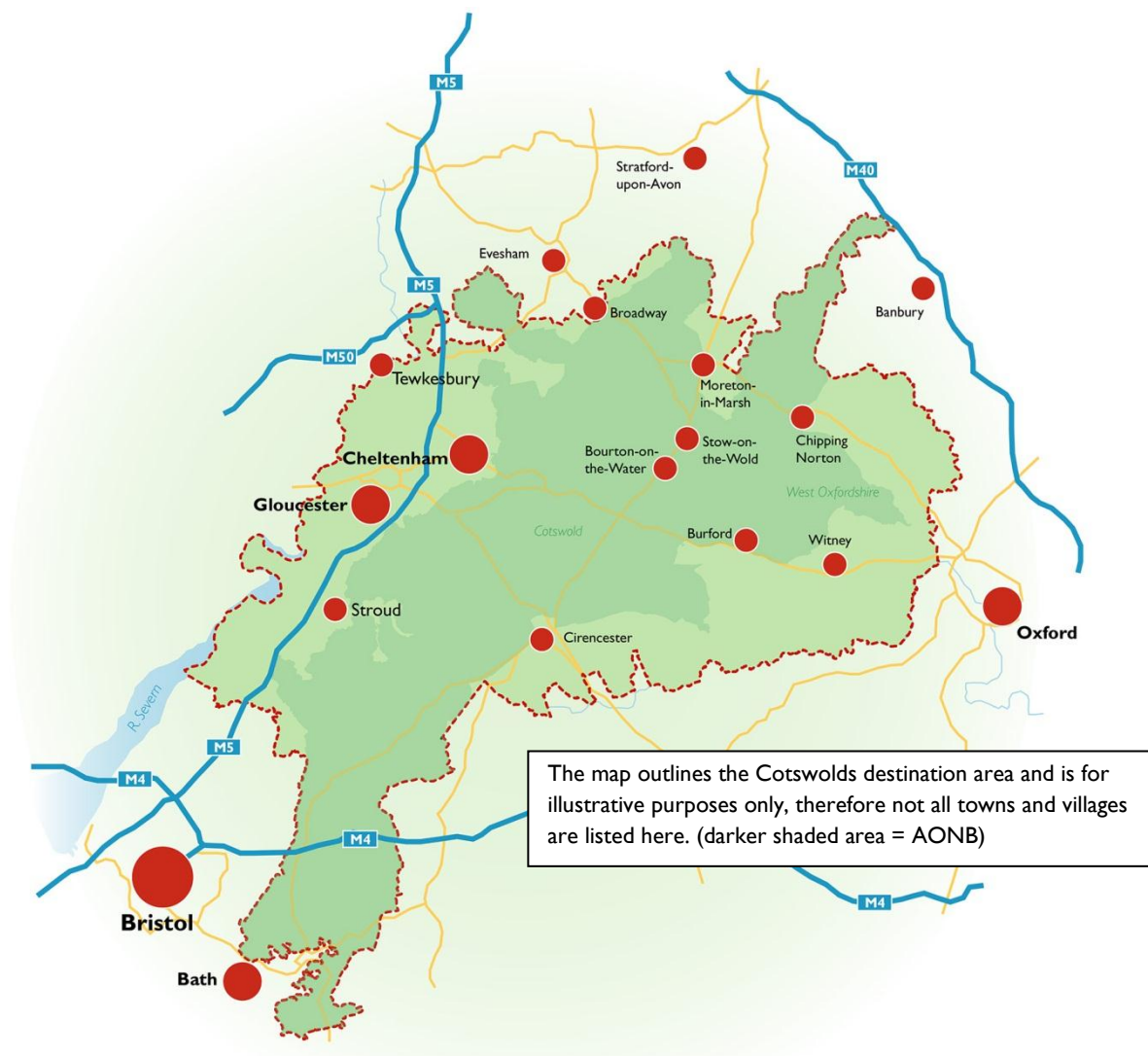


# Destination Management Plan for the Cotswolds

## *'The Path to Growth for Tourism Across the Cotswolds'*

### Introduction

The **Cotswolds** are a range of hills that stretch 80 miles from north east to south west through six counties, the majority of which covers Gloucestershire and West Oxfordshire, but also reaching into parts of Wiltshire, Bath & North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire. In 1966 the area was designated as the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The official area of the Cotswolds AONB was increased to 2,038 square kilometres (790 sq mi) and it is the largest AONB in England and Wales. In 2000, the government confirmed that AONBs have the same landscape quality and status as National Parks.



