



Short / Medium Term  
Destination Management Plan  
2017-2018

April 2017

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## **1. Introduction**

The Destination Dover Short / Medium Term Destination Management Plan (DMP) covering the town of Dover in Kent and nearby parishes, has been developed in or to maximise Destination Dover impact on the Dover's visitor economy for the short term, and also create a firm foundation for the longer term.

Destination Dover has overall ownership of the DMP but it will be delivered by working with organisations, businesses, groups and individuals that have a stake in the visitor economy. It identifies a range of actions for Destination Dover to move the visitor sector forward, until March 2018. A new longer term review is planned for late 2017 once the Dover district visitors survey is conducted and additional research by Destination Dover during its first tourism season.

### **1.1 Aim of DMP**

The aim for this DMP is to create a strong foundation for Destination Dover's long term future, in order to promote and increase visitors to Dover, from now till March 2018.

## 1.2 DMP Presumptions

The DMP has been developed with the following presumptions:

- Initial commitment and support for 5 year from partners to Destination Dover
- St James Development open by April 2018
- Additional visitor research conducted in 2017

## 2 Overview of Dover

### 2.1 Dover's current Visitor economy

- Population of Dover District is approximately 113,000
- Estimated population of Dover town (including the parishes of St Margaret's Guston, Whitfield and Capel-le Ferne) is 44,290

Dover District	Total Visitors	Staying Visitors Trips	Day Visitor Trips	% of Staying Visitors from outside UK	Total Direct Spend	Staying Visitor Spend	Day Visitor Spend	Jobs Supported FTE	Actual Jobs	Value of Tourism (incl. Induced impact)
2009	3.85m	0.44m	3.41m	16%	£181m	£78.3m	£102.7m	n/a	4,418	£211m
2011	3.9m	0.42m	3.47m	18%	£185m	£80.5m	£104.5m	3,776	4,559	£244m
2013	4.05m	0.38m	3.65m	19%	£191m	£79.8m	£111.4m	3,705	5,140	£248m
2015	4.31m	0.42m	3.88m	n/a	£210m	£88.7m	£116m	4,028	5,562	£265m

Data from Economic Impact of Tourism, Dover - 2015 Results

## 2.2 SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Very high brand awareness of visitor assets               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ National Trust - White Cliffs</li> <li>○ English Heritage - Dover Castle</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Range and quality of heritage assets</li> <li>● World- class attractions in Dover Castle and The White Cliffs</li> <li>● Quality and variety of contrasting iconic landscapes within Dover</li> <li>● Accessibility and proximity to London, the Continent &amp; major urban hubs - accessibility by HS1 and road (A20 &amp; A2).</li> <li>● Availability of sports, recreational and outdoor activities.</li> <li>● Investment by businesses. E.g Legal &amp; General, Port of Dover, Love Dover etc.</li> <li>● Community support for tourism.</li> <li>● Waterfront and beach</li> <li>● Very high potential visitors due to the port, the Castle and the White Cliffs.</li> <li>● Large operators transport/visitor active within Dover. P&amp;O Ferries, DFDS, National Trust, English Heritage, Port of Dover.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dover’s perceived poor reputation</li> <li>● Poorly maintained/empty premises</li> <li>● High despondency within the local population</li> <li>● Poor connection between attractions and town.</li> <li>● A20 divides the town centre from the seafront</li> <li>● Topography</li> <li>● Transit town for ferry and cruise passengers</li> <li>● Limited shopping appeal</li> <li>● Very low footfall within highstreet.</li> <li>● Lack of destination hotels and restaurants</li> <li>● Lack of high capacity hotels - for coach tour market.</li> <li>● Lack of flexible trading hours - high street is closed by 5pm.</li> <li>● A20 TAP</li> <li>● Lack of up to date visitor data.</li> <li>● Very weak night time economy</li> <li>● Problems with anti-social behaviour and homeless within the town               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Creates perception of unsafe high street.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Deprived area with very low expendable income.</li> <li>● Limited events calendar of wider interest of high quality.</li> <li>● Strength of nearby towns over shadows Dover.</li> <li>● Lack of parking.</li> <li>● Past disagreements have created a fragmented approach.</li> </ul>

