

# THE WIGHT BID

EXCERPTS FROM THE DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR **THE WIGHT BID**  
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## OUR VISION: RESTORING A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ECONOMY

**Visit Isle of Wight is one of the most successful destination management organisations in the UK and has, since its inception in 2012, demonstrated a quite unusual capacity to forge strong partnerships with local businesses and deliver creative and exciting campaigns designed to boost the Island's visitor economy. But like other similar bodies, it faces serious challenges stemming from a loss of public sector funding at a time when the UK's visitor economy is demonstrating real growth potential driven by consumers' desire for authentic and high quality experiences.**

Capitalising on the organisation's strong track record, a decision has been made to develop an Island-wide tourism-based 'business improvement district' or BID.

Subject to support in a ballot, the 'Wight BID' will be funded through a levy on businesses that operate in the tourism sector based upon an annual contribution of 1.75% of the rateable value of each business premises. The BID will commence on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 and last for five years. The levy will raise £2 million and provide leverage for an additional revenue stream of up to £1.5 million over the duration of the BID programme.

We have undertaken an extensive consultation programme with tourism businesses on the Island and have identified a number of clear priorities that will provide the basis for our BID programme, priorities that we believe will lay the foundations for future growth of our visitor economy. The Wight BID will focus on three themes:

- **Attracting visitors for life** – How we grow our market and increase visitor spend
- **Delivering the Experience (and explore more!)** – The total visitor experience and how we can encourage visitors to explore the whole island
- **Working together** – Our approach to improving our prospects for success through collaboration and partnerships.

This BID proposal also includes plans to reform the governance of Visit Isle of Wight placing the levy payers at the heart of the decision making process and capitalising upon the creative talents of the Island's business community.

The decision on whether the BID progresses or not will be made by tourism businesses through a ballot that will take place on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2016. Support for this exciting initiative in the ballot will enable Visit Isle of Wight to continue its quest to grow our visitor economy and build our capacity to attract more visitors and underpin the Island's economic future.

Go to [www.isleofwightbid.com](http://www.isleofwightbid.com) to download a complete copy of this Business Proposal and for more details about UK BIDS and The Wight BID.

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# THE WIGHT BID – THE KEY FACTS

**Visit Isle of Wight is proposing to invite tourism businesses across the Island to participate in a Business Improvement District, which aims to stimulate growth in the visitor economy and deliver a programme of activities designed to increase visitor numbers, improve the quality of their experience while on the Island, and enable the organisation to better identify and champion the needs and priorities of local businesses.**