The Cotswolds is a popular, well known destination with a reputation built on rural countryside, local limestone, vibrant towns, heritage cities and picturesque villages, along with award winning attractions and events. The destination is keen to communicate more than the clichéd 'Quintessential England' view of the area, for example, by raising awareness of distinctive local foods, the arts and cultural scene and a wider geographical spread beyond the most famous villages. However the Cotswolds is a well performing destination, with high awareness and appreciation.

## **How tourism is currently managed**

In 2013, responsibility for tourism in Gloucestershire transferred from Gloucestershire County Council to GFirst - The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Gloucestershire. The Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire's other key destination, manages tourism in partnership with the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism Association, Forestry Commission, Wye Valley AONB and Monmouthshire County Council. The LEP works in partnership with the local authorities of Cotswold, Cheltenham, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury along with the 300+ paying members from across the Cotswolds, which together are known as Cotswolds Tourism.

In addition, West Oxfordshire District Council has for over 20 years had a dedicated tourism service and promotes the district as the Oxfordshire Cotswolds which has had considerable success in both the international and domestic markets.

The Cotswolds area has the additional complication of crossing over several regional boundaries and associated tourism authorities and organisations such as Tourism South East, the South West Tourism Alliance (formerly South West Tourism) as well as Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) established in Oxfordshire, Stratford, Bath, Worcestershire and Wiltshire.

At national level, tourism is supported by VisitEngland and VisitBritain. VisitEngland is the national tourist board and custodian of the England consumer brand and tourism strategy. VisitBritain is the national tourism agency, funded by Government to build the value of tourism to Britain, working in partnership with the tourism industry and the nations and regions of Britain to attract overseas visitors.

The Cotswolds Conservation Board has a vital role in the management of the Cotswolds and describes its contribution as 'developing and managing sustainable tourism in the AONB'. It has published the Cotswolds Sustainable Tourism Strategy 2011-2016 which recognises the importance of tourism in the locality and has the key objectives of: strengthening identity and awareness of the Cotswolds as a sustainable destination, enhancing the landscape and environment, promoting new product ideas, lengthening visitor stay and providing quality visitor experiences. Despite the size of the AONB area, the Cotswolds Conservation Board has limited resources for its tourism work. It seeks to work in partnership to achieve delivery and in 2010 set up the Cotswolds Sustainable Tourism Partnership to share ideas and network. In 2011 the Cotswolds AONB was awarded the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. In 2013, a Sustainable Tourism Accord was signed between VisitEngland, Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and the National Association for AONBs which outlined how tourism could be grown in AONBs.

From April 2014 the lead organisation for Cotswold Tourism will cease to be GFirst. Day-to-day marketing, promotion and national tourism links will be managed in the short term by a partnership of local authorities and the Cotswolds Conservation Board. However part of the purpose of developing this Destination Management Plan (DMP) is to establish a permanent and long term private and or public partnership that can continue to manage and build on the strengths of the Cotswold brand. There has already been considerable success from both Cotswold Tourism and Oxfordshire Cotswolds in terms of marketing and development and it is key that this work with these established networks is maintained and further developed going forward.

There are many organisations throughout the Cotswolds that have a role to play in managing tourism and the visitor economy across the destination; the DMP will therefore seek agreement and sign-up from them all to ensure future delivery of the plan. Table 1.1 below shows current organisations along with their roles and responsibilities.

Table 1.1

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Roles</b>
<b>Lead organisation/partnership for tourism across the Cotswolds (when established)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the DMP</li> <li>• Representing tourism and the visitor economy at a national level</li> <li>• Providing guidance on ensuring the quality of the visitor experience</li> <li>• Gathering evidence and monitoring</li> <li>• Developing and managing the destination branding, marketing and website.</li> <li>• Visitor information and orientation</li> <li>• Establishment of local private sector partnerships and engagement</li> <li>• Presenting a coherent voice for the visitor economy</li> <li>• Seeking and promoting funding opportunities for tourism development</li> <li>• Co-ordinating appropriate visitor information provision with partners.</li> </ul>
<b>Local Authorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public realm – appearance and maintenance</li> <li>• Transport planning and supporting provision – infrastructure</li> <li>• Planning and development control</li> <li>• Public health and safety</li> <li>• Public/visitor services – toilets, car parking, waste, utilities</li> <li>• Access, rights of way, countryside management</li> <li>• Partnership with private sector on development and promotion</li> <li>• Event and venue licensing</li> </ul>
<b>Cotswolds Conservation Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservation and enhancement of natural beauty/heritage</li> <li>• Visitor access, enjoyment and understanding of protected area</li> <li>• Management of the Cotswold Way</li> <li>• Economic and social wellbeing of the community</li> <li>• Encouraging and promoting sustainability and green tourism practices.</li> <li>• Visitor Giving Scheme</li> </ul>
<b>Towns and Parishes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future direction for area/community</li> <li>• Local place-making; aspects of public realm / visitor services</li> <li>• Neighbourhood planning</li> <li>• Local activities, events</li> </ul>