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Destination Dover and its partnership.</li> <li>● Enthusiasm and passion of local people to harness Dover's offer</li> <li>● Large catchment area: Kent, London, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany.</li> <li>● Various regeneration efforts               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Waterfront masterplan</li> <li>○ St James's</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Potential footfall from St James's</li> <li>● East Kent College - Outstanding Ofsted report</li> <li>● Cruise terminal - increase ship calls</li> <li>● Dover/France crossing</li> <li>● Exploit potential of transit visitors</li> <li>● Proximity to London, the southeast and France</li> <li>● Affordable property for looking to move out of London</li> <li>● High speed 1 to London</li> <li>● High quality unique spaces suitable for events.</li> <li>● Support between the businesses and organisations growing.</li> <li>● Brexit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● St James's</li> <li>● Further empty units within the high street.</li> <li>● Continued central government reduction in council funding</li> <li>● Individuals or organisations, who refuse to cooperate or adapt.</li> <li>● Competition from other areas</li> <li>● Lack of understanding of level of tourism offer needed.</li> <li>● Lack of investment</li> <li>● Perception of Dover</li> <li>● Brexit</li> <li>● Smaller attractions not keeping up with the times.</li> <li>● Large reliance on volunteers.</li> </ul>

## 2.3 Challenges

### **A. Poor communication within the town.**

Currently there is an over reliance on facebook to spread marketing messages. While this is effective to a point, it does miss a large audience and can communicate to the already converted. There is a need for better communication base / marketing mix, which is both offline and online. Opportunities for cross marketing need to be also exploited in order to increase co-operation and reach.

### **B. Lack of coordination and joined up delivery.**

There are many organisations and groups involved within Dover's visitor sector, which tend to operate without thought of other organisations. Efforts need to be brought together which should in turn strengthen the offer, avoid duplication of effort and improve the sharing of information.

### **C. Negative reputation.**

Due to previous events for example the riots, there is a negative stigma attached to Dover even though few people from the town were involved. Also there is a fear of the road network due to TAP and previous Operation Stack. Due to Dovers high volumes of traffic and potential footfall there is the opportunity for a Welcoming message to be spread. This is also even more profound due to Brexit fears.



#### **D. Weak evening and night time economy**

While Dover has some excellent Pubs and Bars, and evening entertainment opportunities the night time economy receives very little footfall due to a number of factors; fear of high street at night, lack of knowledge of what's available and lack of events.

#### **E. Retail offering**

Unfortunately Dover suffers from lack of a strong and appealing retail offer. This is also due to change in shopping habits and can be seen across the country. As such this has created a cycle of low demand and low footfall. Dover opportunity lies within its space, throughout the town there are spaces which lend its well to events. But these have to be of high quality in order to draw people. Dover Cruise Terminal Christmas event is an good example of an event attracting visitors from around the county.

#### **F. Despondency**

Dover has suffered many years of decline, and as a result many business owners suffer from despondency. While there is no easy and quick solution, this can be overcome through increased education, support and involvement with events and initiatives within the town over time.

## **G. Low disposable income**

A large proportion of Dover population have low disposable income available. As such while events and initiatives need to draw additional visitors from further afield with higher disposable income to spend within the town. Efforts need to be made to ensure that sections of the community do not feel alienate and not involved.

## **H. Brexit**

Dover as the main gateway for Europe means the town is on the central to the Brexit negotiations and in the spotlight. While much of the messaging will not be able to be controlled, Dover does have the opportunity to be seen in a Welcoming and open manner and this needs to be exploited as much as possible.

