

# Tourism Strategy



## Destination Management Plan Bradford on Avon

2019 – 2024

V.3



# Contents

## 1. Introduction

## 2. Vision

- Strategic Objectives

- Priorities

- Outcomes

## 3. Context

- The Visitor Economy and Market

- The Tourism Product

- Policy

- Destination Management, Organisation and Marketing

- Future challenges and Trends

## 4. Strategic Analysis

- S.W.O.T.

## 5. Next steps

- Appendix A: Action Plan

- Priority 1: Partnership Working

- Priority 2: Product Development

- Priority 3: Market Development

- Priority 4: Developing the Destination

- Priority 5: Visitor Experience

- Appendix B: Data Collection

# 1. Introduction

Bradford on Avon is renowned for both its natural beauty and historic buildings and is widely recognised as one of the most important industrial heritage towns in the south-west of England, with good transportation links and located close to the UNESCO world Heritage sites in Bath.

This Strategy and Destination Management Plan brings the tourism aims of Bradford on Avon together, in one document, providing a single point of reference. The plan will align with destination partners plans and reduce duplication to maximise local investment.

This document will provide the Town Council and other stakeholders with a clear plan to ensure that the town and its tourism business are supported and developed. The emphasis is on developing a successful visitor experience which in turn will encourage more visitors and therefore boost the local economy to help ensure the viability of the businesses in the Town.

The plan highlights Bradford on Avon's cultural and scenic assets to increase tourism during all seasons, create engaging and appealing marketing campaigns to reach domestic and international audiences, continue and grow relationships with destination management organisations and utilising opportunities offered by them and increasing and improving the tourism offer and taking advantage of the towns close proximity to Bath and its 1.16 million\* staying visitor trips and its £2366 million\* spend from those visitors.

This Strategy and Destination Management Plan has been developed by Bradford on Avon Town Council. The Council has an ambition to create a prosperous and viable economic future for the town, as well as a vision to create a town where people want to live, work, play and visit. The Town Council has already taken the responsibility for the Tourist Information Centre to support this ambition and is now producing this Strategy and Destination Management Plan with the aspiration to improve the visitor experience and increase visitor numbers.

\*Visit Bath Statistics 2016

## 2. Vision

*To make Bradford on Avon the destination of choice for visitors to the South West of England*

### Strategic Objectives

- i) Increase the numbers of visitors
- ii) Improve the visitor experience
- iii) Boost the local economy

### Priorities

Bradford on Avon Town Council have identified the following 5 priorities that will achieve the strategic objectives.

Priority 1: Visitor Experience – to ensure that the visitor gets the best possible experience from visiting the town including great customer service and the ability to navigate the town easily and safely.

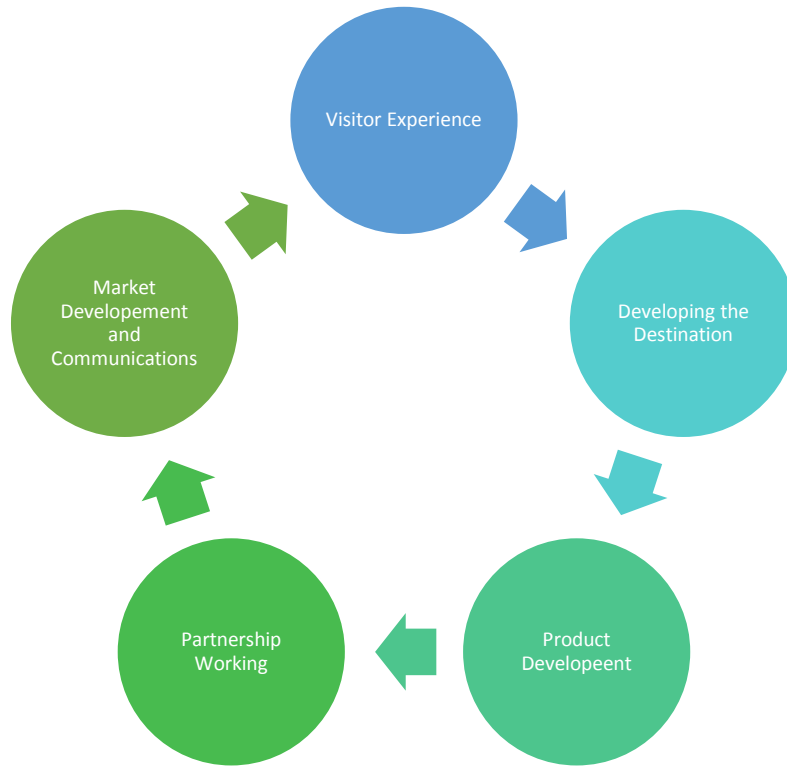
Priority 2: Developing the Destination –through improving the physical and natural environment Bradford on Avon will be an attractive destination to live, work visit and play that will support the economy in the town.

