

Travel Trade & Groups Marketing Strategy 2020 - 2023

1. Objectives

Develop a Travel Trade & Groups Strategy that supports Wiltshire tourism businesses through the coronavirus outbreak, helps rebuild Wiltshire's visitor economy, and to improve structures and delivery by working with key regional and national partners in order to:

- Maximise opportunities for growing travel trade business for Wiltshire and VisitWiltshire partners
- Develop a cohesive, collaborative approach among key partners to winning travel trade business
- Gain maximum leverage from Wiltshire's tourism assets
- Develop and improve our groups/travel trade product
- Generate additional visits and spend for Wiltshire
- Raise the profile of Wiltshire in groups/travel trade activity and programmes

2. Deliverables/Targets/KPIs:

- To contribute to the growth of Wiltshire's visitor economy, matching or out performing VisitEngland/VisitBritain's annual growth rate.
- To retain and develop Wiltshire tourism product being distributed via travel trade intermediaries (group and FIT) and/or booked via group organisers.
- To increase collaborative partnership travel trade and groups activity.

3. Background

- VisitWiltshire established the Travel Trade group in September 2012 as prior to this there was insufficient focus, resource and funds towards growing groups and travel trade activity for Wiltshire.
- VisitWiltshire is the official Destination Management Organisation for Wiltshire and accountable body for the Discover England Fund element of the Great West Way. As such they are the lead body for VisitEngland / VisitBritain.
- Since the development of the trade group there is a consistent 2.5 days per week resource on this area of the business.
- The support from partners has grown from 14 trade businesses in 2014 to 28 in 2020.
- Income from partners received through this model is ring-fenced and ploughed back into groups/trade activity. VisitWiltshire match-funds travel trade partner investment.
- Wiltshire travel trade activity has grown significantly since the introduction of a programme of Great West Way travel trade activity in 2017. From 2020 in response to coronavirus, the primary focus is shifting to domestic trade, while continuing to build and develop international trade activity.
- There continues to be the opportunity to capitalise on our tourism assets and new product developments to improve relationships with key travel trade contacts, both internationally and domestically.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural, perceived as safe, fit with responsible tourism. • Stonehenge national and international brand awareness • High quality relevant product including: Salisbury Cathedral, Avebury, WHS, White Horses, Lacock, Castle Combe, Caen Locks, market towns • Extension of shoulder month activity from by supplier products eg. Christmas etc. • Location close to London and regional connectivity e.g. railways and airports. • Wiltshire's profile and location within the Great West Way brand • Dedicated staff resource for growing trade activity • Dedicated PR resource to grow awareness • Growing international trade awareness due to Great West Way and Wiltshire activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited awareness of Wiltshire's geographic location in international markets. • Salisbury Plain creating north/south divide • Often not seen as a stopover destination • Results of activity are not immediate and difficult to evaluate • Fragmented trade approach from businesses • Insufficient large hotel stock outside Swindon • Limited product development and bookable product • Limited trade knowledge and understanding amongst businesses
THREATS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental and political external factors impacting tourism e.g. Salisbury poisoning, Brexit, Coronavirus etc. leading to loss of market share • Lack of action now leads to greater loss in 5–10 years • Lack of domestic activity undertaken by VisitEngland/VisitBritain • Other destination activity gaining a competitive advantage on Wiltshire e.g. DEF projects supported by VisitBritain • VisitBritain trade activity focused on drive-through Stonehenge programmes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VisitBritain/VisitEngland international activity and opportunities via DEF and Great West Way • Cross selling Wiltshire and Great West Way and build on excellent trade relationships to benefit of all • Utilising digital via consumer channels to push out Wiltshire messaging • To help create new product development and bookability • Embracing sales and communication technology in a post COVID world.

4. Guiding Principles

- VisitWiltshire's Travel Trade Sector Group to input, agree and steer an annual B2B Tactical Activity Plan to engage best prospects among the domestic and international travel trade.
- VisitWiltshire's Travel Trade group businesses to invest in increasing resource and budget dedicated to working with the group and developing travel trade activity within their own business and align it accordingly.
- Travel Trade group businesses to actively attend at least one trade meeting a year to ensure a proactive approach and contribution to VisitWiltshire B2B strategy.
- Increase collaborative partner marketing under a Wiltshire umbrella in order to maximise potential for raising awareness, and growing visits and spend.

