Creative Brief

East of England Touring Route: From London to Northumberland

NewcastleGateshead Initiative are seeking support from a creative agency to develop the creative approach for a new tourism product that is currently under development. The product is a 300-mile touring route that stretches from Hertfordshire to Northumberland that roughly follows the line of the A1. It is being developed for German visitors and will be promoted in that country in early 2019.

1. Background to the ‘East of England Touring Route’

The concept takes a familiar German holiday choice – touring – and present an English version that aims to satisfy the German fascination with English people and their culture.

It features characterful English market towns and villages that are off the beaten track, where you can find icons of English culture such as a pint in the pub, afternoon team, local stories and traditions. Added to this are gardens, stately homes, castles and gorgeous countryside, combined with some of the better known historic cities and major cities that offer a good helping of shopping and sight-seeing.

This project is funded with £1m from the Discover England Fund and £400,000 of match funding from a range of project partners including destination management organisations, local authorities and P&O Ferries. It was approved for funding in February 2018, some 6 months after the majority of large scale projects that are being supported by the fund. This has squeezed the timetable for delivery of the project and we are having to move quickly to deliver a wide range of activities by 31 March 2019, by which time all the project investment must be spent.

Until now the project has been called the East of England Touring Route, but this is a project name and not intended as a consumer-facing title or proposition.

**Our partnership – its geography**

The East of England Touring Route starts north of London and roughly follows the route of the A1 as far as Newcastle. From Newcastle the route follows a loop around Northumberland starting and finishing in Newcastle. There are pragmatic reasons for this geography:

* entry points south of London risk German visitors following their usual habits and exploring South East England, London and the popular West Country, never getting beyond the M25 into Eastern England.
* DFDS report that German visitors entering England via Newcastle typically turn right and head straight for Scotland. Presenting a route that encourages them to turn left, or tour in a loop through Northumberland, will help them to discover and explore Eastern England rather than use the Port of Tyne and Hull as convenient arrival points for a trip to Scotland.

The footprint of the route takes advantage of eight plus entry points that directly connect Eastern England to the German market. The area is particularly accessible by ferry through the seaports at Harwich, Hull and Port of Tyne for self-drive, and by air into Luton, Stanstead, East Midlands, Doncaster, Durham/Tees Valley and Newcastle for fly-drive. This broad base of airline routes and ferry services means that we have a range of partners to engage with. We need to determine the optimal landing and departure points to help us determine who to work with. To date P&O Ferries, are supporting this project in principle because they can see the opportunity it presents to them for additional incremental business. We are also in discussion with DFDS as well as easyjet via VisitBritain.

The main mode of in-destination travel is envisaged as self-drive however the linear nature of the route and the presence of the East Coast mainline make exploration by rail a possibility.

To date, the project partnership comprises organisations that cover almost the whole route, though there are some notable sections without representation eg Cambridge. The counties and destinations that are currently included are:

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| --- | --- |
| **County** | **Destination focus** |
| Hertfordshire | Hitchin, St Albans |
| Rutland | Oakham, Uppingham |
| Derbyshire | Selected products in the Peak District |
| Lincolnshire | Stamford, Grantham, Lincoln |
| Nottinghamshire | Newark, Southwell |
| Yorkshire | York, Leeds, Selby |
| Tees Valley | Darlington |
| Durham | Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland |
| Tyne and Wear | NewcastleGateshead |
| Northumberland | Alnwick, Berwick |
|  |  |

**Our Market and Proposed Audiences**

*Germany*

* Germans are most likely to take the longest trips of the near European markets (8+ nights), ideal for a 300-mile touring route;
* Germans are taking more short breaks of 2-4 nights duration, though of the near-European markets they have a higher than average duration of 5.8 nights;
* Germans are more likely to stay outside of London than any other market;
* Outside of London, Germany generates the highest amount of visitor spend;
* Germans generate the second highest number of nights spent in England;
* German visitors are most interested in activities related to ‘food and drink’ and ‘countryside’ when thinking about holidaying in Britain;
* Germans have the highest levels of knowledge about English regions and cities.

VisitEngland’s recent market summary for Germany reveals:

* a very sophisticated travel market
* an audience with detailed and extensive experience of visiting England
* open to getting beyond the cliché and get excited about the outdoors and the history
* greater familiarity with the country and confidence about visiting meaning they are more open to considering things not on the ‘tourist trail’.
* happy to drive and will rent a car if flying into the country.

*Explorers and Culture Buffs*

These two segments have been chosen because they are culturally curious, interested in exploration and know and love touring routes. The main characteristics that are common to both segments include:

* looking for relaxation and the opportunity to escape and unwind;
* like to include some sightseeing in their holidays, as long it is taken at their pace, allows for more in- depth exploration and has a good dose of culture;
* interested in food and drink;
* higher spenders than some other groups;
* like a level of comfort and uniqueness that they are happy to pay for;
* have more flexibility to travel year-round and vary the duration of their trip.

