

The Great West Way

To: The Board
From: David Andrews, CEO

Date: 10 December 2015

This paper gives an update on the creation of England's premier long distance route, The Great West Way.

Background

The idea of creating an 'A4 Tourist Trail' came out of VisitWiltshire's brand positioning work with Calne we did with Heavenly in November 2014.

Through discussions led by VisitWiltshire and an active Calne working group, and following positive feedback from towns along the route, the idea of an A4 tourist trail has grown into a much more ambitious concept. To create England's premier long distance route from London to Bath/Bristol, a third of which is in Wiltshire.

35 towns, areas and industry partners attended an industry meeting Chaired by VisitWiltshire in October 2015. The agreed project vision and objectives for The Great West Way were agreed at that meeting as:

Vision

To create England's premier long-distance touring route from London to Bristol in order to raise awareness, grow the visitor economy and transform tourism product along and around the route.

Objectives

- Generate additional tourism visits and spend, increase dwell time and achieve high satisfaction along all parts of the route.
- Package the route as a destination to domestic & international visitors
- Improve linkages between a range of attractions and activities
- Improve interpretation, infrastructure and signage along and around the route across a wide range of transportation types.
- Direct visitors to less-visited areas.
- Increase growth, productivity and partnership working via a programme of businesses support activity.
- Increase and improve the quality and range of product along the route.
- Secure significant public and private sector support.
- Encourage towns and partners along the route to invest in developing and marketing the route.

The meeting also agreed:

- A working title of The Great West Way
- On the importance of this project as a catalyst for Product Development
- The route should include provision for a wide range of transport options – coach, car, rail, bicycle, walking, canal
- On the importance of sustainability

- Targets to be confirmed against all objectives as the project progresses.
- The need to adopt an approach that would maximise potential for securing project development funding
- Focus is not about any single form or transport or the A4 road, it's about the corridor and all the things you can do from it.
- Having good quality inspirational content was critical, this would include developing day and multi-day itineraries on and around the route.

Pilot Marketing Campaign

The industry group agreed that VisitWiltshire would lead on developing an initial proposal for a pilot marketing campaign in spring 2016, key components of which should include:

- Inspirational content
- A range of day and short stay itineraries off the route
- A pilot campaign along part of the route
- The campaign should feature main icons and hooks along the route with additional exposure being relative to campaign participation level.
- Three campaign participation levels of £5,000, £2,500 and £295.
- That Product Development should be included as part of the pilot.
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Product Development

The following priorities have been identified for the product development plan:

- *Develop brand proposition and identity, and key market segments*
- *Identify the route*
- *Way-finding strategy including directional signage*
- *Delivery of 'Discovery Points'*
- *Selling Great West Way experiences*

Since the meeting, partners have agreed that they would like to see a proportion of their funding contribution, up to 50%, go towards product development priorities, eg bid writing, feasibility study, operational plan. The pilot project will now be progressed on this basis.

The following have confirmed their intention to commit funding to the Great West Way campaign: Bath, Calne, Corsham, Hungerford, Marlborough, K&A Trust, NWD AONB. A number of other partners have confirmed their support including Sustrans, other AONBs, National Trust, Bowood.

Next Steps:

- Develop the marketing plan for launch in March 2016.
- Align Great West Way activity with other activity, eg SWTGF
- Identify grant funding opportunities and prepare bids
- Secure financial and other support from a range of partners.
- VisitWiltshire to develop the marketing campaign proposal
- Next meeting 28 Jan 2016