<p><b>Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and surrounding LEPs where appropriate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic/ business development, including sector support</li> <li>• Investment promotion</li> <li>• Funding of enterprise focussed initiatives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Private sector individual tourism businesses</b>  <i>(These include a wide and diverse variety of businesses such as attractions, accommodation, retail, pubs and restaurants, tour guides, car hire, publications and much more)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and operation of most visitor facilities</li> <li>• Creating and maintaining employment across the destination</li> <li>• Product development, investment and improvement</li> <li>• Promotion of business and link to destination brand</li> <li>• Visitor welcome, orientation and care</li> <li>• Place-making for the destination</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local landowners</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision and management of access to key sites</li> <li>• Future development opportunities</li> <li>• Festival and events locations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Local civic societies, Chambers of Commerce, heritage groups, arts &amp; culture groups, other local/ voluntary bodies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation / interpretation of heritage – sense of place</li> <li>• Local, regional and national events and initiatives</li> <li>• Support for community and business engagement</li> <li>• Representing environmental interests</li> <li>• Local knowledge and expertise</li> </ul>
<p><b>Town centre management teams</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streetscape, including cleaning, presentation</li> <li>• Signage/ visitor information</li> <li>• Street safety</li> <li>• Other aspects of place making not carried out by the local authority.</li> <li>• Parking</li> </ul>

## National value of tourism

The Strategic Framework for Tourism in England 2010 - 2020 and its associated Action Plans are the product of extensive consultation and collaboration with England's tourism industry. It sets out the ways in which the industry can work together to achieve a 5% growth in value, year-on-year, over the next decade. This will lead to an additional £50bn in expenditure and the creation of 225,000 jobs.

In April 2013 the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport launched VisitBritain's long term tourism growth strategy for Britain. This ambitious strategy - Delivering a Golden Legacy: a growth strategy for inbound tourism 2012-2020 - aims to attract 40 million international visitors a year, spending £31.3 billion, by 2020.

Tourism is one of the largest industries in England and the UK. Accordingly to a recent Deloitte study Tourism Jobs and Growth, overall key findings for England were;

- *Spending: Total spending in the England's tourism economy has increased and is expected to reach £94.2 billion in 2013. This is a 3% increase since 2012.*
- *Value added: tourism directly contributed £48.3 billion in value-added to the English economy in 2013, equal to 4% of England's GDP. Using the broader tourism economy definition the sector represents £106 billion in value added – 8.8% of England's GDP.*
- *Employment: The tourism sector is estimated to directly support 1.44 million jobs in England: some 5.2% of total employment in the UK in 2013. Using the broader tourism economy definition the sector supports 2.58 million jobs – 9.4% of UK employment.*
- *Export value: Inbound tourism to England is worth £16.2 billion, representing 4% growth since 2006.*

## The importance of tourism to the Cotswolds

The most recent volume and value data for the Cotswolds can be taken from *The Value of Tourism 2010 Report for Gloucestershire* (South West Research Company) and *The Economic Impact of Tourism West Oxfordshire 2011* (Tourism South East) which are shown in the table below:

	Total day & staying trips	Total visitor spend	Total employment	% of total employment
<b>Gloucestershire 2010 (exc figures for Forest of Dean)</b>	11,699,700	£740,040,000	19,716 (14,810 FTEs)	8
<b>West Oxfordshire 2012</b>	4,280,000	£268,4219,000	4,760 (3,420 FTEs)	9

Taking the above figures into account, it can be estimated that each year the Cotswolds welcomes nearly 16 million visitors to the destination and **tourism is worth over £1 billion to the Cotswolds economy**. However, the volume of visitors may be considerably more for the wider Cotswolds area as a 2003 report for the Cotswolds AONB estimated the area attracts 23million visitors, many of whom come for the day. There are also a number of destinations outside this area that include a 'Cotswold' offering and which would considerably increase the above figures in terms of value.