We believe that the key differences between the two segments are that Explorers will be drawn more to the market towns, rural scenery and heritage product while Culture Buffs are more likely to include city time in a trip and use the cities as a staying base and for sport and shopping.

Pen portraits of the segments will be available to the successful agency.

2. The consumer and trade view

We have tested the concept of the new route in Germany with consumers and travel trade (tour operators, travel agents) to refine our approach and to understand the critical success factors for this project.

The main findings from this research are captured in a detailed report which will be made available to the successful agency.

**General insights**

The route was seen as delivering strongly on all of the following elements that are important to Germans while on holiday.

* People – meeting local people and engaging with their way of life
* Culture – which means a range of elements including history, architecture, lifestyle of their hosts, arts, food and drink
* The Outdoors – fresh air, being outside
* A desire for unique and ownable experiences when they travel. By this they mean:
* Little adventures – things that aren’t typical and they can talk about to their friends
* Off the beaten track – visiting places that aren’t too touristy, contrived or invented, being where others aren’t
* Hidden gems – unusual and frequented by locals
* Something different – distinctive, specific to a place, unique, not what others do

In addition, German visitors want a relaxed pace for their holidays and something that provides a sense of discovery, freedom and independence. The travel trade are important influencers and viewed as professionals that can help plan and also book a trip.

**Specific insights** that relate to this project are:

German Explorers and Culture Buffs are genuinely very interested in the idea because:

* It provides a tangible concept
* It offers opportunities to get to know The English who are seen as a bit different and quirky
* It offers opportunities to experience the English countryside which is considered beautiful and unique
* It encapsulates the key cultural strengths of England and the things they find interesting
* It has the potential to provide unique and ownable experiences in ‘unseen’ England
* The history of the route is important and links to the idea of England’s multi-layered and textured history that is still relevant today
* The route is seen as a way of accessing the real and authentic English way of life.

In additional the research revealed that:

* For Germans, the route naturally runs South to North
* Awareness and knowledge of the area is low
* The route isn’t in the East of England but the Middle of England in German minds
* Presenting too much choice up front can be overwhelming
* Many will want to do most or all of the route on a trip rather than sections
* Products that were positively received were coaching inns, B&Bs, towns and villages and countryside, informative guides, food and drink and living history; less positively received were city-centre hotels, generic options such as fish and chips or pubs, anything that feels manufactured, anything that was deemed ‘worthy’.

German perceptions of England are currently dominated by London and Cornwall.

5. The brief

We are looking for an experienced creative agency to help us develop the brand and narrative for this project. It has become clear that we need to think carefully about the name of the product that is taken to market and to identify an inspiring name and description that will capture the imagination of Explorers and Culture Buffs and the German Travel Trade. It is particularly important to ensure the name works in translation and in English. It is also important that the name and narrative inspires tourism providers in England to want to belong to the route. We will brief the successful agency on ideas that have been suggested and should be part of their thinking.

In the first instance, we would like the successful agency to suggest 2-3 brand and naming options for consideration and then develop the chosen option into a creative approach that can inform future marketing and communications activity, much of which will be delivered by third parties including destination organisations and tourism businesses.

The project will require a range of creative assets for use by destination organisations, tourism businesses, travel trade partners and by the delivery team. Examples of assets that we predict will be required are: pages for destination websites, route assets that can be adopted by businesses in their properties and marketing materials, materials for press packs, pop up displays for events, designed itineraries that can be embedded in trade portfolios and stakeholder briefing documents. The creative approach should support this range of uses and provide practical guidance and tools to stakeholders and project partners.

We will be making arrangements to test one or more options in Germany with the target segments. Agencies that can carry out testing on our behalf should indicate this in their response and provide costs.

The chosen agency may be asked to design some of the assets described above but at this time we are looking for strategic creative support.

6. Response to brief

The response to this brief should include:

1. Evidence of relevant experience and credentials, including examples of work
2. An initial response to the project and the brief plus details of the suggested approach that will meet the project objectives, commenting specifically on:
   1. Product name and product description;
   2. Overview narrative for consumer and trade audiences;
   3. Development of creative approach and associated toolkit to guide future marketing communications activity;
   4. Arrangements for testing the creative in market (if included).
3. Clear and detailed costings
4. Details of the people that would work on the project including CVs
5. An indication of capacity to meet the timelines.

Tender deadline and outline of project timetable:

Tender deadline: 25 May 5pm

Interviews/presentations for shortlisted agencies: w/b 28 May in York or Newark

Contract award: 1 June

Kick-off meeting: 4 June London

Concepts ready for testing in market: 20 June

In market testing: w/c 25 June

Route name and narrative finalised: Friday 6 July

Creative framework and toolkit complete: Friday 27July.

Budget

Our budget for this brief is £25,000 exclusive of VAT.

Response

Please send your response by 25 May 2018, by 5pm, to:

Melanie Sensicle, Project Director

[Melanie.Sensicle@EETR.org.uk](mailto:Melanie.Sensicle@EETR.org.uk)