### **3. Destination Dover**

#### **3.1 Vision for visitor economy in Dover**

By 2021, Dover is recognised as a vibrant town with a strong appeal. Welcoming visitors both local and tourists, to come to Dover and enjoy its entertainment, culture, heritage, sports, outdoor and leisure offering. Enabling Dover to become a strong destination within the South East.

#### **3.2 Priorities for action**

The priorities for this short/medium term DMP is to establish a strong foundation for Destination Dover in order to achieve its vision for the longer term.

#### **3.3 Identifying Dover's short term target markets.**

The short term target markets need to be realistic within Dover's current visitor offer in order to avoid visitor disappointment. This also needs to work in line with the challenges identified, as such Destination Dover needs to target visitors and residents already in/visiting nearby locations within Kent such as Folkestone, Deal, Canterbury. Highlighting certain appropriate attractions and events for the visitors.

Short break visitors also need to be targeted which can be aligned with Dover's current offer, for example White Cliffs Walking Festival.

## **4 Delivery of DMP**

The DMP will be led by Destination Dover, and by steered by its board member from the following organisations; Dover Big Local, Dover Town Council, Dover District Council, English Heritage, Southeastern, White Cliffs Country Tourism Alliance, National Trust, P&O Ferries, Port of Dover, Dover Marina Hotel & Spa and DFDS.

The DMP's projects will involve multiple organisations in order for Destination Dover to achieve its aim and vision for Dover.

### **4.1 Work themes**

The DMP is focused on three work themes in order to achieve its aim; “to create strong foundation for Destination Dover long term future, in order to promote and increase visitors to Dover, from now till March 2018.”

These work themes are; Communication, Development and Placemaking. Projects will be focused towards achieving the work themes outcomes and may cross over multiple work themes.

#### **4.1.1 Work theme - Communication**

As highlighted within the SWOT analysis and the challenges. Communication between organisations and to visitors is poor. This has led to fragmentation of messages and a lack in co-operation as multiple of the same initiative can be found within Dover, competing with each other.

Also various issues have occurred with marketing and information material, such as being ceased to be produced due to lack of funds, or becoming outdated. The approach moving forward must factor in changing budgets, and led itself to be adapted and edited when required.

Communication work theme, also encourages cross marketing and utilising other organisations reach, so benefits are shared.

##### **4.1.1.1 Outcomes of Work theme - Communication**

- Increase cooperation between businesses and organisation
- Improved visitor & residents awareness
- Platform to support businesses
- Share a initial common message. Welcome to Dover!

#### **4.1.2 Work theme - Development**

Many of the organisations have varied skills and knowledge in order promote themselves and Dover effectivity. This can be due to a number of factors, from reliance on volunteer personal, misunderstanding of visitor market, cost of training and fear of new methods.

In addition Destination Dover needs to support the development of a range new and existing events in Dover, in order to maximise the quality and the success of them for example Christmas.

##### **4.1.2.1 Outcomes of Work theme - Development**

- Raise awareness of visitor demands
- Support to businesses
- Improved visitor experience
- Increased skill sets
- Improved confidence

### **4.2.3 Work theme - Placemaking**

Dover suffers from high despondency, a weak retail offering and a weak evening and night time economy. As such placemaking is crucial in order to raise awareness of Dover's visitor offering and also create opportunities for the economy to grow. These need to play on Dover's existing strengths, Heritage, Landscape, Leisure activities. Creating and highlighting compelling reasons to visit Dover and its assets, in addition to this it creates a reason for locals to reconnect with Dover and reduce despondency. One way Destination Dover can do this is encourage spaces to be reimagined, for example St James's tidy ruin as an event space, thus highlighting the heritage and also reduces anti-social behaviour.

#### **4.2.3.1 Outcomes of Work theme - Placemaking**

- Reimagined spaces.
- Strengthened connection between people, town and its assets.
- Reconnect Dover and it's offering with residents and visitors in the South East.
- Established reasons to visit which resonate with the target audience.