Priority 3: Product Development – to build on the assets of history and heritage and to strengthen and grow, unknown or newly established products so that the town can benefit from extended seasons and create new and compelling experiences for the visitors.

Priority 4: Partnership Working – to work with stakeholders to deliver the elements of the destination management plan.

Priority 5: Market Development and Communications – Identify new and emerging markets eg the curious traveler, that are suited to the offer in Bradford on Avon and how best to communicate with them. Further, to make the best of our memberships to Destination Management Organisations and the Great West Way.

These priorities work on the principle of continuous improvement, in the cycle outlined below;



## Outcomes

The success of the Strategy and Destination Management Plan will be based on the outcomes listed in the table below.

Increase the number of local, national and international visitors for over night stays	
Increase the number of day trips from bath and bristol	
Increased dwell time to improve spend in the town.	
Improve the overall visitor experience	
become a destination for year round visitors	
create a cohesive and sustainable marketing plan and activity for Bradford on Avon	
Attract investment into the town	

## 3. Context

### The Visitor Economy and Market

Tourism spend through domestic and International visits in England generated over £91.7 billion pounds into the British economy in 2016 and supports over 2.6 million jobs. The Total figures broken down shows that £53.5bn was attributed to domestic day trips, 18.5bn overnight stays and £19.7 by international inbound visitors

In the South West the number of visits (day, domestic and International) increased by 4.27% to 39.21m and spend increased by 8.97% to £24.43 billion in 2017, research from the international passenger survey 2017 showed that international visit were up 3% to 2.6m with the highest concentrations of visitors coming from Germany, France, USA, Spain and The Netherlands, it also showed that summer was the most popular time to visit at 37% followed by the spring at 28%.

Information taken from the 2016 Economic Impact of Wiltshire's Visitor Economy Report has shown that Wiltshire attracted approximately 20.7m day and staying visitor trips with a total visitor related spend value of £1,113m. This generated £1,557m of business turnover in the county supporting an estimated 29,000 tourism related jobs. The table below shows the steady improvement annually.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total Staying Visitor Trips (UK and overseas)	1.6 million	1.7 million	1.7 million	1.8 million	1.8 million	1.9 million
Total Staying Visitor Nights (UK and overseas)	5.9 million	5.5 million	5.5 million	5.9 million	5.9 million	6.2 million
Total Staying Visitor Spend (UK and overseas)	£269 million	£321 million	£339 million	£355 million	£368 million	£378 million
Total Day Visits	18.1 million	18.1 million	18.1 million	18.1 million	17.8 million	18.8 million
Total Day Visitor Spend	£549 million	£638 million	£641 million	£646 million	£669 million	£701 million
Total Visitor Related Spend	£859 million	£1,005 million	£1,028 million	£1,041 million	£1,083 million	£1,113 million
Total Tourism Supported Business Turnover	£1,130 million	£1,422 million	£1,455 million	£1,470 million	£1,530 million	£1,557 million
Total Employment (actual)	21,000	27,600	28,000	28,000	29,000	29,000
% Of All Wiltshire Employment	7%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%

Table from: Economic Impact of Wiltshire's Visitor Economy Final Report (Feb 2018)

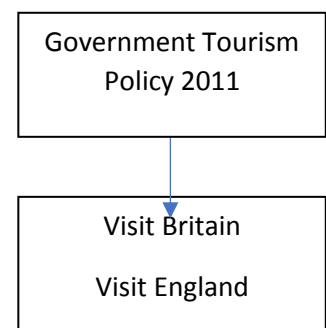
Due to Bradford on Avon's close proximity to Bath and the draw from its tourist economy it is worth considering the figures for Somerset, which received 39.21m visits, with the total spend of the £24.43 billion, data is only available for Bath in 2016 which recorded 1,161,900 staying visitor trips and its £23.5 Billion spend from those visitors, it can be assumed that due to a county increase, 2017's figures would show growth. Bath has continually been in the Visit Britain's top cities for inbound international visitors ranking 12<sup>th</sup> in 2017.

