

2020-2050

# DESTINATION SOUTHEND

A destination management plan for  
the Borough of Southend-on-Sea

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TOURISM  
PARTNERSHIP**

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# FOREWORD

**Southend-on-Sea is one of England's most popular seaside destinations and now welcomes over 7 million visitors each year.**

With seven miles of coastline and an insatiable desire by today's discerning tourists for more, the business community and public sector have come together to set out a vision and action plan that will lead us over the coming years. By working collectively and sharing a set of goals, and means to achieve them, Southend-on-Sea will keep ahead of the competition during the uncharted financial and social changes we face.

The Southend Tourism Partnership has already pooled great resources and is showing that working together delivers more. There is still much more for us to do as competition increases and the need to ensure that our message breaks through the noise of the multi-media landscape of destination marketing.

This strategy is aspirational yet will be focused on delivery. Success will require willing participation by stakeholders who value the past but look to the future needs of our visitors and how our economy can be stronger with coordinated tourism activity at its heart.

We will continue to work in partnership with the two Coastal Community teams, Shoeburyness and Leigh-on-Sea, to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for all our residents and businesses.

Southend-on-Sea was built on tourism and this strategy will position the resort for future generations providing jobs, wealth and an attractive place for all to live, work and visit.

**Jacqui Dallimore**

Chair, Southend Tourism Partnership

**Councillor Kevin Robinson**

Cabinet Member for Business, Culture & Tourism

# INTRODUCTION

**This Destination Management Plan (DMP) is an action plan for the visitor economy across the Borough of Southend- on-Sea up to 2050.**

**The plan will need to be adaptable and allow for regular review to take into account new ideas, technologies, experiences and infrastructure that will no doubt emerge over years to come.**

The aim of this plan is to provide direction to the private, public and third sector for a united ambition to become the region's first choice coastal tourism destination and to increase the value of the visitor economy.

It is developed in consultation with key partners already established across the Borough, and in particular The Southend Tourism Partnership, The Leigh Town Partnership, The Leigh Coastal Community Team, The Southend Business Improvement District, The Shoeburyness Coastal Community Team, The Southend Business Partnership and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

The DMP is jointly owned by various relevant groups in Southend and supports the town's overall prosperity and economic development, recognising the key role that tourism has played and will continue to play in future years.

**In summary, the DMP will;**

- » Specify where we are now and what we want to achieve
- » Review and set priorities, actions and targets
- » Identify roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders

# STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

**A Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a shared statement of intent to manage, develop and promote a destination over a stated period of time.**

Destination Southend has been developed alongside a number of national and regional related priorities, as well the Southend 2050 Ambition.

The DMP articulates both the roles of the different stakeholders, identifies clear actions that they will undertake and the resources they will allocate.

Crucially, destination management includes the planning, development and marketing of a destination as well as how it is managed physically, financially, and operationally.

Broadly, a DMP is equivalent to a Strategy and Action Plan for Sustainable Tourism in a destination.



VisitBritain



VisitEngland

VisitBritain and VisitEngland encourage the development of destination management plans as a key tool to increase the value of the visitor economy.

## **SOUTH EAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP**

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) is one of 38 LEPs, the biggest LEP outside London, established to provide the vision and leadership to drive sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation in their area.

The SELEP and its partner authorities are united in their ambition to achieve an unprecedented scale of economic growth. They believe the visitor economy is critically important to the growth and sustainability of many of our coastal and rural communities across the region. [www.southeastlep.com](http://www.southeastlep.com)

# LOCAL AREA MAP





**Southend 2050 is a shared ambition that has identified the sort of place residents and stakeholders want Southend-on-Sea to be.**

The programme is not about one single publication or statement, it's a mind-set – one that looks to translate the desires of local people and stakeholders into action.

2050 looks to both the long and medium term as well as the work needed now and over the next five years (to 2023).

## PRIDE & JOY

There is a tangible sense of pride in the place and local people are actively, and knowledgeably, talking up Southend.

