
To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board 3

Date: 22nd October 2025

Subject: Destination Coventry

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To update Members of the Board on progress in establishing Destination Coventry as a sustainable Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the city, since the last report of 17th April 2024.
- 1.2 In response to this item the Board requested a further report including a performance update reflecting a change to a commercial model of operation, that adds value to the local authority contribution to sustain operations.
- 1.3 To review and update on activity undertaken by the DMO to promote Coventry as a destination for business and leisure tourism, in support of the newly emerging Coventry Tourism Action Plan 2025-2030.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) is recommended:
 - 1) To note the contents of the report, the appendices and a short presentation will be provided on the day.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 The Scrutiny Board 3 April 2024 report considered progress in establishing Destination Coventry as a financially sustainable Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the city. In response to this item the Board requested a further report including a performance update reflecting a change to a commercial model of operation
- 3.2 The progress outlined how Destination Coventry had performed in its pilot status as Destination Management Organisation (DMO) for the city as a collaboration between Coventry City Council and Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce,
- 3.3 A DMO is the umbrella term for arrangements established in a place to support co-ordination and collaboration across the tourism sector's many stakeholders.
- 3.4 Destination Coventry was established in August 2021 and officially launched in December 2021. Based on recognition of the success of the pilot DMO and the potential to develop a longer-term, sustainable DMO model, on 12 March 2024 the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change approved an

extension to 31 March 2025 of the Destination Coventry hosting arrangement with the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, in order to facilitate detailed exploration with the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce for a permanent public/private funded destination management operating model for the city

- 3.5 From April 2024 Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce undertook to move from this proof-of-concept model to and a revised formal collaboration agreement of a public and private sector funded entity to promote Coventry as a destination of distinction for both leisure and business tourism was adopted. The Coventry City council contribution for this work is £324,773.
- 3.6 This report outlines the progress to date on the new commercial model, effective from November 2024, an update on the of operation of its activity since the appointment of a new Managing director in July 2024 and the launch of a new set of assets and ways of working.
- 3.7 Destination Coventry applies the following principles that were established for the model from the outset:
 - Lead in the management, development and promotion of Coventry's leisure and business tourism (*Brochures at Appendix 1 and 2*)
 - Continue to operate the Coventry & Warwickshire Convention Bureau
 - Assume responsibility for the provision of visitor information in the city
 - Provide opportunities for the private sector to engage in a regular tourism dialogue
 - Coordinate delivery of Strategy, with stakeholders contributing to Strategy reviews and future iterations
 - Not rely solely on Council funding – but will enable the private sector to contribute financially to the DMO's destination marketing activities, with the aim of amplifying growth of the city's visitor economy
 - Deliver activities to include the development of income streams to ensure sustained financial viability
- 3.8 The following outlines governance, strategy and delivery outputs for Destination Coventry 2024/ 2025 based on the above principles.

4 Governance

- 4.1 From July 2024 to April 2025, Destination Coventry underwent a period of transition and a change programme that saw the staffing and structure change, resulting in the existing team members finding new routes of employment. A new Managing Director, Paul McMahon joined the organisation and subsequently, he heads up a new team of 2 in a revised structure that is implementing a new commercial model and delivering new ways of working. Some services for work are supplied by external sources to ensure that Destination Coventry's media and visitor profile remains high. During this change period, the management and operations of Destination Coventry continued to be overseen by an Oversight Board, established in the pilot phase, chaired by the Managing Director of Coventry Building Society Arena.

- 4.2 In September 2025, Destination Coventry welcomed its new board with Paul Michae remaining as chair and held its first meeting, marking a renewed focus and a broader depth of expertise to strengthen the impact on the visitor economy. The announcement was covered in industry publications, including:
<https://www.conference-news.co.uk/news/coventry-appoints-private-sector-led-tourism-board-to-boost-visitor-economy/>
- 4.3 A full list of the board is available in *Appendix 3*.
- 4.4 Governance and standards for the directors on the board is outlined in a handbook and articles set out by the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, applying the usual Nolan principles and corporate governance procedures that all directors have signed and submitted.

5 Strategy and Delivery

- 5.1 Destination Coventry successfully delivered its re-launch event in July 2025, attracting over 200 attendees. The event generated an overwhelmingly positive response and effectively positioned both consumer brands, Visit Coventry and the Coventry & Warwickshire Convention Bureau.
- 5.2 Key objectives were achieved, including reinforcing brand recognition, elevating Destination Coventry's profile within the region, as well with the CCC leadership board, supporting the sales process, and showcasing the organisation as a modern, fit-for-purpose destination management body.

Video of event: [DC Relaunch 1.mp4](#)

New Websites: www.visitcoventry.co.uk/meetcoventryandwarwickshire

www.visitcoventry.co.uk

[Coventry & Warwickshire Business Bureau](#)

[Visit Coventry](#)

- 5.3 Following the re-launch, Destination Coventry has delivered a successful sales programme, keeping performance on track against Profit & Loss targets. This work remains resource intensive, particularly in partner engagement and follow-up, so activity continues to be carefully prioritised. Sales efforts are concentrated on the business market, where the average transaction value remains around £1,000. By contrast, the leisure market delivers an average transaction value of £224 and requires even greater resources to manage a higher number of partners. Current forecasts show the P&L on course to achieve a break-even point for the service. Actual income secured to date since the recruitment of a new Managing Director, totals £70k. Working on the run rates and if all prospective leads converted, with a 70% retention rate, by year end 25/26 this would total £78k. Further new sales in 26/27 are expected with the development of the base of the team.
- 5.4 The launch of the Coventry & Warwickshire Convention Bureau is progressing in collaboration with West Midlands Growth Company. Work is underway to gather technical data from both partners and non-partners across the region, a process expected to continue over the coming months to ensure comprehensive representation. The resulting document, the *Coventry & Warwickshire Event*

