

SOUTHEAST LOCAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK PLACE RECOVERY NETWORK

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STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS



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About this report

This report contains the findings from a series of 10 workshops held with businesses and organisations from across Essex, Kent and Sussex that have a stake in place-based approaches to marketing their respective regions. Based on comments shared by the workshop participants, this report presents:

- The issues and trends that are common to places across the SELEP region
- A 'mapping' of the main stakeholder groups with an interest in place marketing in the region and their respective audiences
- The needs identified, related to place marketing contents and collateral
- Recommendations on place-based approaches to marketing in 2022, to inform upcoming campaigns

This report is the first of two reports to be issued within the Place Recovery Network project. The final report (due November 2022) will present the results of place-based marketing campaigns carried out during 2022, as well as broader recommendations on the formation of place-based recovery networks in the region. Each workshop was facilitated by TOPOSOPHY Ltd, a Place Making and Marketing Agency commissioned to undertake the project, with the outcomes of this process presented by TOPOSOPHY in this report.

SECTION 1 - Project introduction and context

This project forms part of the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership's (SELEP) COVID-19 Business Support Fund Programme for the visitor economy. This Programme is being delivered by the Revi-VE consortium, led by Visit Kent, alongside partners Visit Essex, East Sussex County Council, Sussex Modern and Southend Council. The Programme consists of a package of measures for supporting the long-term resilience and adaptation of the visitor economy to a post-COVID world. The project presented in this report is designed to support the establishment of a framework for the SELEP region (Essex, Kent and East Sussex) to ensure that the visitor economy can become a catalyst for wider place-based recovery and regeneration.

As this report will explain, this project is taking place at a critically important juncture for each of the main partners that are involved in this project, and the counties that they each represent. A series of interrelated 'drivers' (explained in section 2.1) is making the holistic place-based approach to marketing (as opposed to the narrower concept of *destination* marketing)¹ an increasingly vital approach to pursue in the interest of helping places in the SELEP region to build their economic competitiveness and attract the creativity, skills, investment, and entrepreneurial spirit in order to thrive.

¹ Please refer to section 1.2 for more information about the definitions used in this report

1.1 The journey to date

Prior to the formation of the Revi-VE consortium and the commencement of this project, each of the Revi-VE consortium partners had engaged in their own process of exploring the place-based approach to marketing their own county, with each at a different stage of development. In brief:

- I. **East Sussex** - Sussex Modern is the Revi-VE consortium partner delegated to coordinate place-making activities within the scope of the SELEP COVID-19 recovery programme. Sussex Modern is a community interest company that brings together 36 memorable places that capture the county's modern, independent spirit, to inspire visitors to explore the county. The core membership is from businesses and organisations in the creative sector, as well as a collection of vineyards, all of whom share a common interest in projecting a modern, vibrant, and entrepreneurial image of East Sussex beyond the county's borders. East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, 1066 Country and Visit Eastbourne are also key strategic partners in this project.

- II. **Essex** - Partnership building around a place-based approach to promoting Essex started in October 2019 with Essex County Council (ECC) hosting key business leaders from the county to discuss place marketing, with a positive reception. Further meetings continued through November 2019 to March 2020, with further proceedings delayed by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The process has since been resumed, and ECC has resumed scoping activities for the establishment of Marketing Essex (working title), with the aim of developing a county-wide place marketing programme (possibly via a new organisation) to reposition Essex by agreeing market positioning, developing agreed narratives and coordinating communications. The four workshops held as part of this Revi-VE programme together with Visit Essex helped to engage a wider range of businesses and organisations from across Essex in the scoping work for Marketing Essex, and to help in defining its mission and strategic priorities.