The variety and quality of our outstanding cultural and leisure offer has increased, and we have become the region's first choice coastal tourism destination for visitors.

We have invested in protecting and nurturing our coastline, which continues to be our much loved and best used asset.

Our streets and public places are clean and inviting.

## SAFE & WELL

People in all parts of the borough feel safe and secure at all times.

Southenders are remaining well enough to enjoy fulfilling lives, throughout their lives.

We are well on our way to ensuring that everyone has a home that meets their needs.

We are all effective at protecting and improving the quality of life for the most vulnerable in our community.

We act as a green city with outstanding examples of energy efficient and carbon neutral buildings, green open spaces, streets, transport and recycling.

## CONNECTED & SMART

It is easier for residents, visitors and people who work here to get in and around the borough.

People have a wide choice of transport options.

We are leading the way in making public and private travel smart, clean and green.

Southend is a leading digital city with world class infrastructure, that enables the whole population.

## ACTIVE & INVOLVED

Even more Southenders agree that people from different backgrounds are valued and get on well together.

The benefits of community connection are evident as more people come together to help, support and spend time with each other.

Public services are routinely designed – and sometimes delivered – with their users to best meet their needs.

A range of initiatives help communities come together to enhance their neighbourhood and environment.

More people have active lifestyles and there are significantly fewer people who do not engage in any physical activity.

## OPPORUNITY & PROSPERITY

The Local Plan is setting an exciting planning framework for the borough.

We have a fast-evolving, re-imagined and thriving town centre, with an inviting mix of shops, homes, culture and leisure opportunities.

Our children are school and life ready and our workforce is skilled and job ready.

Key regeneration schemes, such as Queensway, seafront developments and the Airport Business Park are underway and bringing prosperity and job opportunities to the borough.

Southend is a place that is renowned for its creative industries, where new businesses thrive and where established employers and others invest for the long term.

# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

**Tourism is one of several key sectors in the borough and has a vital role in shaping the future.**

**The traditional day tourist offer remains part of Southend's appeal and will be added to for future visitors.**

Significant investment by the public and private sector in recent years have developed firm foundations for a stronger and broader tourism offer that supports jobs, prosperity and communities throughout the borough.

