



Visitor Economy Internationalisation Action Plan 2022 - 2025

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Introduction

Lancashire has the opportunity to leverage existing visitor programmes to drive international business and leisure visitors.

Total visits from overseas to Lancashire has consistently remained between 250,000 to 330,000 per year for the past 5 years. This accounts for approximately 0.6% of all overseas trips to the UK. However, the proportion of total nights stayed is nearer 1%. This indicates visitors to Lancashire are more likely to stay longer than other UK destinations.

Compared to the rest of the North of England, Lancashire is consistently middle of the pack for attracting international visits. Across total visits, nights and spend by international visitors between 2015-2019, Lancashire has a consistent 6% share of the total North of England market. Greater Manchester has – by some distance – the largest number of visits and highest spend. Leveraging proximity to Manchester and converting some of these visits into visits that also go to Lancashire will have a positive impact on the county's visitor economy.

Lancashire has a broad range of assets covering both leisure and business tourism. The county's diaspora and international student population also represent a significant opportunity in relation to visiting friends and family. There are also links to be drawn between the visitor economy and other Pillars. Capital investment is an obvious one, increasing investment in the business visitor economy will also help to combat the seasonality of Lancashire's current visitor offer.

Lancashire's Strategic Objective re the Visitor Economy



Promote the Lancashire brand internationally to attract investment, business visitors and increase visitor spend in the county, celebrating the strong quality of life offer. Exploit the new conference centre in Blackpool to host international events centred around our strengths in the North West Cyber Corridor, Net Zero technologies and defence.



Lancashire's Visitor Economy Ambition



To attract an additional 6.3 million visits of which an increased proportion come from international visitors (from 0.05% to 1%)



To attract a greater share of international visitors to the North into Lancashire (from 6% to 15%)



Increase business visits to Lancashire by 15%



Drive an additional £650m of visitor spend and create an extra 5,000 jobs in the visitor economy

Visitor Economy Priority Markets

SHORT HAUL



Nordics



Germany

Short Haul Markets



Existing work has already been done in the Nordics market to target visitors for outdoor holidays as well as encouraging extension of visits to Manchester and Liverpool.



There is potential to undertake similar work in the German market, targeting visitors for outdoor holidays as well as extension of visits to Manchester and Liverpool.

LONG HAUL



USA



INDIA



CHINA

Long Haul Markets



The USA is a large outbound visitor market and also the largest source market for visitors to Lancashire. Building on existing work around England's Historic Cities as well as direct travel links between the USA and Manchester Airport are options to increase tourism from the US.



As well as being a target for family and friends due to Lancashire's large Indian diaspora, an increasingly wealthy middle-class in India are exploring international travel more.



China is the largest market for outbound visitors, and these visitors are now starting to explore further beyond the organised tour trips. One nuance will be how to effectively market Lancashire to the Chinese market using Chinese social media platforms. A more long-term prospect given the resource and effort required to tailor to the Chinese market.

Lancashire's Visitor Economy Action Plan

This Action Plan is underpinned by three key themes that cut across the wider Internationalisation Strategy, as well as other work being undertaken as part of the Greater Lancashire Plan. Importance on the international stage requires particular attention and should be considered throughout each workstream outlined in this plan.

Sustainability

Sustainability is becoming increasingly important as economic development agencies create strategies and companies shift their focus to new types of activity to reduce environmental impact. From an internationalisation perspective there was a feeling that more needs to be done to promote the county. Many of the excellent energy innovation assets in Lancashire were not as well-known as they should be, and more work was needed to establish collaborative partnerships internationally. Green trade presents major opportunities for the UK economy: driving sustainable growth, building the green industrial base, and securing more green jobs. Sustainable tourism is also a key consideration as visitors seek greener travel options.

Digitisation

In a post-pandemic world, there will be a greater emphasis on digital technology in the world of the visitor economy. Not only will businesses need to become more accustomed to using technology as part of their day-to-day operations, but they will also need to familiarise themselves with exploring international opportunities. An ambitious target for Lancashire, would be the creation of a digital platform which could be used across all the workstreams. This platform will allow for a substantial reach across stakeholders in the county and would streamline one-to-many activities to help with resourcing constraints.