**As a prospective BID levy payer, you should be aware of the following key facts:**

- The BID will comply with the Local Government Act 2003 and The Business Improvement District (England) Regulations 2004 (the 'Regulations')
- The BID will be managed by Visit Isle of Wight which will be responsible for ensuring the BID Proposal is implemented within budget and on-time.
- Visit Isle of Wight (Number 08138988) is a 'not for profit' company limited by guarantee whose registered office is The Guildhall, High Street, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 1TY.
- The BID arrangements will commence on September 1st 2016 and operate for 5 years, ending on August 31st 2021.
- All businesses defined in Appendix A will, if the ballot is successful, be liable to pay the levy.
- Any new business that begins to operate during the BID which had it operated at the commencement of the BID would have been eligible to take part in the ballot and subsequently liable to pay the levy, shall be liable to pay the levy from the beginning of the first chargeable period after the business commences trading.
- A ballot of businesses liable for the payment of the levy will be held, and will be deemed to be carried if more than 50% of businesses participating in the ballot approve the BID arrangements and those voting in favour represent more than 50% of the rateable value of those participating in the ballot.
- The person responsible for the payment of business rates will be entitled to one vote in the ballot for each hereditament that is liable for the payment of the levy.
- The levy will be charged annually in advance on a chargeable day basis. No refund will be made if a property is disposed of and liability for the BID levy in future years transfers to a new owner or tenant.
- The levy for the first chargeable period commencing on September 1st 2016 will be set at 1.75% of the rateable value of each business premises on April 1st 2016, or £150, whichever is the higher.
- The levy for the second and subsequent 'chargeable periods' will be 1.75% of the rateable value of the premises on the first day of April of that year or £150 whichever is the higher.
- The BID levy will be charged to businesses during September annually and will be payable in full within 30 days of the date of the levy demand.
- The person responsible for the payment of the levy will be the person responsible for the payment of the National Non Domestic Rates for the premises.
- If the rateable value of any premises reduces during the course of the BID to a level below £3000, then that business will no longer be liable for the payment of the BID levy from the beginning of the next chargeable period after the reduction in rateable value takes effect. Likewise, if the rateable value of any premises increases from a level below £3000 to a rateable value of £3000 or more, then it will become liable for the payment of the levy from the beginning of the next 'chargeable period'.
- Except where the rateable value of a premises changes, the levy payable in respect of each premises will not increase from one chargeable period to the next.
- Businesses such as registered charities whose business rates are eligible for certain reliefs will pay a levy based upon their full rateable value.
- VAT will not be charged on the BID levy.
- The levy will be collected by the Isle of Wight Council or a body contracted to do so, on its behalf, and passed to Visit Isle of Wight to implement the programme set out in the BID Proposal. The process for collection and enforcement will be the same as the council applies to the collection of NNDR.
- The Council will account for the money in accordance with the Regulations.
- The levy cannot be used to fund services that local authorities are required to provide as a part of their statutory responsibilities.
- All of the revenue raised from the BID levy will be utilised for the purposes of delivering the programme set out in this proposal.
- No part of the BID arrangements will be altered without an alteration ballot.
- The BID will apply to the whole of the area administered by the Isle of Wight Council and shown on the map.
- The council will make a charge for the cost of collection on a basic cost-recovery basis.
- The cost of conducting the ballot will be borne by the council.
- In the event that the ballot is unsuccessful, no similar BID will be developed and submitted to a vote within 12 months of the ballot being rejected.
- The finances of the BID will be independently audited on an annual basis and the summary accounts will be made available to levy payers at the annual general meeting of Visit Isle of Wight.
- Management accounts will be produced on a quarterly basis and submitted to the Visit Isle of Wight board of directors and to the Isle of Wight Council. Visit Isle of Wight will formally report annually to levy payers on progress and achievements.

# WHY YOU SHOULD VOTE 'YES'

**The aim of the Wight BID is to forge a new and exciting partnership between Visit Isle of Wight and local businesses to improve the economic prospects of the Island's tourism industry. It will lead to a potential increase of 370,000 trips over the lifetime of the BID and could generate more than £60million for the Island's economy from a total investment of around £3.5million. Importantly, all of the levy paid by businesses will be invested in the delivery of the BID programme.**

**With your support, our programme can be a real 'game changer'.**

Support for the Wight BID will enable us to:

- Deliver real additional growth in first time and repeat visitors.
- Promote the Isle of Wight as a must-see destination in the UK to higher demographic groups capable of travelling to the Island often.
- Deliver an 18:1 return on investment in marketing activity.
- Work with all levy payers to champion local products and experiences.
- Protect ourselves from competitor activity aimed at wooing our loyal repeat visitors away from the Island.
- Build on improvements in the length of stay and first-time visitors secured during the first three operational years of Visit Isle of Wight.
- Take the next step in turning Visit Isle of Wight into a fully democratic, transparent, accountable and effective destination partnership that is fully engaged with local businesses.
- Increase first time and repeat visits by developing and implementing creative and dynamic marketing campaigns that communicate the quality and diversity of the Island's tourism offer.
- Implement measures designed to enhance the quality of the holiday experience and improve circulation of information about what to see and do.
- Encourage visitors to stay longer by working with organisations responsible for the provision of transport to, from, and around the Isle of Wight, to make the Island more accessible and to encourage our visitors to explore the diversity of the place.
- Help ensure that the built and natural environment and especially our beaches are maintained to the highest standards by our partners.
- Encourage investment that enhances the visitor experience.
- Help us to reduce red tape that stands in the way of progress, and be the official voice for tourism.
- Champion the priorities of tourism businesses at a local, regional and national level.
- Identify and be open to opportunities that will support medium to long-term growth in the visitor economy.