## The Tourism Product

Bradford on Avon provides a charming welcome to visitors, with numerous unique selling points including its rich heritage, impactful tiered honey stone buildings, its location on the River Avon and proximity to the Kennet and Avon Canal. The town lies partly on the Avon Valley, eight miles southeast of Bath, in the countryside between the Mendip Hills, Salisbury Plain, the Cotswold Hills and the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

In addition, it boasts a wide variety of walking and cycling trails, a large arts and crafts offer, performance and events programmes as well as a uniquely large independent shopping offering, restaurants/cafes and leisure experience. Bradford on Avon has a rich history and considerable evidence of its heritage remains today.

Such features include:



- The Saxon Church
- Holy Trinity Church
- The Town Bridge and Chapel
- Catholic Church
- The Iron Duke
- The Tithe Barn
- Dutch Barton
- Packhorse Bridge
- Moulton Hall
- St Mary Tory

## Policy

There is a hierarchy of policies, plans, organisations and objectives that impact on the tourism industry. These national and regional policies will impact on the context within the development of Bradford on Avon as a tourist destination. These policies highlight;



- Government recognition that support is needed to see a growth in tourism in rural areas.
- Visit Britain /Visit England focusing on building England’s tourism product. I.e. funding for projects like the Great West Way for which Bradford on Avon is a Destination Ambassador.
- The objectives of Visit Wiltshire are to promote and market the county of Wiltshire as a tourist destination and to act as an official voice for those involved in Wiltshire tourism industry.

Bradford on Avon’s Neighbourhood Plan (2013- 2023) and The Bradford on Avon Town Council Business Plan (2015-2020) have an ambition to create a prosperous and viable economic future for the town, as well as a vision to create a town where people want to live, work, play and visit, which would include visitors and tourism to Bradford on Avon.

In order to achieve this vision with regards to tourism, the council have vowed to encourage and promote the economic and commercial vitality of the town and provide and support town events to encourage visitors from further afield.

## Destination Management, Organisations and Marketing

To ensure that the Strategy and Destination Management Plan is taken forward and Bradford on Avon is able to grow and prosper it is essential that partnerships are strengthened or established between tourism organisations and town stakeholders, to ensure a collaborative approach for tourism in the town.

### Visit Wiltshire

Visit Wiltshire are the main Destination Management Organisation for the County of Wiltshire and offer out of county marketing and PR opportunities to increase visitor numbers. It has an extensive network of Travel Trade contacts (group travel, coaches, executive travel).

Bradford-on-Avon is a ‘town member’ partner of Visit Wiltshire.

### Great West Way

Visit Wiltshire in consultation with other destination management organisations have created a new touring route ‘The Great West Way’, The aim for the route is for it become as iconic as the ‘Route 66’ in the USA and ‘The Wild Atlantic Way’ in Ireland. The Great West Way is a 125-mile route which runs from London to Bristol and takes in many of England’s iconic destinations and



attractions. The Route has gained support from Visit Britain and has secured a grant of £1 million from the 'Discover England Fund'.

Bradford on Avon is a Destination Ambassador for the Great West Way.

### Visit Bath

Bradford-on-Avon is also a member of Visit Bath, the Destination Management Organisation for Bath. This offers the same advantages as Visit Wiltshire, but also allowing access to prospective Bath tourist market. The Council is working closely with Visit Bath to develop a strong and reciprocal partnership with the aim of tempting tourists and residents of Bath to take the 12-minute rail journey to Bradford on Avon.

Bradford on Avon is a Town Member of Visit bath.

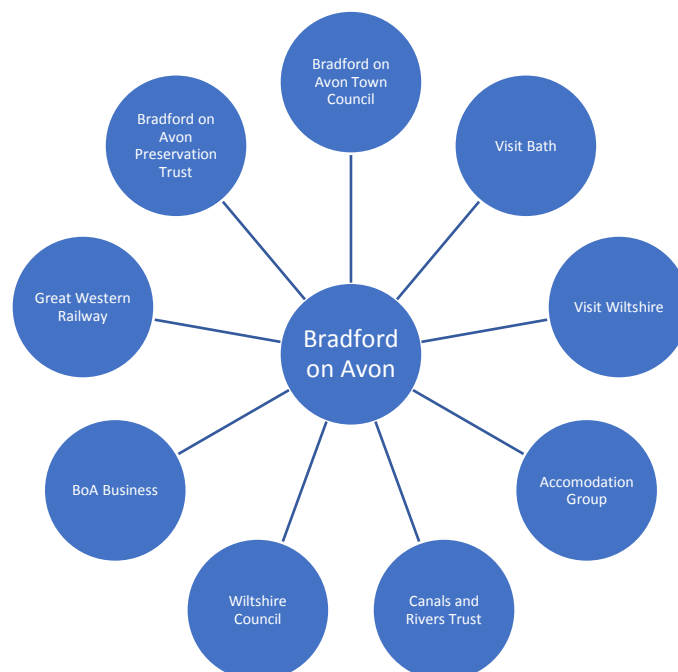
### The Bradford on Avon Preservation Trust

The Trust has over 50 years of experience, campaigning and helping restore buildings of importance, they are the guardians and managers to some of the most historic buildings in Bradford on Avon Including the West Barn and Tithe Barn. The Preservation Trust is key to the town's heritage tourism and historic attractions.