The recent study 'Assessment of the Economic Value of the Cotswolds AONB' in 2013, estimates that there are 1,070 tourism businesses in the AONB, representing 11.3% of the total number of businesses in the AONB, which employ 6,720 people (12.3% of total employment in the AONB).

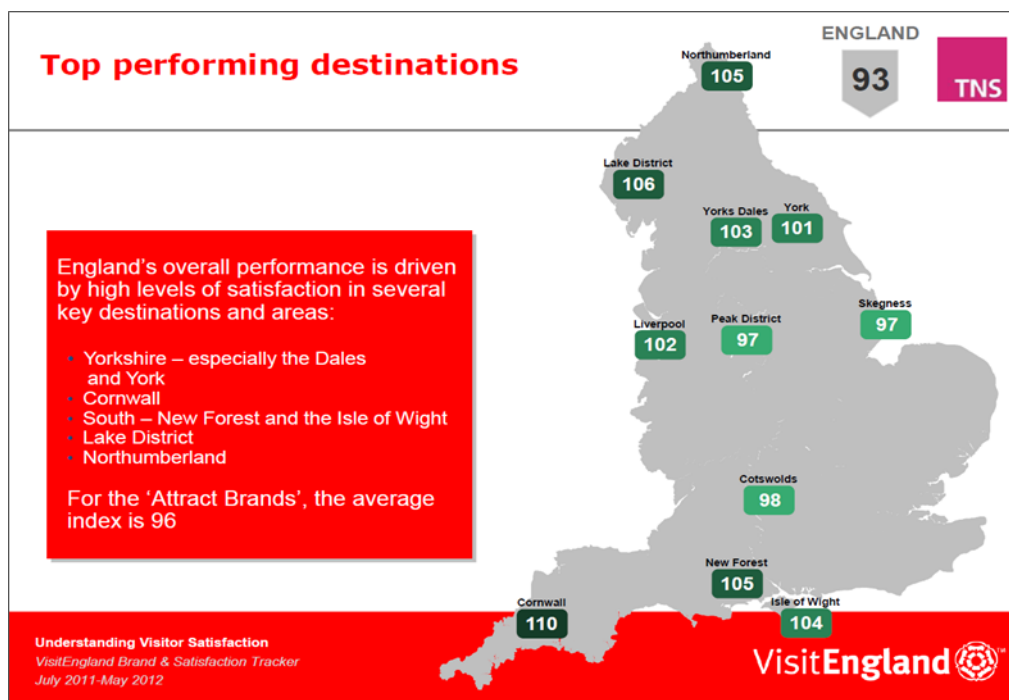
## Perceptions of the Cotswolds

VisitEngland's Visitor Satisfaction Survey in 2012 showed that generally the Cotswolds came out as high for levels of customer service and experience with 94% of visitors rating their experience as excellent or very good, against a figure of 85% for the rest of England and 93% stating they would definitely or probably recommend the Cotswolds to friends and family. Transport both in terms of getting to and around the area were highlighted as negatives and below the national average.

The importance of the Cotswolds to the rest of the country is recognised in Visit England's Strategic Framework for Tourism 2010 – 2020 which refers to the Cotswolds as 'one of England's long established and world-renowned "attract" brands', which can help to attract visitors and encourage them to travel and spend more widely in the country as a whole.

Below is an insight from VisitEngland into how the Cotswolds is viewed in relation to other UK destinations, in terms of visitor satisfaction and which show the Cotswolds as above average, but however still with significant room to improve against the other top performing destinations.

VisitEngland Brand and Satisfaction tracker 2011-2012



## SWOT Analysis of tourism across the Cotswolds

A SWOT analysis was originally undertaken in 2010 as part of the development of the Cotswolds AONB Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Using this as a base, the following SWOT analysis has been undertaken to highlight the current issues and opportunities across the wider Cotswolds area that relate to destination management and will be used to develop future detailed business and marketing plans for the Cotswolds. The following items are in no particular order.

