media and websites to amplify messaging to differentiate Leicester	Ongoing	Visit Leicester, Invest Leicester and Meet Leicester websites are set up to communicate messaging for tourism, investment and business tourism respectively. Christmas in Leicester website has been developed to support the ice rink ticket sales and sponsorship recognition. In addition to organic social media posts through marketing and comms, press desk and Visit Leicester, the introduction of paid social media campaigns for Diwali, Christmas, Valentine’s Day and ERDF Welcome Back has proved to be very successful and extended audience reach.
Establish Visit Leicester What’s On guide as the go-to place to find out what to see and do in Leicester	Ongoing	Visit Leicester information is regularly updated and features the larger events on the home page tiles. A weekly newsletter is sent out to subscribers. Competitions using sponsored prizes have been used effectively to sign web users up to regular contact from Visit Leicester.
Use video, photography, blogs and influencers to increase engagement with social media channels	Ongoing	Social media video content, commissioned photography, newsletters, organic social media posts are led by Visit Leicester. Influencers are engaged with and included in the PR work being carried out to secure positive features on Leicester. Poetry videos have been used effectively as part of the ERDF Welcome Back campaign.
Develop and coordinate content for the projector screen in Green Dragon Square and the wall of Ramada Encore	Ongoing	The projector in Green Dragon Square has been used for projector mapping to celebrate events such as Always and always towards the light, celebrating the 50 th anniversary of landing on the moon. Other uses include cross promoting events, screening Leicester TV adverts and videos and a snowflake game at Christmas. Ramada Encore projections are used mainly for stills and promote festivals and events and cultural activity.

Theme 4: People

Objective 9 ; Fostering pride amongst our residents to act as civic ambassadors

Objective 10 : Develop skills, networking, support and engagement from tourism businesses

Progress with this theme has been more mixed. Good work has been done throughout the pandemic to provide information support and business advice to businesses. This has included webinars, advice, support and assistance to help businesses pivot and develop new online offers. Considerable grant support has been made available from central government administered through the council and specific initiatives have been introduced to assist hospitality e.g outdoor seating grants and bespoke marketing campaigns have encourage consumers back when that has been possible.

Progress with the skills specific element of the theme has been more problematic. Partly that is also due to the pandemic and the restrictions put in place over the last 2 years. However, it is also partly because resource to support the work is harder to identify and since there are fewer obvious 'lead' organisations to champion and lead initiatives. This also reflects the challenge of progressing the 'skills' agenda across all economic sectors and as such is not something specific to tourism.

It is clear now there is a national, as well as local skills shortage and recruitment challenge facing the tourism & hospitality sector for catering, housekeeping and front of house staff amongst others.

Short term – Sector Based Work Academy

To help address this in the short term we are working with DWP to explore the feasibility of setting up a sector-based skills academy (SBWAs). SBWAs offer jobseekers across England and Scotland, who are interested in the sector and taking up employment in it, a training programme lasting between 1-6 weeks. The training is intended to give people the confidence to work in a new sector as they learn new skills, gain hands-on work experience and build contacts in a new line of work. SBWAs provide pre-employment training, relevant work experience and the chance to 'meet the employer' to have a more practical understanding of the job role and a guaranteed interview with a specific employer.

There are successful precedents in other sectors, for example Care where 81% of those completing SBWAs are still in employment 12 months later.

A bespoke Hospitality/Tourism SBWA webinar is taking place on Wednesday 2nd March 2022. The theme for this year's English Tourism Week which runs from 18-27 March is 'Skills and Tourism Careers'.

Longer Term - Careers Hub

The LLEP Careers Hub¹ works with schools and colleges across Leicester and Leicestershire. It leads a community of best practice around careers education and raising the career aspirations of young people to help them take their next best steps.

A key area of the Hub strategy is to highlight the importance of careers in local industry sectors including tourism and hospitality. The Hub has funded and developed the 'World of Work'² which includes specific Leicester and Leicestershire travel and tourism resources. The resources are available to all local schools and colleges include a labour market guide, sector videos and resources all localised for teachers to easily embed into the curriculum or careers events.

The Careers Hub has several senior business volunteers (Enterprise Advisers) each working with a school or college on their career strategies helping them consider local opportunities in the sector.

Through recent engagement with the Tourism Advisory Board and Leicester College (who are part of the Careers Hub) a set of options are being proposed to further support sector engagement and visibility with young people.

Areas for collaboration include CPD for teaching staff to gain industry insights, an 'Open Doors' project to create meaningful³ and multiple encounters for young people in the workplace and engaging existing apprentices in the sector to join the East Midlands Apprenticeship Ambassador Network and inspire young people with their own career journey.

Next Steps – Building Local Capacity

Results of research conducted by [GlobalData](#) in August 2021 suggests that people's desire to reconnect, in person, with family and friends (VFR) will be a major driving force in the global travel industry's recovery. It is expected that the same desire will be seen within the UK with family and friends arranging to meet up to reconnect with each other after nearly two years of Covid restrictions. The role and significance of 'locals' to stimulate and support visits will therefore grow.

The Tourism Action Plan acknowledged the strength and potential of this market before the pandemic. An effective plan of action to capture this market will require additional resource and budget. One possibility is the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which government is introducing to replace European Union structural funds. The pre application guidance suggests a much greater focus on local pride, sense of place and the visitor economy than is the case with the ESF / ERDF regimes. The new UKSPF will be administered through the city council. Specific ideas that could address and support this work are noted below.

¹ Careers Hubs convene and support school and college Careers Leaders providing opportunities to collaborate and innovate together to create a world-class careers education system. Careers Hubs lead partnerships of schools, colleges, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local authorities, businesses, and careers providers, to help young people connect closely to local skills and economic needs through a responsive careers education programme.

² www.llep.org.uk/wow

³ A young person who has four or more meaningful encounters with an employer is 86% less likely to be unemployed or not in education or training and can earn up to 22% more during their career.

- Identify and engage residents to become tourism ambassadors for the city
- Organise familiarisation visits to city tourism attractions and venues for the ambassadors
- Develop a 'Leicester Knowledge' certificate to be awarded to the ambassadors in the first instance. It is hoped that local businesses will want to support this initiative through staff training.
- Develop a 'Live like a local' itinerary where visitors can discover the city's hidden gems that only locals know about.