Other identified stakeholders include Bradford on Avon Business, Bradford on Avon Accommodation Group, Great Western Railway (GWR), the Canal and Rivers Trust and Wiltshire Council.

These are the key organisations, who will be impacted by the Strategy and Destination Management Plan and who will be involved or consulted with in the development aspects of the plan.

While the plan is progressed, it will be regularly reviewed where additional members may be identified, in this instance they will be consulted to help shape the future outcomes.



In the marketing of the Strategy and Destination Management Plan, the Council will take advantage of all mediums, including a new web site, social media and the printed word.

To ensure the delivery of the outcomes from this Strategy and Destination Management Plan, funding opportunities need to be sourced for investment, tourism infrastructure, product development, accessibility and training opportunities for local business and the town council to develop the offer.

## Future Challenges and Trends

The Visit Britain/Visit England's future trends report from 2015 showed that over the next 5 – 10 years there will many new challenges and trends. These include:

- The Ageless Traveller - people are living longer and more active lives, while adhering less and less to a traditional order of key life stages, it is becoming less relevant to think about travellers in terms of their age and more in terms of their interests.
- The Curious Traveller who is seeking the real authentic England and a key component of the Great West Way initiative
- Targeting audiences on social media and online will become more difficult and time consuming with the filter bubble and personalised algorithms.
- Travellers will look for destinations where they can collect many unique experiences without having to invest considerable time and money. They will also want to find out as much as they possibly can about a destination before they get there. Online information is key.
- Booking may change with future travellers being able to expect to purchase directly from Wishlist's on interfaces such as smart TVs. Being able to book through messaging apps and the desire to travel like a local not a tourist and the growing use of mobile devices and booking on the move rather than before the trip starts
- Connected Travel- Location based apps that allow a visitor to move through a location without Wi-Fi helping to navigate using phones

and tablets. Visitors are more social media conscious and require a destination that is 'instagramable' and that is worthy and easy to share on their accounts.

- Wellbeing and Relaxation – Due to the pressures of modern-day life a key motivation for travel in the future is to focus on mental wellbeing and escapism of everyday stress. This can also include a digital 'detox'
- Pursuit of Real – Future travellers will seek to get rid of the tourist stamp and experience like a local, as well seeking to improve their skills or learning a new skill (i.e. cookery classes)

[https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/England-documents/visitengland\\_future\\_trends\\_report.pdf](https://www.visitbritain.org/sites/default/files/vb-corporate/Documents-Library/documents/England-documents/visitengland_future_trends_report.pdf)