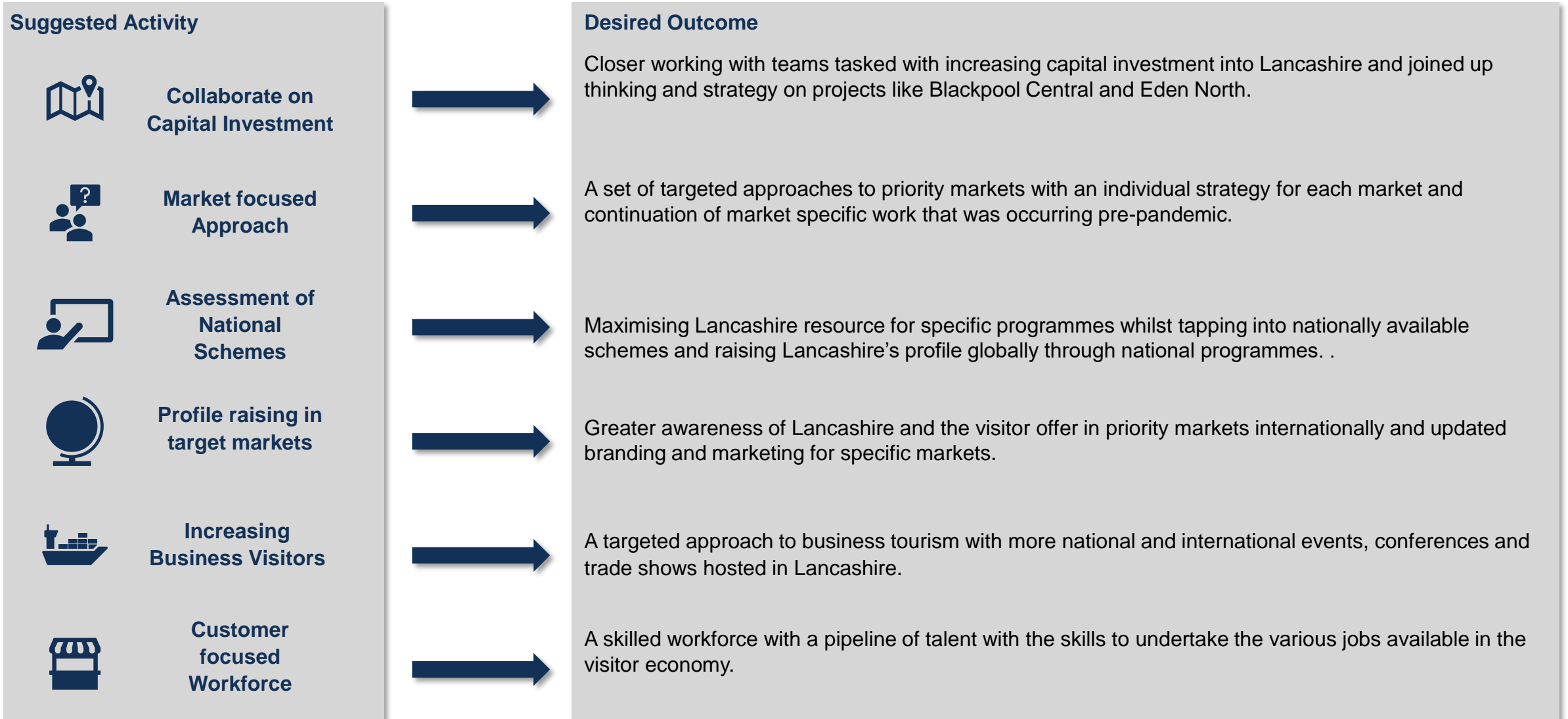
Lancashire could digitise low value-add services, providing basic information on exporting, frequently asked questions, e-learning and key sector and market opportunities for businesses in the Visitor Economy to help reach international visitors. This will allow support to focus on higher value-add activities, ensuring that resources are used most effectively to ensure the highest return on investment.

Branding and Promotion

Throughout this strategy, there emerged a need for a more coordinated approach to selling Lancashire. Marketing Lancashire has already produced a cohesive brand, however, more needs to be done to sell this to an international audience. The county's identity can be promoted at events, through targeted activities and with a greater online presence in international markets.

Working with trade, investment, and innovation teams will help to spread the message and drive adoption of the cohesive brand identity that can be used to holistically sell Lancashire in key markets. Working closely with the already outward-facing organisations in the county, such as universities, will be a strong enabler for this work.

This Visitor Economy Action Plan sets out 6 suggested activities to enable the achievement of Lancashire's visitor economy internationalisation objectives. These enablers and activities can be implemented by stakeholders across the county and aim at fostering greater cooperation and collaboration between the broad range of supporting organisations.