Table 1.2 SWOT Analysis of Cotswolds destination management

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weakness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-established and high-profile destination across the UK &amp; overseas</li> <li>• Unspoilt countryside &amp; environment – 2<sup>nd</sup> largest protected landscape in England.</li> <li>• Easy access by road and rail – 90 minutes from London with good rail and road infrastructure to support this</li> <li>• A place where visitors feel safe &amp; secure</li> <li>• Extensive range of information and publications available.</li> <li>• Tourism related employment is 8%, worth £1 billion to the local economy.</li> <li>• Visitor loyalty - high levels of satisfaction from current visitors &amp; repeat visitors</li> <li>• Cotswolds is key 'attract brand' for VisitEngland</li> <li>• Cotswold Way National Trail</li> <li>• Close proximity to two World Heritage sites - Bath &amp; Blenheim Palace</li> <li>• Heritage towns and cities and retail attractions with established international brand recognition– Oxford, Stratford upon Avon and Bicester Village</li> <li>• Strong TV, film location and press/PR activities</li> <li>• Good quality accommodation</li> <li>• Strong Arts and Crafts Heritage offer</li> <li>• Strong retail offer; market towns, Gloucester Quays, Cheltenham voted best High Street in the UK.</li> <li>• Welcoming and friendly people</li> <li>• Numerous attractive towns &amp; villages to visit including a regency town and a cathedral city.</li> <li>• Established festival &amp; events programme with internationally renowned festivals including one of the most famous horse racing events in the UK, bringing in £50 million to the local economy</li> <li>• Peace and tranquillity – get away from it all despite proximity to large towns and cities nearby</li> <li>• Strong food offering in pubs, restaurants and local produce and farmers markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perceived as an expensive destination</li> <li>• Lack of low cost accommodation</li> <li>• Inconsistent signage and orientation does not help visitor find way around area.</li> <li>• Multiple agencies &amp; private businesses all advertising Cotswolds – confusing message</li> <li>• Limited conference facilities to host large events</li> <li>• Lack of engagement/involvement by majority of industry</li> <li>• Limited range of public transport options especially on Sundays &amp; Bank Holidays</li> <li>• Lack of up-to-date and robust statistics and trends data for the Cotswolds area eg occupancy, volume &amp; value</li> <li>• Concentration of visitors in honeypot areas leading to visitor pressures</li> <li>• Perception that the Cotswolds has little to offer younger people and families</li> <li>• Current large and administratively complex area</li> <li>• Limited parking facilities in popular towns and villages</li> <li>• Limited mobile and WIFI coverage</li> <li>• Poor road maintenance in some areas</li> <li>• Lack of events in off-peak seasons</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business collaboration on consumer offers and promotions.</li> <li>• Make it easy to find useful information about planning holiday including booking in advance</li> <li>• Tourism in UK set to grow by 5% year on year which will generate new demand with corresponding impact on jobs and economy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining engaged industry support – currently only one third of businesses support Cotswolds Tourism membership</li> <li>• New &amp; invigorated destinations within the UK &amp; abroad attracting same market</li> <li>• Competition from other UK destinations managing tourism more effectively</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legacy of Olympic Games 2012</li> <li>• Rugby World Cup 2015 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> biggest sporting event in the world and is expected to attract a large influx of domestic and international visitors to the area</li> <li>• Scope to market the Cotswolds as a whole</li> <li>• Scope to convert day visitors to staying visitors through suitable product development.</li> <li>• Promote &amp; increase reach of Cotswold Discoverer &amp; public transport</li> <li>• Cotswold Canal expansion continuing</li> <li>• Development of stronger links across wider area including Bath, Stratford, Oxford</li> <li>• Increase the range of outdoor activities and further develop the walking offer</li> <li>• Simplify organisational structure to ensure clear leadership</li> <li>• Availability of individual/independent local shops</li> <li>• New product development &amp; campaigns eg Vintage &amp; Modern and Cotswolds Live</li> <li>• Increased importance for health and well-being</li> <li>• Increase in domestic holiday/staycations</li> <li>• Doubling of the Cotswold Line track leading to improved rail services</li> <li>• Increasing developments with mobile technology</li> <li>• Private sector influencing changes in tourism management</li> <li>• Conference facilities promotion</li> <li>• Expand the Cotswolds events season</li> <li>• Expand links with film &amp; creative industries</li> <li>• Opportunity to increase engagement with industry</li> <li>• Social Investment Fund (SIF) opportunities (EU Structural and Investment Fund Strategy)</li> <li>• Build on already successful marketing and PR activity to maximise both domestic and overseas exposure</li> <li>• Draw together the rural and urban product proposition across the area to develop enhanced visitor experiences</li> <li>• Review and improve signage and information provision across the Cotswolds to enhance sense of place.</li> <li>• Maximise Cotswold churches proposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced public sector budgets</li> <li>• Unstable economic climate impacting on public and private sector spend and investment</li> <li>• Balance of needs between visitors and residents to avoid conflict &amp; retain a sense of place</li> <li>• Complacency that visitors will continue to come to the area</li> <li>• Lack of coordinated approach to customer service</li> <li>• Climate change and adverse/extreme weather situations</li> <li>• Increasing legislation and regulations putting extra strain on small businesses.</li> <li>• Potential environmental damage eg erosion caused by increased visitor numbers.</li> <li>• Number of TIC services and networks reducing</li> <li>• Weather perceptions of destination eg flooding and 'being open for business'</li> <li>• Increased visitor pressure in honeypot areas</li> </ul>
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## The future vision for tourism in the Cotswolds