Planner Guide', is scheduled for publication in November 2025. The Event Planner Guide initial design has been completed as follows:



5.5 The leisure visitor guide will follow once this project is complete.

5.6 Below are selected key priorities outlined in the collaboration agreement for this financial year that aim to create the stability required for long term effective delivery of DC's aims and objectives:

- Oversee the creation of a **Tourism Action Plan and Strategy 2025- 30 by March 2026**. This will outline medium term ambitions and measurable outcomes. We will align any immediate objective-setting with the emerging vision of this plan, and it will be aligned with the emerging nighttime and events strategy for Coventry, currently in development. *Appendix 4*. This work has been commissioned, and the views of this board will be sought from the consultants.
- Develop a **city-wide readiness plan for large bids**, enabling us to respond quickly and effectively when opportunities arise. This will also involve the identification of sports and major events we can target.
- **Finalise digital assets** for both leisure and business markets, alongside the build and launch of the new Destination Coventry Partnership website.
- **Expand the commercial model** across Coventry and Warwickshire to ensure long-term financial stability. This includes maintaining a break-even budget this year to build confidence with our host partner and secure ongoing support into 2026/2027. A short overview of the approach and digital visibility, being driven locally, nationally and internationally can be found here: [Destination Coventry - Explore our new 'Partnership Packages'](#)
- **Create an Event Planner Guide** for the Convention Bureau to increase our competitiveness against larger cities.
- **Establish a Hotel and Venue Network** to foster greater cohesion and serve as a vehicle to explore and to look at options for an Accommodation bid.¹
- **Produce a comprehensive Visitor Guide** aimed at extending visitor stays and enhancing the city's appeal. This guide will serve as a key resource for showcasing Coventry's attractions.
- **Drive improvements in Search Engine Optimisation performance**. Our current average ranking across all keywords is 13, with 800,000 monthly impressions but

¹ On 21 October 2025, Destination Coventry will launch its inaugural **Hotel & Accommodation Association**, chaired by Michael Lyons, Cluster General Manager at Hotel Indigo. This association will foster closer collaboration within the hospitality sector, supporting improved communication, productivity, and occupancy strategies. It will also raise the profile of Destination Coventry and, in time, provide a forum to explore the Tourism Levy, part of a long-term strategy to secure sustainable funding alongside local authority support and commercialisation.

a low click-through rate of 0.7%. Our goal is to improve rankings to increase CTR, reach, and ultimately visitor numbers.

- **Design a city-wide marketing strategy** for Pride and other LGBTQ+ events to strengthen their impact and economic benefit.
- **Increase promotion of local artists**, incorporating more local cultural content into our campaigns and digital assets.
- **Develop a trade show strategy** for 2026/2027, with defined objectives and measurable outcomes.
- **Implement a CRM system** to improve internal organisational management.

5.7 Sector performance analysis is provided through the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM). STEAM is a tourism economic impact model which measures how many visitors have come to Coventry. The table below shows the upwards trend since 2018 and data for 2023 is noted separately.

Table 1 – Coventry STEAM Data

Measure	YEAR 2018	YEAR 2019	YEAR 2020	YEAR 2021	YEAR 2022
Tourism Economic Impact Value (£M)	£568.30	£594.36	£230.88	£495.29	£750.86
Overall Visitors	7,974,000	10,030,000	4,028,000	8,197,000	11,050,000
Overnight Visits	8%	12%	11%	11%	12%
Day Visitor Spend	£27.77	£38.84	£39.04	£40.46	£46.18
Overnight Visitor Spend	£119.42	£203.95	£209.58	£220.56	£224.74
Jobs - Direct	5,108	5,275	2,176	4,201	5,693
Jobs - Total	6,575	6,760	2,754	5,367	7,534

5.8 Coventry's latest visitor data for 2023 (*awaiting 2024 and maybe available at the meeting*) shows a positive and steady picture but we cannot be complacent as this is a very competitive market and sector.

- Visitor numbers in 2023 rose by more than **1m, from 10.03m in 2019 to 11.39m in 2023.**
- Coventry's visitor economy was worth **£855m in 2023, up 44% (or £261m) compared with 2019, and up by over £100M from 2022.**
- Number of full-time equivalent jobs supported by the sector was **up by 17%, from 6,760 to 7,911 in 2023.**

6 Health Inequalities Impact

6.1 The establishment of Destination Coventry as a proof-of-concept model for a new DMO was anticipated to increase resources for tourism promotion and destination management, thereby creating opportunities to improve service delivery, invest in the City's visitor offer and strengthen the business and leisure tourism economy within the city and its surroundings.

6.2 Destination Coventry has successfully secured £70k of private sector investment in this financial year to support tourism promotion and destination management. Whilst

it should be noted that the new commercial model is still in its relative infancy and the development of a longer-term sustainable model is required, the projected success of the DMO and Partnership LVEP model will contribute to sustaining and increasing employment in the tourism and hospitality sectors, creating positive opportunities for local people. This will further promote Coventry as a visitor destination and focus for investment, promoting opportunities for sustainable and inclusive growth in the city, thereby contributing to positive health outcomes for residents.

Appendix 1: Business Destination

Appendix 2: Leisure Destination

Appendix 3: Full list of Board Members

Appendix 4: Proposed alignment of strategies

Paula Deas, Strategic Lead for Business Engagement, Coventry City Council

Paula.deas@coventry.gov.uk

Paul McMahon, Managing Director, Destination Coventry.

PaulmcMahon@destinationcoventry.co.uk