# THE WIGHT BID PROGRAMME

## THEME 1 – Attracting Visitors for Life

**Delivering effective destination marketing campaigns is crucial to the success of the Island's visitor economy. We face strong competition from high quality destinations within the UK and overseas and our capacity to compete depends upon us collaborating to invest in creative and effective marketing campaigns.**

### What you told us:

- Over 90% of you said that off-Island marketing is a very high priority with domestic short-breaks and long holidays of almost equal importance.
- You highlighted the need to deliver promotions and campaigns to improve shoulder periods and during events such as the Isle of Wight festival when many visitors stay away from the Island.
- Consultees had differing views about who to target: Many thought London was a clear target, most thought that visitors need to be from higher demographic groups, and some thought that marketing should be carried out across the country.
- Many of you said we should recognise the role played by overseas visitors to the Island, especially given their high level of spending.
- You asked for more research into why people aren't coming here and what products and experiences we need to improve or develop.
- Most people consulted felt that we need to improve the negative perceptions of the Island regarding travel and access.
- Events and festivals are very important drivers for our tourism sector and you would like to see new events and festivals supported.

### What we plan to do:

- Run high-profile above-the-line advertising campaigns in the Spring and Autumn featuring an enriched Island brand and supported by a press office function to deliver quality editorial in target markets.
- Concentrate on attracting new, higher demographic, first-time visitors.
- Introduce campaigns and improvements in information provision both on and off-Island to encourage people to stay longer and spend more.
- Position the Island as the ultimate relaxing break – the '*nearby far away escape*'.
- Devise and run a rolling 'customer relationship marketing programme' based upon our database of over 150,000 previous visitors to encourage repeat visits.
- Develop our working links with overseas markets through Visit Britain, Visit England and Tourism South East partnerships.
- Allocate 10% of the entire marketing budget to new research to tell us not just who is coming, but why some are not, and what we need to do about it.
- We will continue to focus on shoulder season growth above all else and will develop new thematic promotions and other new reasons to visit during these periods.

### Our aims are to:

- Increase first time visitors by 370,000 over the lifetime of the BID.
- Grow the tourism economy by £60 million over the lifetime of the BID from £264million to £324million.
- Increase the average length of stay (currently 3.5 days).
- Encourage more visitor travel across the Island to find our 'hidden gems'.

# THE WIGHT BID PROGRAMME

## THEME 2 – Delivering the Experience (and explore more!)

**When prospective visitors look at the Island as a possible holiday destination and again when they arrive, our customer service, products, and most importantly of all, the Island itself has to look good and meet their expectations if we are to encourage more repeat visits, higher levels of spending and move our customer base ‘up market’ to attract independent, savvy visitors.**

### What you told us:

- More than 75% of you said that the quality of the Island product needs attention.
- Nearly everyone consulted felt that the landscape was the most important Island attraction. (Consumers too, tell us that they love the Island because it is relaxing, operates at a slower pace of life, because of the spectacular coast and countryside and the compact nature of the Island – many different experiences can be found within a short distance).
- Most of you said that the road signs, on-Island transport, car parks, public spaces, parks and gardens needed improvement.
- 92% of you told us that providing award-winning quality beaches on the Island was important to the success of your business.
- Almost everyone said that we need to tell a better story about the hidden gems, towns and villages across the Island.
- You recognised that with the desire to improve visitor numbers in the Spring, comes the need to encourage more attractions and facilities to stay open in the shoulder periods.
- Most tourism businesses felt that if the number of visitors and tourist spend started to increase significantly, then owners would be able to investing more in their own businesses.
- Some of you stressed the importance of first impressions and the need for our ports of arrival to look more welcoming and exciting.
- Many of you were uncomfortable with the number of on-Island guides, pocket guides and magazines that appeared to be duplicating each other and asked for this situation to be rationalised and co-ordinated in future.

### What we plan to do:

- We will establish a number of working parties to facilitate discussion on improvements to public spaces including our beaches and an action plan of improvements will be agreed.
- In our first year we will carry out a ‘Visitor Journey’ audit of on-Island information and communication that includes all on-Island guides, tourism signage, ports of arrival and departure, and key public spaces that visitors use. We will then co-ordinate, implement, facilitate and encourage improvements in the continuity of visitor message, brand and quality of information.
- We will encourage and help parish councils, local residents and tidy-action groups to re-introduce beach awards so we can promote them.
- We will hand over editorial responsibility for the town and village pages on the official consumer website to towns and villages to populate with their stories, reasons for visiting, and showcase the characteristics and attractions of their areas.
- We will create new thematic trails that link towns, villages and attractions together.
- Introduce a new on-Island survey that will report of visitors perception and concerns about the Island, track satisfaction levels and focus on the top priorities that need addressing first.