- III. **Kent** - For several years, Visit Kent has maintained close relationships with both tourism and 'non-tourism' stakeholders with an interest in embedding a common vision for 'brand Kent' and in ensuring that the county's visitor economy can become a wider catalyst for place regeneration. This partnership approach has included chairing the Promoting Kent Group, an informal group of organisations responsible for promoting Kent. As part of Visit Kent's work to support the recovery of businesses and communities from the impact of COVID-19, Visit Kent's strategy has been to position the visitor economy firmly at the heart of the county's destinations to enable the wider recovery of the economy and local communities. Visit Kent is now exploring ways to support the regrowth of our economy by bringing together organisations from across different sectors to create collaborative campaigns to help businesses across the county to promote Kent as a place to live, work, visit, invest and study in. This project has marked an important step forward in that process. Against this backdrop, it is important to take into account that a number of local place making and marketing programmes are underway across Kent, with stakeholder consortia varying by location. Highlighted projects include: the [Margate Town Deal](#), Future High Street

Fund projects in Dover, Chatham and Ramsgate and Heritage Action Zones in Chatham and Ramsgate. Furthermore, we have the [Creative Estuary](#) focussing on developing the creative and cultural sectors with partners along the Thames Estuary production corridor. The Medway Place Board which has been set up to promote the Medway area in a more holistic way, towards potential residents, students, businesses and visitors, with a public-facing site, [We Are Medway](#). Amongst others, these have helped to generate a significant amount of local knowledge around key themes such as place regeneration and resident engagement. It will be important to ensure that experience gained from these local programmes can help to support programmes in different parts of Kent, as well as place marketing for the county as a whole.

It is anticipated that the insights and recommendations from this project will help to accelerate the coordination and implementation of place marketing initiatives further in each county, both in the short and longer term. In the short term, the recommendations from this report will help to inform the development of marketing campaigns during the first half of 2022, while in the longer term, consortium partners will be able to learn from each other, supporting synergies and a more consistent approach to delivering place-based marketing activities across the SELEP region in the future.

1.2 A guide to the terms used in this report

The concept of 'place'

Over the past decade, a clear, discernible shift has been underway, both in the UK and overseas, towards developing a more comprehensive approach to marketing cities, regions and countries. This approach is driven by a range of factors, chief among them being the need for places to increasingly compete on the global stage, for skilled individuals, investment and diverse types of business activity. This approach also recognises that individuals rarely perceive a place from one angle only; during a leisure visit, an individual may consider a place in terms of a future place to live, to study, trade with or to set up a business. It is important to keep in mind that a comprehensive, well understood and accurate place brand must be built on a long-term process of place making; i.e. developing, nurturing and constantly improving the built and natural environment, and common goods that make up a place.

Key terms:

- The practice of **placemaking** concerns the deliberate shaping of an environment to facilitate social interaction and improve a community's quality of life.² In this sense it should be understood as 'what you do'.
- **Place branding** is the process of discovering, creating, developing and realising ideas and concepts for reconstructing place identities, their defining traits and 'genius loci' and

² Department of Urban Studies and Planning | Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2013, Places in the Making

subsequently building the sense of place, by efforts and investments in hardware (e.g. infrastructure, buildings), software (e.g. events, stories), 'orgware' (e.g. co-operative organisational structuring) and virtual ware (e.g. symbols and symbolic actions, websites).³ In this sense, it can be understood as constructing the identity of 'who you are'.

- **Place marketing** is a philosophy and skill set dedicated to market and improve a **place** (town, city, state, region, or nation) and develop a core image that can attract visitors, residents, industries and companies, whatever the object may be.⁴ In this sense, it should be understood as the short-term process of communicating who you are and what you do.
- **Destination marketing** is done with the goal of turning **tourism** into a key driver of socio-economic progress in communities through export revenues, the creation of jobs and enterprises, and infrastructure development.⁵ In this sense, *destination* marketing should be understood as a narrower concept given that it refers to attracting and servicing the *visitor* to a destination, for the purpose of relaxation and enjoyment.

1.3 Workshop aims and methodology

Workshop overview

- A total of ten workshops were delivered across the SELEP region; four in Kent (two each day on 20 and 24 January 2022), four in Essex (two each day on 2 and 3 February 2022) and one on each day in East Sussex (21 and 24 February 2022)
- Participants were invited by the SELEP consortium partner responsible for each area, with Essex and Kent workshop participants divided approximately by area in each county
- A total of 114 organisations attended across all workshops. A list of all organisations that participated is included within each partners' summary report in this document
- All workshops were held online, in order to ensure the largest attendance possible and to conform with COVID-19 public health guidelines in force at the time
- The content and discussion for each workshop was led by TOPOSOPHY, and included a presentation from Visit Kent, Visit Essex or Sussex Modern, according to each location
- Following each workshop, a survey was issued to collect further information from participants. A full list of questions discussed in the workshops and placed in the survey is available in Annexes 2 and 3.