Collaborate on capital investment

Description

- There is a strong and consistent link between the visitor economy and investment. Whether that is through international hotel chains or foreign investment in key tourism assets.
- Capital investment in particular can be attracted to grow the visitor economy. Worldwide, regeneration projects have driven economic growth and revitalised previously struggling areas.
- Increasing investment in the business visitor economy will also help to combat the seasonality of Lancashire's current visitor offer. As will investment in inter-county transportation links and infrastructure

Desired Outcomes

Closer working with teams tasked with increasing capital investment into Lancashire.

Joined up thinking and strategy on projects like Blackpool Central and Eden North.

Existing Activity		
Raising profile	Articulating key strengths	Key projects
<p>Pre-pandemic, Lancashire had been building momentum and generating profile for the county at some key national and international events.</p> <p>Proposals for FY22/23 (under consideration, but not yet approved or funded), include:</p> <p>UKREiiF // Leeds // May 2022 Fine Food Festival // Harrogate // June 2022 Festival of Place // London // July 2022 EXPO REAL // Munich // October 2022 BBC Good Food // Birmingham // Nov 2022 MIPIM // Cannes // March 2023</p> <p>In addition, we have launched the #InLancashire campaign designed to work across sectors to showcase the strengths of the county.</p>	<p>The 'We Are Lancashire' narrative remains broadly current and is still the primary driver of content and messaging for platforms such as the Invest in Lancashire website.</p> <p>The messaging should be frequently reviewed and refreshed, linking with initiatives such as the AEM watchtower and informed by research such as the EY attractiveness survey.</p>	<p>Eden North Blackpool Central Showtown Linear Park / Super Slow Way British Textile Biennial National Festival of Making Harris Quarter</p>

Workstream 1- Collaborate on Capital Investment



Activities are plotted against a three year timeline to help with prioritisation. Although the strategic outcomes are targeting a 10-Year strategy, activities will need to be reviewed and refreshed throughout to ensure relevance and keep material up to date.

Months	0-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36
Activities	Collaborate on Capital Investment		Collaborate on Capital Investment		Collaborate on Capital Investment	

Collaborate on Capital Investment

Description	Support for international trade missions and events to ensure consistent, high quality Lancashire representation		
Ease of implementation	Should be simple if information is shared		
Proposed approach and activities	<p>This work will involve the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a working group with regular meetings in place in order to share information on upcoming activity Lancashire could/should be involved with; • Generate consistent, high quality content to support missions and showcase Lancashire; • Identify opportunities for increased international profile with an agreed formula for calculating the return on investment. 		
Resourcing and Budgetary Considerations	Number of FTE required 2.5	Number of months required 36	Total Cost of Workstream £300,000

Market Focused Approach

Description

- Specific activities for each market as visitors from individual countries are distinct and respond to different approaches.
- Adopting specific approaches to social media campaigns and tailoring promotional activity to target various visitor types from individual markets.
- This could include using different social media platforms, coaching individual businesses on approach for new markets and translation into native languages.

Desired Outcomes

A set of targeted approaches to priority markets with an individual strategy for each market.

Continuation of market specific work that was occurring pre-pandemic.

Existing Activity		
Nordics	US	India/China
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover More than Just a Holiday groundwork completed in FY19/20 • Budget available to re-visit the region and rebuild relationships • Current itineraries in partnership with Cheshire, Manchester and Yorkshire – potential to refresh and extend or to re-focus on Lancashire https://www.visitlancashire.com/discovermore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lancaster involved in England Originals project, re-focusing on a US millennial audience. • ML delivering social media content and support on behalf of the heritage cities involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Workstream 2 - Market Focused Approach



Activities are plotted against a three year timeline to help with prioritisation. Although the strategic outcomes are targeting a 10-Year strategy, activities will need to be reviewed and refreshed throughout to ensure relevance and keep material up to date.

Months	0-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36
Activities	Market Focused Approach		Market Focused Approach		Market Focused Approach	
		Gate Review		Gate Review		

Market Focused Approach

Description	Extension of #InLancashire campaign to target the Nordics and Germany, building on 'Discover More' (0-12 months), plus development of a US focused campaign to cover assets beyond Lancaster (12-36 months).					
Ease of implementation	Content exists, but funding required to target new markets and for travel trade activity					
Proposed approach and activities	<p>This work will involve the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product bookability and itinerary development • Travel trade engagement • International campaign activity • Engagement with international students 					
Resourcing and Budgetary Considerations	Number of FTE required 1.5	Number of months required 36 months		Total Cost of Workstream £50,000		

Assessment of National Schemes

Description

- Lancashire is already engaged with many national schemes around international visitor attraction, such as England's Historic Cities.
- Depending on resourcing constraints, a further assessment could be undertaken to find other national schemes and programmes that may be beneficial for driving international visits into the county.
- Programmes that are focused on Lancashire's priority markets or key assets would be most beneficial.