### 4.3 Action Plan

Please note this list Action Plan is not exhaustive and will be adapted.

<b>Program/Project</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Partners involved</b>	<b>Priority</b>
Establish Destination Dover's branding and identity	Communication	April 2017	Destination Dover	Buckland Media Group	High
Audit existing printed materials	Communication	August 2017	Destination Dover	Multiple	Medium
Review communications of events information	Communication	March 2017	Destination Dover	N/A	High
Develop/Launch Destination Dover website	Communication	May 2017	Destination Dover		High
Launch newsletter	Communication	May 2017	Destination Dover		High
Implement B2C Social Media Campaign	Communication	Ongoing	Destination Dover		High
The Big Dover Review	Development	July 2017/Ongoing	Destination Dover		High
Establish Online/Offline Cross Marketing	Communication	June 2017	Destination Dover		High



Dover Group Travel Guide	Communication	July 2017	Destination Dover		Medium
Guides / Promotional Assets	Communication /Placemaking	May 2017/Ongoing	Destination Dover		High
Photo Competition	Communication /Placemaking	May 2017/Ongoing	Destination Dover	All partners	High
Daymark	Placemaking	December 2017	Destination Dover		Low
Chalkup21 Trail	Placemaking	May 2017/Ongoing	DAD	Destination Dover	Medium
Bluebird Heritage Trail	Placemaking	December 2016/Ongoing	Dover Society	Destination Dover	Medium
Dover Nightlife	Communication /Development/Placemaking	May 2017/Ongoing	Richard Esdale	Destination Dover & Multiple hospitality businesses	High
Dover Acoustic Festival 2017	Communication /Placemaking	July 2017	Richard Esdale	Destination Dover & Multiple hospitality businesses	High
Dover Tour bus route	Placemaking	ASAP	Stagecoach	DDC & Destination Dover	Medium

#DoverTalks	Development	September 2017	Destination Dover	Multiple	High
Business Marketing Clinic	Development	Ongoing	Destination Dover		High
Purple Flag	Placemaking	October 2017	Destination Dover	Multiple	Medium
Hospitality Training	Development	TBC	Dover Big Local	Destination Dover	Medium
Coach parking	Development	Ongoing	Destination Dover	DDC, English Heritage, National Trust	High
Dover Sole Season/Festival	Placemaking	Summer 2018	Destination Dover	Multiple	Medium
Christmas Season	Placemaking	December 2017	Dover Town Council	Destination Dover	High
Walkers are Welcome	Placemaking	Feb 2017/Ongoing	Walkers are Welcome	Destination Dover & Multiple	Medium
Micro Pub/Brewery trail	Placemaking	July 2017	Destination Dover	Multiple	High
Website Support - Dover Town Team, Dover Greeters	Development	Feb 2017 / Ongoing	Mike McFarnell, Greeters	East Kent College & Destination Dover	Low
Dover Film Festival	Development/Placemaking	March 2018	Mike McFarnell	Destination Dover	Low
Communication Relationship	Communication	Feb 2018	Destination Dover		High

with St James					
Develop Joint Campaigns with Calais and Dunkirk	Communication	Feb 2018	Destination Dover		High
Involvement with Visit Kent campaigns	Communication	Ongoing	Destination Dover		High
Improvement of Cruise Terminal Welcome	Development	Ongoing	DDC	Port of Dover & Destination Dover	High
Raise profile of Art offering in Dover for Folkestone Triennial	Communication /Dover	July 2017	Destination Dover		High
White Cliffs Festival	Communication /Placemaking	August 2017	Dover Ramblers	Destination Dover	High
Accommodation Guides	Communication /Development	June 2017	Destination Dover		High
High Street event support	Communication /Development	Ongoing	Various	Destination Dover	High
Dover Farmers Market	Placemaking	June 2017	Kay Marsh	Destination Dover	Low
Dover Visitor Survey	Development	TBC	DDC	Destination Dover	High