Core workshop aims

- Ensure a common understanding of the concepts and trends related to place marketing, and how this differs from the traditional approach to destination marketing
- Review UK and international best practice case studies in place marketing
- Review the activities that Revi-VE consortium partners have led in the area of place marketing to date

³ Govers, R. & Go, F., (2009) Place Branding: Glocal, Virtual and Physical Identities. Constructed, Imagined and Experienced

⁴ Place Brand Observer, 2015, Philip Kotler on Place Marketing, Branding and Why We Need to Rethink Capitalism

⁵ Michael Gehrisch, President & CEO of Destination Marketing Association International (2001-2016)

- Hear participants' input on how their own organisations have undertaken place marketing activities, the audiences that they seek to reach, how they would like to see collective place marketing evolve in their region, and what practical assets and collateral could help them to market their places more effectively

SECTION 2 - Summary of findings - whole SELEP region

A summary of core findings is included in the following section. A more detailed report on the findings per region is included in individual reports for each Revi-VE consortium partner.

2.1 Drivers of demand for a place-based approach to marketing

Workshop participants hailed from a wide variety of sectors which are summarised, together with their respective audiences in sections 4.1, 5.1 and 6.1. While these organisations are spread across a combined geographical area of more than 3,500 square miles of South East England and face multiple audiences in the UK and overseas, a series of cross-cutting challenges and opportunities emerged from the input given in all ten workshops. When considered together, these challenges and opportunities can be identified as **drivers of demand for a collaborative, place-based approach to marketing**.

Many of these drivers were present in each region prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, however the impact of the pandemic appears to have accelerated many of these and is exerting greater pressure on businesses and local authorities to react in a more collaborative, consistent way. The 12 drivers are summarised in the following pages.

Driver of demand for place-based marketing	Explanation	Examples of drivers and related key messages cited in workshops
<p>1. New major infrastructure is creating new opportunities</p>	<p>New infrastructure is making some areas newly attractive to businesses for relocating, or for new residents to move in. This creates a need to explain the opportunities related to this in a more holistic way, to diverse audiences, and to ensure that this leads to a general improvement in how the areas in question are perceived.</p>	<p>Work is underway under the Superfast Essex programme to connect more of the counties to superfast broadband. Epping Forest District Council has already noticed an increase in relocations and enquiries from high-value tech businesses that are attracted by the Superfast connections and would like to do more to promote this.</p> <p>Fast train connections via HS1 have been driving growth for the last 15 years. Further examples of new infrastructure and projects include the development of the Newtown Works Studios in Ashford, Ebbsfleet Garden City, the proposed Otterpool Park near Folkestone and the proposed Lower Thames Crossing connecting Essex and Kent, in Kent. The opening of the Thames Freeport in Essex as well as the Elizabeth Line (Crossrail) are also expected to bring further opportunities to the Southeast Region in terms of job creation and improved connectivity.</p>
<p>2. Good connectivity makes the region a more attractive place to locate to, or work in or visit</p>	<p>The SELEP region is home to some of the UK's busiest transport hubs and routes (e.g. Stansted Airport, Tilbury Port, Harwich Port, HS1, Port of Dover and Eurotunnel, as well as nearby Gatwick Airport), however millions of travellers arrive every year in Kent, Essex and Sussex, but continue their journey without stopping. If more were persuaded to stop en-route/ divert/change their journey/ stay longer this could lead to more visitors perceiving the region more favourably for investment. The region's transport gateways also put pressure on the road and</p>	<p>There was a common feeling that more could be done in a holistic way, to show the potential to businesses and investors that each area could offer a good base to locate in, offer an attractive base for staff, as well as offering access to skills and talent from local universities.</p> <p>Brentwood, Thurrock and Epping Forest Councils, as well as the developers of Ebbsfleet Garden City have sought to position the areas as getaways to London, for Londoners to gain easy access via public transport or cycling superhighways</p>