Desired Outcomes

Maximising Lancashire resource for specific programmes whilst tapping into nationally available schemes.

Raising Lancashire's profile globally through national programmes.

Existing Activity		
England Originals	England's Coast	Another Side of Britain
Lancaster part of DEF funded campaign targeted at the US; Funding ceased but social media activity ongoing;	Lancashire's coast featured in DEF funded campaign, seeking to celebrate 'Year of the Coast' in 2023.	VisitBritain led international campaign which we feed Lancashire content into (primarily focused on 'unboxed' and the Commonwealth Games for 2022 so limited engagement opportunities).

Workstream 3 - Assessment of National Schemes



Activities are plotted against a three year timeline to help with prioritisation. Although the strategic outcomes are targeting a 10-Year strategy, activities will need to be reviewed and refreshed throughout to ensure relevance and keep material up to date.

Months	0-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36
Activities	Assessment of National Schemes		Assessment of National Schemes		Assessment of National Schemes	
		Gate Review		Gate Review		

Description	Review potential for Lancashire to become involved in Manchester Gateway campaign // Explore opportunities to engage with national campaigns beyond 2022		
Ease of implementation	Relationships exist and easy to activate if funds are available		
Proposed approach and activities	<p>This work will involve the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement in Manchester Gateway campaign would allow Lancashire content to be featured in European, US, India and China focused campaign activity – participation in international missions will be key, with potential for Lancashire tourism and hospitality businesses to lead as ambassadors. • VB international campaigns not yet confirmed for 2023 and beyond so opportunities will need to be assessed once more detail is known. 		
Resourcing and Budgetary Considerations	Number of FTE required 1	Number of months required 36 months	Total Cost of Workstream £100,000

Profile Raising in Target Markets

Description

- One of the key pieces of feedback from stakeholder consultations is a lack of awareness of Lancashire in international markets.
- Lancashire already has a distinct brand and offer set out across social media platforms and marketing material. It is simply a case of taking this to market.
- Collaborating with other pillars on market-focused activity will help to share resource and efforts when it comes to raising Lancashire's profile abroad.

Desired Outcomes

Greater awareness of Lancashire and the visitor offer in priority markets internationally.

Updated branding and marketing for specific markets.

Existing Activity

Links back to workstreams 1-3
Currently reviewing and revising the Invest in Lancashire website to support this objective

Increasing Business Visitors

Description

- Further links can be seen to capital investment. With international visitors often wanting familiar hotel chains to stay in, attracting investment from major hotel chains from across the world can help set the infrastructure to attract more business tourism.
- Increasing investment in the business visitor economy will also help to combat the seasonality of Lancashire's current visitor offer, as will investment in inter-county transportation links and infrastructure.

Desired Outcomes

A targeted approach to business tourism with more national and international events, conferences and trade shows hosted in Lancashire.

Existing Activity		
National	Regional	Local
<p>Marketing Lancashire has developed a 'Meet in Lancashire' website to showcase the county's event venues; Campaign set to support the launch of the website stalled due to covid; Individual destinations within the county do a lot to promote event venues, but primarily with a focus on weddings; Blackpool presents a significant opportunity with the redeveloped Winter Gardens.</p>	<p>Links being explored with neighbouring convention centres (i.e. Manchester Central) to provide both fringe event options and itineraries for extender stays, but more could be done.</p>	<p>Venues work independently and/or as part of their groups to attract and deliver local events.</p>

Workstream 5 - Increasing Business Visitors



Activities are plotted against a three year timeline to help with prioritisation. Although the strategic outcomes are targeting a 10-Year strategy, activities will need to be reviewed and refreshed throughout to ensure relevance and keep material up to date.

Months	0-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36
Activities	Increasing Business Visitors					

Description	Development of a 'convention bureau' style alliance to attract international conferences and events into Lancashire					
Ease of implementation	Requires stakeholder engagement and support and a long-term commitment to deliver results					
Proposed approach and activities	<p>This work will involve the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and agreeing the specific topics/specialisms where Lancashire has unique strengths, plus individuals able to act as ambassadors/champions for the county (especially within universities); • Development of a 'hit-list' of international events which can be proactively targeted; • Engagement with MICE buyers and contacts via events such as Explore GB; • Development of bespoke collateral/presentations, including ambassador profiles, to pitch to conference organisers; • Support for FAM visits and development of itineraries for conference attendees. 					
Resourcing and Budgetary Considerations	Number of FTE required 1.5	Number of months required 42	Total Cost of Workstream £120,000			

A Customer Focused Workforce

Description

- Work with the Lancashire Skills & Employment Hub in partnership to undertake recruitment campaigns and Sector Based Work Academies to attract people to the sector. Provide sector-based training to improve customer experiences.
- Work with the Lancashire Careers Hub in partnership with business to showcase the range of job opportunities in the sector to encourage young people to progress to the sector either through technical or academic routes.