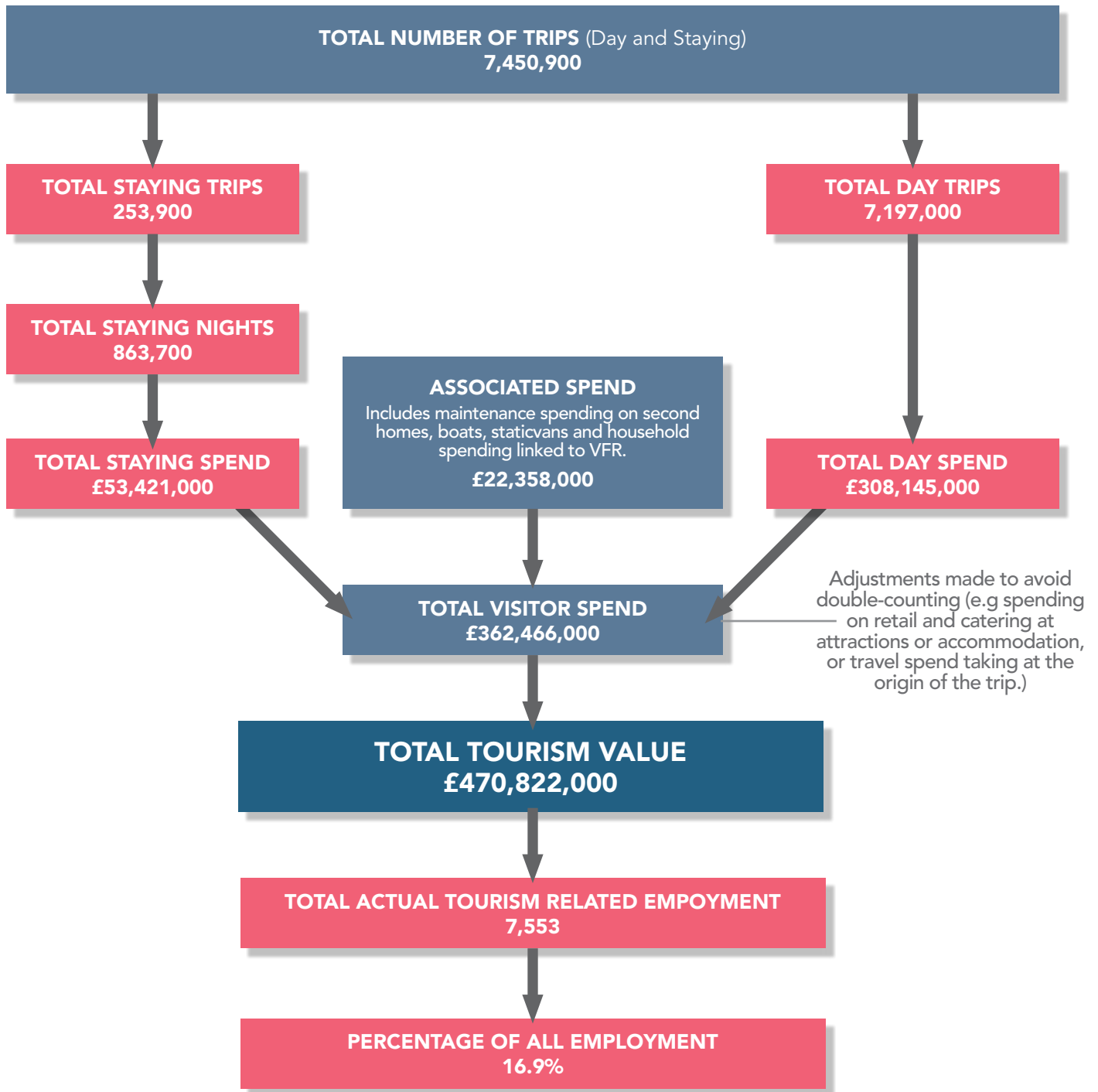
## FACTS AND FIGURES

- » Southend is a unitary borough, serving 182,500 residents.
- » Southend's economy is mixed with approx. 6000 businesses, many of which are small and medium size enterprises.
- » Tourism is a key business sector, supporting over 7,500 related jobs. 15.9% of all employee jobs in Southend are related to the local tourism sector.
- » Southend receives 7,450,900 trips (day & staying) which equates to a total tourism value of £470,822,000
- » Total day trips of over 7.3m, generating £308,145,000 spend.
- » Total overnight trips 253,900, generating £53,421,000 spend
- » Trips by purpose

Holiday	51%
Visiting Friends & Relatives	32%
Business	14%
Other/Study	3%

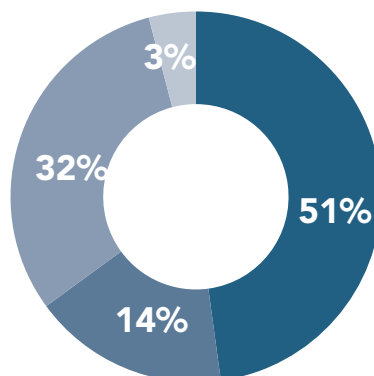
Figures obtained from Economic Impact of Tourism Southend 2019, produced by Destination Research using the Cambridge Model [www.destinationresearch.co.uk](http://www.destinationresearch.co.uk)





**TRIPS BY PURPOSE**

- Holiday
- Business
- Friends/Relatives
- Study



# OUR VISION & **TARGETED OUTCOMES**

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Our vision is to increase the value of Southend's visitor economy and for Southend to become the region's first choice coastal tourism destination.

This is a bold ambition, and we plan to demonstrate this by establishing a set of objectives, actions and targets, delivered in partnership with local stakeholders.

