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Date: 24.3.2016

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Dear Tourism Partner

**RE: Leicester & Leicestershire Tourism Support Services Review 2016**

I am contacting you in my capacity of Chairman of Melton Promotions in relation to the recent consultation information about the proposed changes in the delivery of **Tourism Support Services** in Leicestershire.

Currently we are supported on a local level by Melton Borough Council, who provide us with a budget to deliver the actions identified within the Melton Tourism Blueprint 2015–18, and Internationally & Nationally through the Destination Management Organisation (DMO), LeicesterShire Promotions (LPL).

Tourism plays a vital role in the Melton economy and is said to be worth over £80 million delivering 1.5 million visitors a year. We are a role model for food tourism hence the successful branding of the Rural Capital of Food. All this has been achieved because of the leadership, support and expertise of LPL.

By working with LPL, Melton has been able to develop the Gourmet Taste short break offer, creating a unique selling point for the area which is appealing to both leisure visitors and the group market. LPL have been able to generate significant business to the area and raise the profile of the Melton.

LPL's contract with Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council is due to expire in June 2016. LPL currently delivers the Tourism Support Service for the City, the County and the Districts.

I have been asked by Leicestershire County Council to seek your views on the proposals as valued stakeholders in the Tourism Industry through the completion on an online survey. The review proposes quite radical changes to the current delivery of tourism support services which is currently delivered through LeicesterShire Promotions.

### Proposed Options:

1. Reformed public private partnership – an independent not-for-profit company similar to LPL but with a broader remit and greater involvement in policy development
2. A Destination Management Organisation (DMO) within the Local Authority (Leicester City / County)
3. A LA controlled company – similar in function to 2 above but established as a company owned by the City & County Councils.

### It is proposed that:

- The strategic governance of tourism should be led by the Leicester & Leicestershire Combined Authority and that a Tourism Advisory Board be established to provide business insight and guidance from the tourism sector to the Combined Authority
- The strategic management of tourism should be managed by one or both of the lead authorities (Leicester City & Leicestershire County Council) on behalf of the combined Authority
- The delivery of tourism Support Services, including tactical marketing and campaigns should be via a combination of the lead local authorities' staff and commission services; City and county council officers will explore the option of establishing a trading organisation which could undertake commercial or bidding activity.

Melton Promotions feel that the option to keep and enhance the current relationship with LPL should be included in the consultation process.

The current consultation on Tourism Support Services follows the recent review undertaken by Blue Sail consultants. The details of the consultation can be accessed through the link below and we urge you to read the report **BEFORE** completing the online survey.

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-consultations/tourism-support-services-for-leicester-and-leicestershire](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-consultations/tourism-support-services-for-leicester-and-leicestershire)

We have attached the questions for the online Survey and included in red our comments / concerns. We would urge all stakeholders to complete the online survey to ensure that the views of Melton tourism stakeholders are fully represented. I would welcome the opportunity to talk to you further about our concerns and how we can work together to ensure that we continue to build and grow the tourism offer across Melton and the whole destination.

Stephen Hallam

Chair of Melton Promotions

**PLEASE NOTE THE CLOSING DATE FOR ONLINE RESPONSES IS FRIDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> APRIL.**

LEICESTER & LEICESTERSHIRE CONSULTATION REVIEW – ONLINE SURVEY

Have your say on the Tourism Support Services for Leicester & Leicestershire:

<http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-consultations/tourism-support-services-for-leicester-and-leicestershire>

**Q3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following recommendation?**

The Strategic governance of tourism should be led by the Leicester & Leicestershire Combined Authority (noting that this will require approval)

If LPL's contract is due to expire in JUNE 2016 but no decision will be made on the Combined Authority until October 2016

- How can the continuation of Tourism Support Service be deemed seamless when there is a 4 month gap?
- What happens if the Combined Authority doesn't get approved?

**Q4 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following recommendation?**

A Tourism Advisory Board should be established to provide business insight and guidance from the tourism sector to the Combined Authority.

- Would this be the current LPL Board?
- How would the Districts be represented?
- Will there still be District Tourism Partnerships? (Melton Promotions, Harborough Promotions, Charnwood etc).
- What will happen to the Leicestershire Tourism Partnership (LTP) which currently acts as a Tourism Advisory Board?

**Q5 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following recommendation?**

The strategic management of tourism should be managed by one or both of the lead local authorities (Leicester City and Leicestershire County Council) on behalf of the Combined Authority.

Overall Strategic governance could be led by a Combined Authority.

- Where does this leave the Districts and the City's individual Strategic Tourism Blueprints which have been prepared to deliver a strategic approach to tourism at a targeted local level.

Each district has a different offer and a different target market

- To truly represent the industry should not the delivery of the various offers remain independent?

**Q6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following recommendation?**

The delivery of Tourism Support services, including tactical marketing and campaigns, should be delivered via a combination of the lead local authorities staff and commissioned services.

Delivery of tourism should be through tourism experts who understand their market. Each District currently delivers proven successful tactical marketing campaigns through LPL, such as the Stay Play Explore Short Breaks. LPL have an encompassing knowledge of Leicestershire.

- Would LA staff know what Melton, Harborough, Charnwood or other Leicestershire districts have to offer and where they can stay?
- Would LA staff be able to prepare itineraries for Group Travel Organisers to include group friendly accommodation and eateries, group discounts and coach parking facilities across the County?
- Would it all become City-led?

Each district knows its attractions and accommodation providers and has an in depth understanding of suitability.

- Should services be commissioned out when we already have a DMO who understands the industry and the area?

**Q7 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the option of establishing a trading organisation which could undertake commercial and/or bidding activity?**

LPL is an independent trading organisation which is already doing a very successful job of undertaking commercial activity and bidding activity – this is detailed in the Blue Sail Consultation Report – See page 17 about reforming the existing model.

- Should both time and resources be wasted by setting up a new company when there is a successful one already operating?

**Any Other Comments ?**

In this section we have expressed the following concerns:

- What will happen in June 2016 when LPL's contract expires?
- Will [www.goleicestershire.com](http://www.goleicestershire.com) just get turned off?
- What will happen to all the Stay Play Explore campaigns?
- It will be right in tourist season – surely the worst time to cease operations?
- How will there be a seamless transfer of Tourism Support Services when the Combined Authority decision will not be made until October?
- Will the LA Department be up and running in June to take over the Support Services?
- What will happen to the accommodation booking service through [www.goleicestershire.com](http://www.goleicestershire.com)?
- What will happen to the Districts artwork and all the print, promotion and design work commissioned through LPL?
- Who will prepare all the Group Travel Itineraries?
- Who will take all the Group Enquiries?
- What will happen to district partnerships?