

## Yorkshire's local government leaders support a new destination management organisation for the region

At its meeting yesterday (28 February 2022), the Yorkshire Leaders Board – made up of council leaders and metro mayors from across Yorkshire – unanimously agreed that a new approach was needed to the marketing of the Yorkshire region.

This decision followed the recommendation of an independent review to look at the structure and function of destination management and marketing across the region commissioned by the Leaders Board in November 2021, as well as private sector views gathered by Welcome to Yorkshire.

The decision means that Welcome to Yorkshire, the region's current destination marketing organisation, will no longer receive public funding via local authorities to promote tourism in the region.

Yorkshire's local and combined authorities also agreed to take time to further engage with businesses to develop an organisation that will meet the needs of both public and private sector clients and bring wider benefit to the region. Leaders will meet again in May 2022 to agree the timeline for the establishment of the new organisation.

Co-Chair of the Yorkshire Leaders Board, Cllr Stephen Houghton, who is Leader of Barnsley Council, said: "Every district, borough and county in Yorkshire benefits from tourism. The industry, and the communities that rely on it, deserve our support, in particular as we continue to recover from the effects of a global pandemic over the last two years.

Welcome to Yorkshire has played a pivotal role over the last decade, enabling us to bring high profile sporting events and investment to the region, and showcasing our talent and diverse offer. But a lot has changed and, following consideration of the views of our public and private sector stakeholders on the current arrangements, we have unanimously agreed that a new approach is needed.

"We all agree that our visitor economy needs a champion, and we will now speak further to our stakeholders to ensure we have an organisation with a clear purpose, that works for all, and is sustainable for the future.

On behalf of Leaders and Elected Mayors, I would like to thank the current and previous Board and staff at Welcome to Yorkshire for the phenomenal job they have undertaken in supporting the tourism sector in Yorkshire over nearly 30 years, and particularly through some difficult, more recent times. I would particularly like to thank the current Chair of the Welcome to Yorkshire Board, Peter Box, for the leadership and commitment he has shown in such challenging circumstances".

ENDS

Editor's note: The Yorkshire Leaders Board is a partnership of 22 local authorities and two mayoral combined authorities working together for the betterment of the whole of the Yorkshire and the Humber region. More information on its members can be found at [www.yhcouncils.org.uk](http://www.yhcouncils.org.uk)