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**To articulate a shared understanding of the vision, objectives, actions and targets for Southend's visitor economy in partnership with the local stakeholders across the public and private sector.**

**Increase the economic impact of tourism.**

**Raise the national and international profile of Southend-on-Sea as a visitor destination.**

**Increase visitor spend and length of stay.**

**Improve the visitor experience and levels of satisfaction.**

**Attract investment and reinvestment into Southend-on-Sea.**

# OUR PRIORITIES

Four key priorities have been set to support the delivery of these targeted outcomes and will help continue to strengthen Southend's visitor economy over the coming years.

01

## Promoting and Marketing Development

We will attract existing, new and next generation markets through a dynamic, creative brand with consistent and relevant messaging. Creative targeted campaigns that promote our wide range of experiences will encourage more people to visit Southend and contribute to a vibrant visitor economy.

02

## Developing and Enhancing the Destination

We will develop the physical destination and natural environment to attract visitors and encourage repeat visits. We will offer a compelling destination experience by responding to market demands and changing technologies to identify future opportunities. We will continue to build on our key assets as well as increasing awareness of a broader offer across the wider area.

03

## Improving the Infrastructure

Support the development of improvements that enable visitors and residents to easily get in, out and around Southend. We will work with travel partners to ensure visitors and residents have access to smarter, greener and cleaner options that enable them to move around and explore the wider borough.

04

## Enhancing the Visitor Experience

Ensure that Southend welcomes new visitors and encourages their return by offering compelling year-round experiences across the whole resort which exceed visitor expectations and levels of satisfaction. Deliver a consistently clean and safe environment for our visitors and residents to be proud of.

# PRIORITY 01

## Promoting and Marketing Development

We will attract existing, new and next generation markets through a dynamic, creative brand with consistent and relevant messaging.

Creative targeted campaigns that promote our wide range of experiences will encourage more people to visit Southend and contribute to a vibrant visitor economy.

OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Increase the number of visitors to the Borough by broadening our appeal to new markets such as 'Urban Dwellers', millennials, empty nesters, niche and interest groups such as health, wellness and activity tourists. Exploit proximity to London.</p>	To create a new 'city' brand, website and assets for the Borough that reflects a more confident, contemporary and creative place in line with Southend 2050 outcomes.	Completion of new place brand narrative and destination website.	Website and place brand launch by Spring 2021	<p>STP - Place Marketing Group SBC - Culture &amp; Tourism VIC Visit Essex BID Leigh Town Partnership</p>
	Increase the visibility of cultural, heritage and wellness aspects of Southend and the wider resort to attract new audiences	Engagement, visitors at cultural and related venues, attractions, and events across the wider borough	Annual increase of 10%	
	Create seasonal, multi-channel promotional campaigns that drive interest - focused on culture, arts, heritage and events in collaboration with key partners.	Number of visits, click-throughs and dwell time to new destination website.	Annual increase of 5%	
		Increase in number of followers across social media.	Annual increase of 5%	
<p>Ensure local residents are kept informed about events, attractions and cultural activity in order to encourage them to actively talk up Southend.</p> <p>Capitalise on the VFR (visiting friends and relatives) market.</p>	Ensure the identity/tone of voice for the new destination website appeals to residents as well as visitors as a source of information.	Number of visits and subscribers to new destination website from local postcodes.	Annual increase of 10%	<p>STP - Place Marketing Group SBC - Strategic Comms SBC - Culture &amp; Tourism</p>
	Distribute monthly 'whats on' newsletter to local media channels as well as partners and businesses for them to distribute to their own staff.	Increase in followers across social media channels from local area.		
	Reintroduce a hard copy Council magazine to residents which will feature a 'whats on' section as well as a sign post to the new website for more information.	Engagement, numbers participants at events, attractions and cultural experiences	Spring 2021	SBC
	Use new digital technologies to provide pride messages on key routes, bus stops and the town centre.	Increased awareness		

OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
Target international opportunities presented by destinations served by London Southend Airport, as short haul travel starts to return to pre-COVID levels	Explore opportunities to collaborate with London Southend Airport on creative campaigns that exploit the Borough's coastal offer coupled with its proximity to London - target destinations served by current routes.	Increase number of visits from overseas visitors	Annual increase of 3%	London Southend Airport STP VIC Accommodation providers SBC - Culture & Tourism
		Accommodation occupancy rates	Annual increase of 3%	
	Ensure new destination website has the facility to translate into other languages, focusing on destinations served from London Southend Airport.	Number of visits to the destination website from international IP addresses.	Annual increase of 3%	
Encourage visitors from all sectors to stay longer and spend more money in the local economy.	<p>Develop a joined up marketing campaign to build consumer confidence. Include clear protocols and reassurance of COVID safe practice to capitalise on the rise in safe 'staycations' and repeat visits - which are likely to be maintained during, and post COVID-19 recovery.</p> <p>Create bespoke campaigns aimed at the business sector, showcasing Southend's coastal experience and COVID safe venues as an alternative destination to host meetings.</p> <p>Exploit proximity to London and destinations served by LSA as a source of corporate business as short haul travel starts to return to pre-COVID levels (2022-23 IATA estimate)</p>	Total value of tourism	6% growth annually	<p>STP - Place Marketing Group</p> <p>SBC - Culture &amp; Tourism</p> <p>VIC</p> <p>Visit Essex</p> <p>Accommodation Providers</p> <p>BID</p> <p>Leigh Town Partnership</p>

# PRIORITY 02

## Developing and Enhancing the Destination

We will develop the physical destination and natural environment to attract visitors and encourage repeat visits. We will offer a compelling destination experience by responding to market demands and changing technologies to identify future opportunities.

We will continue to build on our key assets as well as increasing awareness of a broader offer across the wider area.

OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
To support local tourism businesses increase their profitability and productivity and to fill skills gaps and training needs.	<p>Development of a customer service support programme across the local tourism sector.</p> <p>Identify funding for business skills development for local tourism businesses. Create a new tourism business support service on the new destination website.</p> <p>Ensure regular sector evaluation takes place and performance is monitored. Keep local tourism businesses aware of visitor trends, emerging markets and other opportunities in order to help them develop and maximise their offer.</p>	Employment figures in tourism, and tourism related businesses (direct and indirect)	2% growth annually	<p>SBC Economic Development Team</p> <p>SBC Culture &amp; Tourism</p> <p>Southend Tourism Partnership</p> <p>Leigh Town Partnership</p>
Enhance the quality of our physical and natural tourism products to attract new visitors and encourage repeat visits.	<p>Continue to work in collaboration with key partners on a series of projects to ensure our beaches, streets and public places are clean and inviting.</p> <p>Maximising 'city dressing' and creative opportunities to improve the street-scene and visitor welcome at key gateways.</p> <p>Develop offer to improve the year-round experience and extend the season to maximise the appeal.</p>	Maintain Green Flag and Purple Flag status.	Maintain current status Increase to five Blue Flags	<p>SBC - Parks</p> <p>SBC - Pier and Foreshore</p> <p>SBC - Waste Management</p> <p>SBC - Property Veolia</p> <p>BID</p> <p>Arts Organisations</p>
		Maintain internationally accredited Blue Flag beach status.		
		Visitor and business feedback	Increased visitors and employment.	New visitors

OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
Undertake improvements to futureproof Southend Pier - enhance the visitor experience and increase visitor numbers.	Delivery of new pier shelters, decking and toilets. Pier entrance upgrade to include new café, toilets and improved access.	Visitor numbers to Southend Pier	Annual increase of 3%	SBC - Pier & Foreshore SBC - Property Services SBC - Culture & Tourism VIC
	Acquisition of new pier trains, to improve the visitor experience	Visitor feedback	Increased rating on Trip Advisor	
	Enhance social media profile of Southend Pier, and position to new audiences.	Levels of engagement and followers	Annual increase by 5%	SBC - Culture & Tourism
Development of the 'Make Southend Sparkle' (MSS) campaign - focusing on attracting volunteers to improve our civic realm and public spaces.	Development of creative campaigns aimed at improving the appearance and perception of the public realm. Improve access to facilities and equipment across the borough for MSS volunteers	Levels of engagement and followers	2% annual growth	MSS SBC - Culture & Tourism SBC - Parks SBC - Waste Management Veolia
	Create promotional campaigns on current MSS projects, future initiatives, past successes and volunteer recruitment.	Number of volunteers and groups	2% annual growth	
		Positive visitor feedback/perception surveys	Increase	
To build on Southend's digital presence, becoming a leading digital city with high quality information made easily accessible to visitors, residents and businesses.	Integration on new destination website that will allow visitors to build itineraries. New destination website to be mobile optimised.	Visits to new destination website	Annual growth of 5%	SBC - Culture & Tourism
	Collect anonymous footfall data to provide analysis across a range of measures, including - heatmaps, direction of travel, demographics etc. Regular reporting will ensure the local tourism trade has access to market trends and analysis over a specific geographical area.	Installation of LDC tracking/counter assets	March 2021	SBC STP
	Ongoing promotional campaign to promote free wifi across key sections of the destination to new and returning visitors.	Number of sign ups to access free wifi	Annual increase of 5%	SBC
	Installation of CityFibre's borough-wide infrastructure programme bringing the benefits of full fibre connectivity to local businesses	Completion of network across the borough	2022	SBC

# PRIORITY 03

## Improving the Infrastructure

Support the development of improvements that enable visitors and residents to easily get in, out and around Southend. We will work with travel partners to ensure visitors and residents have access to smarter, greener and cleaner options that enable them to move around and explore the wider borough.

OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
To support the improvement of access into and around Southend so that it is easier for residents, visitors and people who work here to get around the borough	Improve traffic flows on A127 access road with improvements to Bell Junction.	Improved access to Southend via A127	Target start date April 2020	SBC - Highways
	Installation of new wayfinding schemes in Leigh-on-Sea and Central Southend to improve information for visitors and promote a wider scope of local attractions.	Completion of scheme	2021	SBC - Highways Leigh Town Partnership STP Place Marketing Group
	Continue to produce printed maps/guides that pinpoint key attractions and facilities.	Maintain current level		SBC BID Travel operators
Support the development of improved options for access to the Borough's car parks and parking offer.	Support the development of smart car park signage that will better enable drivers to find a car park serving the area of town they intend to visit, while minimising excessive travel.	Carry out actions identified in parking strategy	Summer 2021	SBC - Highways
	Actively manage traffic on days of high visitor demand through a range of on the ground interventions	Positive visitor and business feedback		SBC - Highways SBC - Culture & Tourism
	Amend signage on new right turns from Queensway to highlight town centre and alternative seafront parking	Signage amended	February 2021	SBC - Highways
	Explore the feasibility of creating new multi-level car parks in central Southend and Leigh-on-Sea	Result from feasibility study	March 2021	SBC - Highways STP BID Leigh Town Partnership
	Targeted social media campaigns to provide visitors with information regarding available payment options across the Borough's car parks and bays	Record levels of engagement with campaign.	Increased engagement	
Number of Mobon app downloads		Annual growth 5%		SBC - Highways



OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
Visitors and residents have a wide choice of transport options to access and move across the borough	Explore the implementation of a borough wide integrated travel card to use on a range of travel options.	Introduction of a borough wide integrated travel card.	By 2023	SBC Highways Forward Motion Travel Operators
	Promote integrated cycle related infrastructure across the borough	Increased facilities and usage.		
Support the development of initiatives aimed at making public and private travel around the borough smart, clean and green.	Install additional electric charging points across the borough in preparation for increased use of electric/ultra low emission vehicles.	Increase number of electric charging points installed across the borough	By 2023	SBC - Highways Forward Motion Travel Operators
	Support the development of an integrated travel hub to enable visitors and residents to easily switch between various methods of public transport.	Integrated system co-designed with commercial partners.		