- Continue to develop our B2B online and offline collateral and integrate with consumer strategy, activity and messaging wherever possible.
- Maximise opportunities for working with national bodies and associations.
- Make recommendations for developing our travel trade activity to the VisitWiltshire Board.
- Maximise potential for Wiltshire within Great West Way trade activity (for example the Great West Way Discoverer Pass features all Wiltshire railway stations).

5. Activity Plan

The Tactical Activity Travel Trade Plan (detailed in annex 1) includes key strategic objectives, target markets, key performance measures and price points for activity which is reviewed and agreed annually by the group. The programme of activity will focus on the following elements:

Developing Saleable Wiltshire Product for Trade Programmes

- Develop relationships with key trade contacts to extend trade programmes to include Wiltshire product.
- Dedicated sales resource focusing on programme of sales calls/meetings (virtual or in person) to hot prospect domestic group and travel trade
- Securing more businesses to work with the travel trade
- Continue to develop opportunities and facilitate where possible supplier: buyer meetings.
- Working in partnership with VisitEngland/VisitBritain to maximise potential of Taking England to the World training programme (TETTW) and Tourism Exchange Great Britain (TXGB)
- Continue to develop international activity in line with Great West Way Official Tour Operator programme (Wiltshire is now included in new [bookable programmes](#) developed by [Official Tour Operators](#))
- Continue to develop opportunities and facilitate where possible supplier: buyer meetings.

Marketing Collateral & Communication Activity

- Review requirements for printed travel trade collateral and opportunities for expanding Wiltshire content online and in Great West Way trade directory.
- Review and update travel trade pages and content on visitwiltshire.co.uk (including content, imagery and itineraries) in the light of coronavirus.
- Review need for additional information for partners such as a toolkit
- Review and update the travel trade database and segment accordingly
- Review design, content and regularity of travel trade e-newsletters
- Develop social media activity to increase awareness via twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn
- Businesses and destinations on the Wiltshire travel trade group to promote wider relevant Wiltshire product where appropriate in their trade communication.

Exhibition and Events – either Virtual or In Person

- Attend key domestic and international travel trade exhibitions and events.
- Review opportunities for having a Wiltshire presence at key VisitBritain international events.
- Agree a number of key exhibitions to have a coordinated Wiltshire or Great West Way stand focus with partner support.
- Coordinate an annual trade workshop for Wiltshire partners to meet key trade contacts.

Familiarisation Visits

- Coordinate spring and autumn trade familiarisation group visits. Reviewing format in light of coronavirus eg. self-drive or group.

Partnership Activity

- Build on industry partnerships to extend activity and awareness of Wiltshire at national and international trade events, sales meetings and missions etc.
- Share best practice amongst Wiltshire travel trade group and industry leaders to learn, support and develop trade activity.
- Leverage Great West Way Official Tour Operator partnerships to maximise collaborations for distribution of Wiltshire product.
- Continue to develop and build on key relationships with partners such as VisitEngland/VisitBritain, UKInbound, ETOA.

Press & PR

- Use PR and advertising (online and offline) to target key trade press and review B2B advertising opportunities with key Wiltshire messaging
- Work with trade press to raise awareness of our marketing collateral.
- Target media for trade media visits in line with trade fam visits.
- Create and distribute a travel trade media information at key timings.

Research, Evaluation and Reporting

- Undertake regular audit of relevant group product.
- Define best prospects, target markets and group/trade segments
- Carry out regular reporting and an annual review of the strategy against the Activity Plan and KPIs.

6. VisitWiltshire Travel Trade Group

- Guide the VisitWiltshire Travel Trade group to input to and support the Travel Trade Tactical Activity plan.
- Liaise with the Chair and VisitWiltshire CEO/ Board regarding trade activity implementation and formally feedback as required.
- Follow VisitWiltshire Terms of Reference for the Travel Trade Group

7. Product Development

- Make recommendations to the Travel Trade Group, VisitWiltshire CEO/Board and other bodies as agreed for developing and improving Wiltshire's groups/travel trade product.
- Advise and support Wiltshire's travel industry on product development where relevant.

8. Budget

VisitWiltshire budgets run from 1 April to 31 March. From 2021 the travel trade group strategy and activity plan will run from 1 April to 31 March to fall in line with this.

Annually the travel trade group reviews pricing of the three levels of trade investment and communicates these accordingly.