## 4.Strategic Analysis

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis has been undertaken to identify the areas that need to be addressed and developed, these then have informed the priorities and outcomes needed to deliver the Vision of this strategy.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial Heritage</li> <li>• Many Heritage buildings remaining</li> <li>• Varied food and drink offer</li> <li>• Large number of independent business</li> <li>• Active Tourist Information run by knowledgeable local volunteers</li> <li>• Array of open green spaces</li> <li>• Strong arts and Culture scene with Wiltshire Music Centre and event venues, St Margaret’s hall, Holy trinity Church and the West Barn.</li> <li>• Proximity to Bath &amp; Bristol</li> <li>• Location – Multi modal: visitors can access the town by Canal Boat, Rail, Car, Walking and cycling.</li> <li>• Destination Ambassador on the Great West Way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extreme Seasonality – Summer months /Bath Christmas Market</li> <li>• Car parking offer</li> <li>• Limited Coach Parking and amenities to gain coach friendly status</li> <li>• Small winding streets, issues for coaches and groups</li> <li>• Navigation difficult for pedestrians, directional signage not matching and/or in useful places</li> <li>• No consistent iconography/Branding</li> <li>• No Marketing Plan</li> <li>• Accessibility to areas of the town</li> <li>• Tourist Information Centre difficult to locate</li> <li>• Brexit</li> <li>• Tourist Information dated and not fir for purpose</li> <li>• Lack of printed material available online or</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain Coach Friendly status to increase awareness of the town to coaches</li> <li>• Maximise visitors’ interest in the local food/drink and the outdoors</li> <li>• Create a coordinated marketing campaigns to highlight unique selling points of the town in low season times.</li> <li>• Create a varied events program to attract and engage visitors, residents and business</li> <li>• Use marketing to encourage visitors by train from Bath and Bristol</li> <li>• Improve car park offer to increase day trips and shoppers</li> <li>• Utilise marketing opportunities offered by the Destination management organisations and the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ageing visitor profile</li> <li>• Low rate of overseas visitors</li> <li>• Accommodation is expensive and no budget option</li> <li>• Limited accessible accommodation</li> <li>• Many organisations not working together, not one place to find information.</li> <li>• Seen as a cheaper place to stay than bath, so visitors travel out</li> <li>• Heavy traffic through the town and over one of the key historic features of the town.</li> <li>• Limited crossings and small pavements</li> <li>• Limited data gathered from Visitors businesses and accommodation providers</li> <li>• Increased presence of anti-social behavior and</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership relationships with Destination management organisations</li> <li>• New updated website</li> <li>• Increased social media presence</li> </ul>	<p>hardcopy that can be sent out to prospective visitors (visitors guide)</p>	<p>Great West Way to engage both national and international audiences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather information from Businesses and accommodation providers yearly on visitor trends and business.</li> <li>• Creating a visitor's guide and more detailed map to help with navigation and information on the town that might be supplemented with a smartphone app.</li> <li>• Create a town trail and put on new detailed map</li> <li>• Implement information boards at key historical/heritage sites</li> <li>• Increased and matching navigational signage.</li> <li>• Improve pedestrian safety in the town</li> <li>• To encourage accommodation providers and tourism businesses to engage online</li> </ul>	<p>homeless people in public places</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No connection with the canal side of town</li> </ul>
---	---	--	---

## 5. Next Steps

The Action Plan, attached as an appendix, will provide the foundation for the Town Council to direct its efforts.

The implementation of the action plan will be over seen by the Council's Town Development committee which meets every two months, the Council's intention is to follow the methodology of 'Plan – Do – Review' to monitor progress, with a formal review of the Strategy and Destination Management Plan after three years (2022).

Due to the current lack of reliable data The Council will be collecting data to create a baseline to measure the outcomes from the strategy against.

# Appendix A: Action Plan

## Priority 1: Visitor Experience

	Who	When	£'s
Improve visitor navigational experience – wayfinding and map boards	IB		
Create a series of 'Town Trails' to take in the array of historical and heritage elements	TEO		
Investigate the feasibility of regular town tours by local guides.	TEO		
Improve the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) appearance	IB		
Identify and delivery training for TIC volunteers	TEO		
Investigate, recruit and train Town Ambassadors	TEO		

## Priority 2: Destination Development

	Who	When	£'s
Create a parking and traffic strategy for the town	TDEV		
Improving parking facilities for visitors using motorhomes and coaches (supporting coach friendly status)	TDEV		
Work with partners to develop a plan to improve wayfinding and town navigation	TDEV		
Develop street scene strategy to deliver a clean and attractive vista for the town	TDEV		

## Priority 3: Product Development

	Who	When	£'s
Create a sustainable and engaging events calendar for the town	TEO		
Improve on-line appeal	CO		
Develop on line accommodation guide	CO		
Develop on line 'attractions' guide	CO		



Priority 4: Partnership Working

	Who	When	£'s
Develop relationships with current partners	TEO		
Identify and foster new partner relationships that benefit tourism in Bradford on Avon	TEO		
Maximise the marketing and promotion opportunities offered by partners	TEO		

Priority 5: Market Development and Communication

	Who	When	£'s
Improve marketing materials so there is brand consistency	CO/TEO		
Ongoing development of website and printed material	CO/TEO		
Develop a 'Visit Bradford on Avon' guide to help visitors navigate the town easily	TEO		
Conduct accommodation providers annual survey (January), where their visitors have come from, occupancy rates and quiet times	CO/TEO		
Conduct where do you come from surveys (seasonally) within a minimum of 3 locations	CO/TEO		
Increase social media activity and engagement	CO/TEO		

## Appendix B: Data Collection

Bradford-on-Avon currently has no reliable information regarding visitor numbers and their activities. Thus, a data collection exercise will take place during 2019 in order that the Town Council has a better understanding of how many visitors come to the town and what their priorities are. This will enable the Council to determine its targets for increasing visitor numbers and enhancing their experience. Questions will include:

- How many people visited the town?
- Where did they come from?
- How long did they stay?
- How did they travel to the town?
- How much did they spend?
- How did they hear about us?
- What did they like? Accommodation, Food and Drink, Sightseeing?
- What could be improved?