Desired Outcomes

A skilled workforce with a pipeline of talent with the skills to undertake the various jobs available in the visitor economy

Existing Activity		
National	Regional	Local
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKAccess to national programmes of activity via the Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub which are driven locally to support LEP Growth Pillars including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DWP programmes ○ ESF funded programmes with opt-in agencies ○ Careers and Enterprise Company funds from the DfE for the Careers Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership working with DWP district team to drive Sector Based Work Academies in the local area, and for employers to access the Kickstart scheme (Kickstart now ended) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinated recruitment campaigns undertaken with Marketing Lancashire, DWP and providers of employment support to attract unemployed Lancashire residents to the sector and to undertake Sector Based Work Academies to upskill potential applicants prior to interview • Engagement of Visitor Economy employers in skills programmes, such as the ESF programme 'Skills Support for the Workforce' to support reskilling and upskilling in the workplace (ESF funds cease in 2023) • Engagement of Visitor Economy employers in digital skills provision • Promotion of the Visitor Economy via the Careers Hub to young people in schools and colleges, showcased on the Start in Lancashire digital platform as a Growth Pillar, and employers engaged to deliver employer encounters and experiences.- increase in employer engagement would support further raising of the profile

Workstream 6 - A Customer Focused Workforce



Activities are plotted against a three year timeline to help with prioritisation. Although the strategic outcomes are targeting a 10-Year strategy, activities will need to be reviewed and refreshed throughout to ensure relevance and keep material up to date.

Months	0-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36	
Activities	A Customer Focused Workforce	A Customer Focused Workforce			A Customer Focused Workforce		

Description	Development of a skills and employment action plan with the Tourism, Culture and Place Sector Group					
Ease of implementation	Requires engagement of employers in the Sector Group and their and the wider sector's commitment to engaging in skills and employment programmes					
Proposed approach and activities	An initial workshop has been held with the Tourism, Culture and Place Sector Group to discuss priorities regarding skills and employment – these will be mapped to existing initiatives, as detailed in the table above, and any gaps identified. This will support the development of an action plan. Funds may be required to address gaps – especially as ESF funds cease.					
Resourcing and Budgetary Considerations	Number of FTE required	Number of months required		Total Cost of Workstream		
		12		£TBC		

Workstream Activities 2022 - 2025



Activities are plotted against a three year timeline to help with prioritisation. Although the strategic outcomes are targeting a 10-Year strategy, activities will need to be reviewed and refreshed throughout to ensure relevance and keep material up to date.

Months	0-6	6-12	12-18	18-24	24-30	30-36
Activities	Collaborate on Capital Investment					
	Market Focused Approach					
	Assessment of National Schemes					
	Identify Target Markets	Profile Raising in Target Markets				
		Increasing Business Visitors				
	A Customer Focused Workforce					
				Review progress		

Summary

Summary of Implementation of Action Plan 2022 - 2025

Workstream	Resource	Cost	Outcomes
1. Collaborate on Capital Investments	2.5	£300,000	Generate consistent, high quality content to support missions and showcase Lancashire; Identify opportunities for increased international profile
2. Market Focused Approach	1.5	£50,000	Product bookability and itinerary development Travel trade engagement International campaign activity Engagement with international students
3. Assessment of National Schemes	1	£100,000	Involvement in Manchester Gateway Assess VB international campaigns when details known
4. Profile Raising in Target Markets	0	0	Reviewing and revising the Invest in Lancashire website to support this objective
5. Increasing Business Visitors	1.5	£120,000	Identify Lancashire's unique strengths along with individuals to act as ambassadors/champions for the county Development of a 'hit-list' of international events Engagement with MICE buyers and contacts Development of bespoke collateral/presentations Support for FAM visits and development of itineraries for conference attendees
6. A Customer Focused Workforce	TBC	TBC	Coordinated recruitment campaigns undertaken to attract unemployed Lancashire residents to the sector with specialist training provided Engagement of Visitor Economy employers in skills programmes and digital skills provision
Total	6.5 FTE	£570,000	

The resource identified in the table above is additional resource to take the work done within Marketing Lancashire to the international community.