# PRIORITY 04

## Enhancing the Visitor Experience

Ensure that Southend welcomes new visitors and encourages their return by offering compelling year-round experiences across the whole resort which exceed visitor expectations and levels of satisfaction.

OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
Broaden our appeal and profile with the increasing variety and quality of our cultural and leisure offer, as well as our wide range of fun experiences.	Enhance our year round event programme with new cultural experiences that will attract new audiences to Southend-on-Sea and further develop out of season growth.	Number of safe, well organised all year round experiences across the borough	Increase	SBC - Culture & Tourism BID STP Leigh Town Partnership Art and cultural organisations
	Streamline events application process in order to encourage more organisations and groups to host events and festivals.	Development of new event application and scrutiny process.	March 2021	SBC -Regs Services SAG (safety advisory group) members
	Develop a creative 'rainy day package' outlining the amazing variety of indoor attractions and experiences available.	Engagement with campaign and visitor numbers to attractions	Increase	SBC - Culture & Tourism Visit Essex Attractions
	Development of a promotional 'beyond the boundary' campaign that positions Southend and the surrounding area as a wider resort.  Talk up heritage attractions and experiences in the local area, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shoeburyness</li> <li>• Old Leigh/Leigh Town</li> <li>• Belfairs Woodland</li> <li>• Hadleigh Castle &amp; Olympic Mountain Bike Park</li> <li>• Rochford District</li> <li>• Wallasea Island</li> </ul>	Media coverage & tone  Engagement and reach of campaign.	March 2021	SBC Visit Essex ECC Leigh Town Partnership

OBJECTIVES	KEY TASKS	MONITORING	TARGET	RESPONSIBILITY
Improve Southend's welcome to strengthen and add value to the visitor experience and improve levels of satisfaction	Encourage partners and members to continue to develop excellent customer service across the borough - signpost to relevant training and development programmes.	Survey of destination wide assets and visitor satisfaction levels.	Improve satisfaction levels to 95% by 2021 (?)	STP - all members SBC - Culture & Tourism
	Extend the visitor information service across the borough by maximising digital and mobile technology	Development of new destination brand website and local digital assets.	Summer 2020	SBC - Culture & Tourism STP - Place Marketing
	Commission mystery shopper and destination appeal analysis	Survey of destination wide assets and visitor satisfaction levels.	Improve satisfaction levels to 95%	STP - all members SBC - Culture & Tourism VIC
	Develop volunteer offer at seafront and attractions.	Feedback from visitor surveys / mystery shop	Summer 2021	SBC
To provide a quality, comfortable experience for disabled, elderly and vulnerable visitors.	Provide pre-visit information on accessibility in Southend, to include details on Blue Badge parking, dropped kerbs, toilets, wheelchair hire and beach access as well as general information on the environment and geography of Southend.	Number of click throughs to relevant landing page	Annual growth of 5%	SBC - Culture & Tourism
		Customer satisfaction and perception surveys.	Improve satisfaction levels to 95% by 2021	STP Shopmobility VIC
	Continue to work with local stakeholders to improve the overall accessible beach offer.	Customer satisfaction and perception surveys.	Ongoing	SBC - Pier and Foreshore SBC - Culture & Tourism
Continue to support the Southend Dementia Action Alliance (SDAA) to help the Borough become a 'Dementia-Friendly' town.	Number of organisations taking up Dementia Friends training	Annual increase of 5%	SBC/STP - all members SDAA	



**SOUTHEND-ON-SEA**

HIGH SUNSHINE      WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA      LEIGH-ON-SEA      LOW RAINFALL

THORPE BAY      SHOEBOURNESS

Guide free from Inquiry Bureau, 108 Pier Hill, Southend-on-Sea

BRITISH RAILWAYS      stations offices and agencies

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