This Destination Management Plan has the following vision for tourism in the Cotswolds:

*To ensure that the Cotswolds is a vibrant year round destination where visitors enjoy high quality, authentic experiences and tourism makes an increasing contribution to the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the local economy.*

We aim to achieve this through a partnership approach to lead the sustainable growth of the Cotswolds visitor economy by 5% per annum in line with VisitEngland's Strategic Framework, and improve the ranking of the Cotswolds from number six to number three in the VisitEngland list of top performing destinations over the next decade.

In order to do this there will be several guiding principles that underpin the approach to destination management. These are;

- Putting the visitor experience first
- Being evidence based
- Working collaboratively with partners and stakeholders
- Creating a tourism sector willing to innovate

### Priorities for action

#### *1. Partnership – shaping the approach together*

From the visitor's perspective, the Cotswolds is one destination, yet this large area comprises many counties, local authorities, tourism organisations and private sector partnerships which often result in duplication of effort and ineffective use of resources.

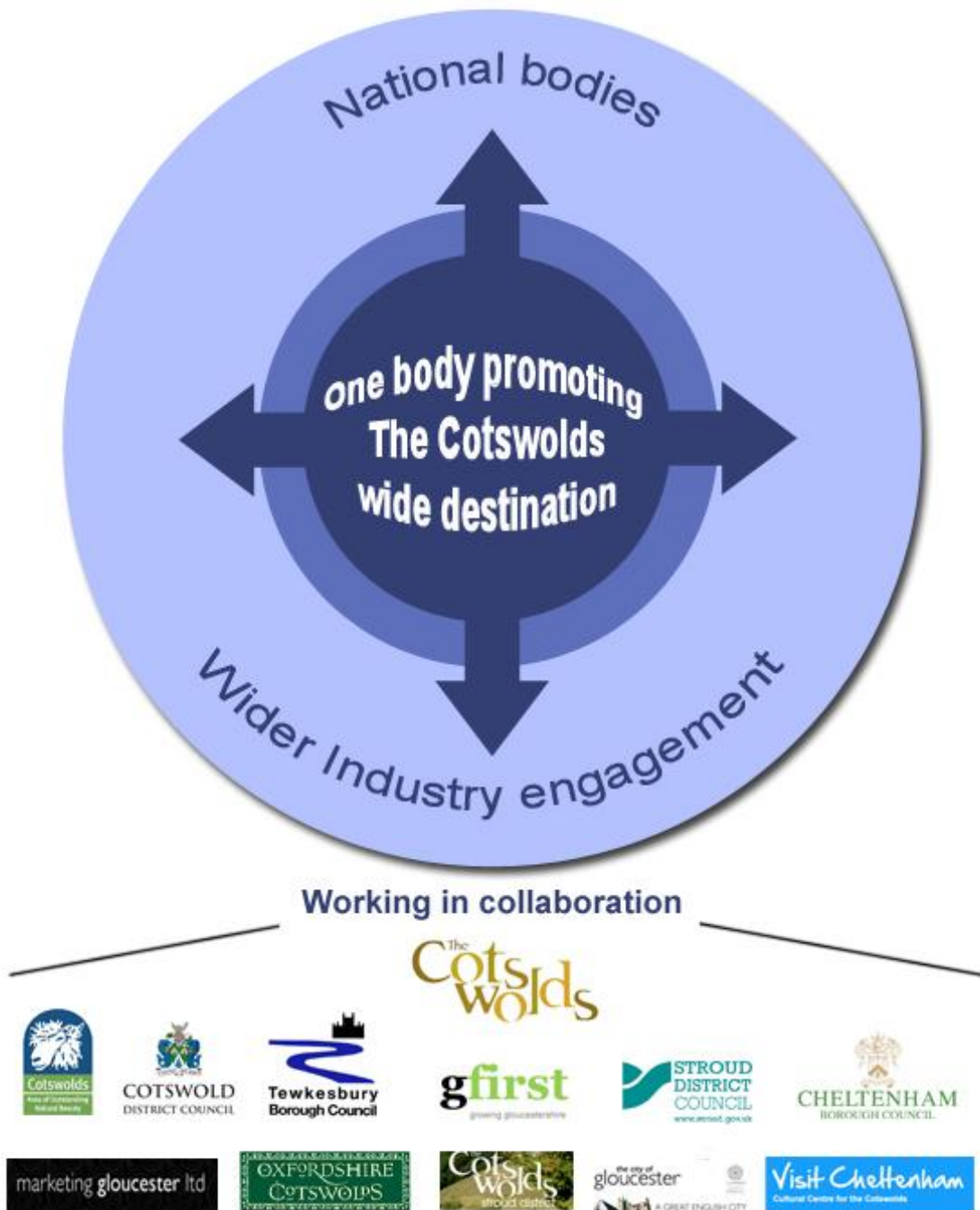
Partnership working is the best way we can make a difference and shape the future of the tourism industry in the Cotswolds. Public and private sector organisations, tourism businesses and local community groups across the wider Cotswolds area need to work together to maximise their combined efforts for the wider benefit of the industry.