### Our aims are to:

- Increase repeat and return tourist trips and set new targets for the lifetime of the BID.
- Address key concerns that visitors express about the way the Island looks in some areas.
- Work with our travel partners to do all we can to make our ports and Island arrival points as welcoming and customer friendly as possible.
- Encourage visitors to explore far more of the Island and to spend their money in towns, villages and attractions over a wider area than previously.

# THE WIGHT BID PROGRAMME

## THEME 3 – Working Together

**Tourism is vitally important to the Isle of Wight but the industry is fragmented and we need to work together to ensure that businesses' priorities are agreed and delivered in a way that underpins long-term growth.**

### What you told us:

- Visit Isle of Wight is the organisation best placed to co-ordinate activities that are designed to grow the Island's visitor economy, provided that the BID governance and decision making process is truly inclusive, transparent and accountable to all levy payers.
- You want to see us doing all we can to encourage new investments and to assist in removing any barriers to development and regeneration.
- You would like to see more done to encourage pride in the Island.
- Larger retailers and superstores should be invited to play a fully active and engaged role in supporting the BID, and contributing to costs.
- 88% of you wanted a stronger and more influential voice for the Island's tourism sector.
- You also wanted a better 'joined-up' approach to managing tourism with other sectors such as retailers, and the delivery of programmes to ensure that the industry has access to skilled staff

### What we plan to do:

- Lead a transparent, accountable and inclusive organisation that makes every levy payer feel involved and ensures they have a say in the development of activities, and the implementation of plans and projects.
- Introduce a strategic partnership scheme to attract additional investment from supermarkets and other large stores over the lifetime of the BID.
- Create a membership supporters club from smaller retailers, tourism industry support service companies such as accountants and PR agencies, and very small tourism businesses with a rateable value of less than £3000, to generate additional investment in the BID programme.
- Create a governance and task-force structure that reflects the make-up of the levy payers.
- Create an online forum for all levy payers to access and exchange ideas, vote for actions and share ideas.
- Create toolkits of digital and creative assets that all the levy payers can use to help promote their own businesses.

### Our aims are to:

- Ensure that those who also benefit from the visitor economy, but fall outside the scope of the BID arrangements are encouraged to contribute funds and other benefits in kind to support the delivery of the BID programme.
- Create a unified destination partnership that every member feels engaged with.
- Generate at least an additional £275,000 a year to cover the administration, management and running costs of Visit Isle of Wight enabling us to maximise our investment in the BID programme.
- Unify the Island's visitor economy behind one vision.



# MONITORING PERFORMANCE

## **The Wight BID will deliver a range of business-focused and achievable measures that will lead, over the course of the BID, to:**

- Business growth based upon increased visitor spend and extended duration of visitors' stay.
- Expansion of our market base.
- An improved reputation of the Island and an uplift in the quality of our visitors' experience.
- Greater collaboration between tourism businesses to ensure what we do meets our levy payers' needs and priorities.
- Our voice being heard more clearly at a strategic level.

To understand the effectiveness of our BID programme in meeting these performance objectives, we will establish measures that are designed to cost-effectively assess how our programme is progressing, which will be overseen by representatives of the levy payers.

