

Great South West Tourism Partnership

MP Paper

23rd October 2020

1. Introduction

Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) and the South West Tourism Alliance (SWTA) have come together across the Great South West region, forming a new collaborative group the Great South West Tourism Partnership (GSWTP).

The GSWTP is an inclusive, equitable alliance that brings together the strength, knowledge and expertise of the leading tourism organisations across the Great South West area of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset and Dorset (including unitary authorities Plymouth, Torbay, Exeter, Dorset Council, Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole). The lead organisations in the GSWTP are:

- Visit Cornwall
- Visit Devon
- Destination Plymouth
- English Riviera BID Company
- Visit Somerset
- Visit Exmoor
- Visit Dorset
- Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Council Tourism
- South West Tourism Alliance

The partnership has existed in different forms for many years delivering value to the region. During the COVID-19 crisis the GSWTP has come together like never before to the benefit of the tourism and the visitor economy, including providing business support to individual businesses, co-ordinated domestic marketing campaigns, collaborative business impact surveys and joint lobbying to Government for industry support.

2. National Context

Tourism and hospitality is one of the UK's largest, most diverse and interconnected sectors of the UK economy, generating high levels of revenue and employment across all parts of the country.

It is acknowledged as being one of the sectors of the UK economy most affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. With regards to domestic tourism, VisitBritain's forecast (29th July) is that expenditure during 2020 will decline by £44.8bn (49%) to £46.8bn with domestic overnight tourism being down by £12.1bn and day visitor expenditure down by £32.7bn.

Combined, VisitBritain is forecasting that tourism revenue will decrease by £68.8bn, which equates to a loss of over 1,000,000 FTE tourism-related jobs.

The DCMS Coronavirus Impact Business Survey published on 17th June 2020 shows:

- 92% of tourism businesses said that their revenue had decreased by more than 50%, with 68% saying that their business was generating no revenue at all.
 - 62% said that they would not be viable within 6 months even with existing Government support packages.
 - Only 31% of tourism businesses said they had accessed Government support.
- (Source: Retained, Rebuilt, Resilient, UK Tourism Recovery Report Sept 2020.)

3. Regional Context

The South West visitor economy in Cornwall and IoS, Devon, Somerset and Dorset is the largest single visitor region outside of London in the UK, attracting 17 million staying visitors, with an estimated economic impact of £11.3 billion, with direct employment of 210,000 people.

4. Covid-19 Business Impact

In August 2020, a business impact survey took place to measure the impact of Covid-19 across the tourism sector. The purpose of the survey was to collect more hard evidence regarding the impact of Coronavirus and crucially what support businesses need for their future survival and growth.

The Great South West impact survey shows for the period January-July 2020:

- The average change in business turnover is -56%.
 - As a consequence, it is estimated that approx £2.2 billion of anticipated tourism business turnover will be lost in the Great South West region (Jan-July 2020).
 - If the supply chain is also considered, it is estimated a further loss of £486m is lost to the GSW economy.
 - 5% of businesses remain closed; 33% of businesses are now open, but are actually operating at 75% capacity or less (including 15% operating at 50% capacity or less).
 - Only 30% of businesses anticipate they will survive beyond summer 2021.
- (Source: South West Research Company Sept 2020)

October Half Term:

Concern is now growing about the threat of a 'national circuit breaker', which if instigated could seriously damage our sector once again with October Half Term worth **£287 million** to the tourism and hospitality economy across the GSWTP region. (Source: South West Research Company 2019).

5. Asks to Government

The Great South West Partnership key asks to Government are:

- Allow October half term holidays to take place, do not instigate a 'national circuit breaker' at this time.
- Extend the Job Support Scheme to also cover businesses that are not able to open due to Government Guidelines, not just those closed due to legal restrictions and also to those businesses whose customers are unable to travel due to local/ international lockdowns.
- Support to be offered to businesses who have suffered direct cancellations as a result of last-minute lockdown restrictions
- Review the Rule of Six in England to exclude children.
- Review the 10pm closure for hospitality venues in Tier 1 areas.
- Maintain the 5% VAT reduction rate and business rates relief to Sept 2021.
- The Government reviews the structure and funding of all DMO's nationally for the long term and in conjunction with Tourism Sector Deal ambitions.

On behalf of the Great South West Tourism Partnership.