The creation of a new partnership to lead the future direction and development of tourism across the Cotswolds will provide greater, more cost-effective support for businesses and enable visitors to easily access information before and during their stay. Such an organisation will be best placed to take advantage of new opportunities to access vital funding streams, participate in national marketing campaigns and act as a single voice for destination management in the Cotswolds.

#### **Key objectives:**

- To establish an effective partnership for tourism across the Cotswolds that coordinates the delivery of the destination management plan along with the development of business and marketing plans.
- To work with businesses to achieve their business objectives eg increased footfall, revenue and profile.
- To identify opportunities for leveraging funding for the organisation to implement the destination management plan.
- To establish an effective partnership mechanism between the lead organisation and the wider tourism stakeholders to enable joint delivery of the destination management plan.

## Proposed way forward for Tourism in The Cotswolds



## Private Sector Businesses

*In addition to the above partners, all other destinations, businesses and organisations with an interest in tourism across the Cotswolds would be welcome to engage in the new way forward.*

## **2. Product – Enhancing the visitor experience**

The visitor economy is not only about the accommodation, attractions, pubs, shops and restaurants but also refers to the wider environment that can impact and influence the overall visitor experience such as footpaths, car parks, public toilets, tourism signage, accessibility, public transport networks and visitor information centres as well as the more intangible aspects such as friendliness, value for money and a sense of place.

Visitor expectations are constantly growing therefore there is a need to meet, and ideally exceed those expectations through the provision of innovative value for money products, high quality services and memorable visitor experiences to ensure that the Cotswolds increases its share of the visitor market. The greater the visitor experience, the greater the likelihood for recommendations and repeat visits.

### **Key objectives:**

- To develop a sense of place by encouraging enjoyment and understanding of the natural, historic and cultural heritage of the Cotswolds.
- To secure investment and improvements to the wider destination infrastructure, including public transport and public realm.
- To ensure all visitors receive high quality service, diversity and experience throughout their destination journey.
- To maximise visitor distribution across the whole Cotswolds area outside the traditional honeypot sites.

## **3. Marketing – developing the Cotswolds brand and its core values**

The Cotswolds is a well-known name across the UK and many overseas countries, however there is a need to reinforce the Cotswolds 'brand' as a distinctive, quality visitor destination and widen its appeal to new, growing markets both domestic and overseas.

Future marketing is not just about increasing the volume of tourism but also about growing the value of tourism to the local economy and recognising the needs of individual businesses to increase footfall where appropriate. The Cotswolds doesn't suffer the sharp seasonal peaks and troughs of many other destinations such as Cornwall, and therefore has the scope to build on its offer as the ideal year-round destination which will help to develop a stronger visitor economy overall.

A co-ordinated and consistent approach should be developed for destination marketing which aims to reduce duplication across the Cotswolds and make best use of limited resources. Such an approach will also enable a more collaborative approach with neighbouring brands such as Bath, Stratford and Oxford on areas of mutual interest and benefit whilst still having a core focus on promoting the areas and products represented by the stakeholders of the new partnership

Whilst the traditional printed brochures still have an important place in Cotswolds marketing, a move towards better use of digital marketing and new technologies would help to target new markets in a more cost-effective way.