## **To monitor the effectiveness of our programme and account to levy payers, we will:**

- Monitor and report on:
  - Solent traffic research and in particular, first-time and repeat visitors.
  - The amount of quality media coverage achieved each year.
  - Consumer web traffic and social media engagement.
- Carry out additional research every 24 months to measure and record perceptions and attitudes towards the Island.
- Carry out consumer surveys to test visibility, impact and conversion following key Spring and Autumn above-the-line campaigns.
- Publish an annual visitor perception survey and track satisfaction levels.
- Monitor and report on traffic improvements and consumer engagement with towns and village pages on the official website.
- Record and report on annual visitor traffic and highlight shoulder-period visits by quarter.
- Document and publish the annual 'visitor journey' on-Island audit for the Isle of Wight with recommendations highlighting urgent fixes requiring attention.
- Produce annual reports, monthly meeting reports, quarterly engagement reports and make them available online and/or in print format to levy payers.
- Ensure total transparency in our accounting practices producing audited accounts that will be available to levy payers.
- Establish large working-group meetings, task meetings, conferences and other events throughout the year.
- Establish a monitoring working party to look at how Visit Isle of Wight is engaging with the levy payers, with the authority to commission surveys and gather in feedback from the industry that will lead to improvements in engagement activities.

# APPENDIX

## Descriptions of businesses eligible to vote in the BID ballot and liable for the payment of the BID levy.

This schedule is based upon information supplied by Isle of Wight Council from their database of National Non-Domestic (NNDR) Rate payers.

### NNDR Classification (Primary Description)

Activity Centre and Premises  
Airfield and Premises  
Amusement Arcade and Premises  
Amusement Park and Premises  
Aquarium and Premises  
Beach Hut  
Bingo Hall and Premises  
Botanical Gardens and Premises  
Bowling Alley, Nightclub and Premises  
Bowling Rinks and Premises  
Bus Station and Premises  
Café and Premises  
Cafe Amusement Arcade and Premises  
Cafe B and B and Premises  
Cafe Bar and Premises  
Cafe, Golf Course and Premises  
Camping Site and Premises  
Car and Coach Park  
Car Park  
Car Park and Premises  
Car Park and Public Conveniences  
Car Park Offices and Premises  
Caravan Park and Premises  
Chalet Park and Premises  
Children's Amusement Park and Premises  
Chine, Tea Rooms and Premises  
Cinema and Premises

### Club and Premises (part) Clubhouse and Premises (part)

Crazy Golf Site and Premises  
Exhibition Hall and Premises  
Farm Park and Premises  
Farm Shop  
Farm Shop Cafe and Premises  
Ferry Terminal and Premises  
Festival Site (Part Exempt)  
Gallery and Premises  
Garden and Exhibition Centre and Premises  
Garden Centre  
Garden Centre and Premises  
Go Kart Track and Premises  
Golf Course and Premises  
Guest Accommodation and Premises  
Guest House and Premises  
Guest House, Cafe and Premises  
Historic Monument and Premises  
Historic Property and Premises  
Holiday Centre and Premises  
Hostel and Premises  
Hotel and Premises  
Hotel Restaurant and Premises  
Hovercraft Terminal and Premises  
Ice Skating Rink and Premises  
Inn and Premises  
Leisure Centre and Premises  
Licensed Restaurant and Premises  
Lift and Premises  
Light Railway Museum and Premises  
Marina and Premises  
Market and Premises  
Model Village and Premises  
Mooring and Premises  
Motel and Premises  
Museum and Premises  
Nature Reserve and Premises  
Nightclub and Premises  
Offices Day Spa and Premises  
Owl and Falconry Centre and Premises

Pleasure Pier and Premises  
Public House and Premises  
Public House Community Hall and Premises  
Public House Hotel and Premises  
Residential Sailing Centre and Premises  
Restaurant and Premises  
Restaurant Take Away and Premises  
Restaurant, BandB and Premises  
Restaurant, Holiday Lets and Premises  
Seaside Amusement Site, Cafe and Premises  
Self Catering Holiday Unit(S) and Premises (Incl. Self Catering Holiday Unit, Car Space and Premises)  
Self Catering Unit and Premises  
Shooting Lodge and Premises  
Site of Amusements and Premises  
Site of Mobile Catering Vehicle and Premises  
Speedway Racetrack and Premises  
Stable Camping Site and Premises  
Stables, Guest House Accommodation and Premises  
Swimming Pool and Premises  
Tennis Centre and Premises  
Tennis Club and Premises  
Theatre and Premises  
Theatre Stores and Premises  
Therapy Pool and Premises  
Toll Ferry and Premises  
Tourist Attraction  
Water Sports Centre and Premises  
Wine Bar and Premises  
Yacht Club and Premises  
Zoo and Premises