## **Key Objectives**

- To define and strengthen the Cotswolds brand and profile as a top year round destination in England.
- To develop innovative marketing plans and themed itineraries that identify and establish routes to market inclusive of leisure and business markets, both domestic and overseas and work with other DMOs and brands across the area when appropriate to achieve maximum exposure.
- To investigate new opportunities for enhancing and supporting a year-round events and activities programme.
- To ensure that the Cotswolds as a destination is given high profile amongst key international markets.

### **4. Knowledge – Establishing a thriving tourism industry**

The future marketing and development of the Cotswolds will necessitate having robust and up-to-date intelligence and data on the value, volume and patterns of the visitor economy, along with key insights into current and new target markets. At present, whilst there is some research available there is very little coherent data for tourism in the Cotswolds, therefore establishing effective mechanisms for obtaining feedback from visitors and enterprises is essential to informing future destination management planning.

Through regular industry research, satisfaction surveys, tourism impact surveys, marketing and campaign evaluation and other intelligence gathering, a clearer picture can be developed to support tourism-related decision making processes in the future. A commitment to commissioning annual economic impact data is essential to track and monitor progress of the overall growth targets.

## **Key Objectives**

- To develop a comprehensive and robust system of monitoring visitor satisfaction, marketing effectiveness and business performance to inform future business and marketing plans.
- To commission annual volume and value reports for the wider Cotswolds area.

### **5. Performance - building excellence through networking and collaboration**

Tourism businesses in the Cotswolds tend to be dominated by many small and micro businesses all of whom will have different skills, ambitions, resources and needs. As there is no one Cotswolds-wide private sector-led tourism association in place that represents the whole, networking opportunities are limited yet they are hugely beneficial to tourism providers who place great value on the ability to share ideas, cross-promote and liaise with other like-minded businesses and tourism professionals on a regular basis.

Excellence across the Cotswolds in the form of hospitality, customer service and visitor welcome should be endorsed and promoted. Investing in developing the necessary skills to run successful businesses and to provide the high levels of customer service that visitors expect should be encouraged. A co-ordinated approach to communicating across the industry needs to happen to develop stronger links with and between tourism providers.

Ensuring greater use of local produce and suppliers is an important aspect of developing a sustainable visitor destination for the Cotswolds and maximising the proportion of visitor spend that is retained within the Cotswolds.

### **Key Objectives**

- To increase participation from local suppliers to engage with the new partnership.
- To establish a network of tourism businesses to enable good communication and sharing of best practice.
- To promote and support opportunities for training and high level skills development across the tourism industry to enhance the visitor experience.
- To encourage the development of sustainable tourism initiatives among businesses that deliver economic, environmental and social benefits for the wider industry.

## Partnership Working and Transition Arrangements

The Cotswolds tourism sector group that developed the Destination Management Plan for tourism across the Cotswolds is a partnership group that includes representatives of both private and public sector tourism organisations in the region. The DMP was developed following support from VisitEngland who proposed it as a useful tool to drive growth and collaboration across the area. The members of this group will form a new body that with the support of stakeholders will act as the interim strategic board for Cotswolds Tourism with the prime purpose of delivering a new, inclusive and effective Cotswolds Tourism body.

This group will continue to:

- Review the Destination Management Plan.
- Oversee the delivery of Cotswolds Tourism support for the tourism sector (April 2014 onwards)
- Proactively seek out support and input from the tourism industry and the wider public and voluntary sector in rural and urban locations. (April 2014 onwards)
- Ensure that any new destination management organisation or process for the Cotswolds includes private, voluntary and public partnership as part of its governance structure.

Phase 1: Completed

- Draft Destination Management Plan circulated for consultation
- Audit of current roles and responsibilities
- All local authorities and Cotswolds Conservation Board to work together to ensure a smooth transition of roles and responsibilities from GFirst.
- Local authorities invited to consider allocation of resources, including seconding staff to assist with the transition and interim phases.

Phase 2:

- Cotswolds Destination Management Plan finalised and published by end of May 2014
- Interim Phase 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015
- Continuation of planned marketing campaigns, website development and other promotional activities.
- Planning and development activity underway towards a new partnership arrangement for the Cotswolds.
- Seek out and confirm funding available for new partnership.
- **Establish and launch new partnership to lead tourism from April 2015.**

**ENDS**