	<p>wider transport network in ways which have to be managed carefully – and occasionally attract negative headlines (for example, when Operation Brock is implemented to manage traffic at Channel ports).</p> <p>At the same time, the whole SELEP region has an extremely dense (and expanding) network of cycling and walking routes which have seen increased popularity during the pandemic.</p>	<p>to Londoners (or international visitors to London) to gain easy access to fresh air and open spaces.</p> <p>The increased popularity of walking and cycling during the pandemic was widely seen a major benefit to the region, as it made a more attractive place to live in and visit. At the same time, many participants highlighted that there is still a lot of work to do to address ‘final mile’ transport options, both for residents and visitors.</p>
<p>3. The increase in remote working has shifted balance of commuters’ time and spending towards London’s surrounding regions</p>	<p>The shift towards completely remote or hybrid working was underway prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, however the pandemic drove a sharp, seemingly permanent increase in the trend. As a result, London-based professionals are relocating to regions surrounding the capital, in search of larger, more affordable properties and a better quality of life, while ‘ex-commuters’ in London’s surrounding regions are spending more of their time and money in their local area.</p>	<p>All local authorities present cited increased demand for property in their local area from Londoners seeking to relocate. In response to demand for flexible workspaces, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council is in the process of converting vacant council-owned town centre properties for use as co-working spaces, while some properties in surrounding areas are seeking to do the same. Locate in Kent has set up the Kent Co-Working Collective.</p> <p>This trend has also been observed in Chelmsford, where ex-commuters spending more time in the town are being newly considered as key to the town’s future regeneration. The opportunity to re-engage residents as local workers, or Londoners as potential new residents was also confirmed by all the rail operators present (c2c, GTR, HS1, Southeastern).</p>
<p>4. National and international competition to attract a skilled workforce</p>	<p>The global labour market is in a period of huge flux, triggered by the pandemic, rise of remote working, early retirements and professionals re-assessing their work/life balance and city-dwellers coping with the rising cost of living. This presents a challenge for the region, in that it</p>	<p>Thanet District Council’s tourism division recently collaborated with the local NHS Trust to introduce the area to local doctors, with the aim of tackling a local shortage of GPs.</p> <p>East Sussex’s Director of Public Health is seeking to promote</p>

	<p>has exacerbated existing skills shortages, particularly in areas such as healthcare and education. The rise in remote working in particular has meant that local companies are now competing with global brands for skilled employees, in some cases meaning that the region's businesses face having to compete with the type of pay and conditions offered in London or other global cities.</p> <p>This challenge underlines the opportunity for the region to appeal to footloose skilled workers who may be attracted by the region's good connectivity and easy access to coast and countryside, while also needing to show the value of working for the region's own companies.</p>	<p>the region to young medical professionals currently based in London, based on the region's health benefits (sea air, good walking routes) and an opportunity to build a career in the region from a young age.</p>
<p>5. The snowball effect of new businesses attracting partners and competitors</p>	<p>The SELEP region has largely benefitted from a new wave of locals (either resident or having moved from London) setting up businesses in the business services, creative, food and drink, and hospitality industries. As sectors become established locally through the availability of property and a skills base, this leads to other businesses in the supply chain becoming attracted to the area. This can help to present a new narrative about the region more generally and gather pace with further collaborative marketing efforts.</p>	<p>Locate in Kent reported that creative businesses were attracted to historic premises in towns such as Chatham, which typified part of Kent's appeal. Hastings Borough Council has been using the town's creative community to leverage more events funding and as a means to attract new residents to the area.</p> <p>Workshop participants in East Sussex agreed that 'entrepreneurial' should be used to describe the county more accurately, alongside other core messages adopted by Sussex Modern.</p>
<p>6. Housing developments seek to attract a mix of new residents</p>	<p>A considerable amount of housebuilding is underway across the region, to meet demand for affordable housing. Developers use good transport connections with London and the range of good schools and universities as</p>	<p>Countryside Properties (Essex) seeks to promote the county based on the quality of its schools and universities, as well as its dense public transport network. Images of these are in high demand.</p>

	<p>a means to appeal to families and young professionals, key target markets. A sense of connectivity, history, authenticity, community and belonging are all essential assets to convey, and are deeply rooted in place identity. The same is often true for investors in large-scale commercial property (e.g. retail and office space).</p>	<p>This is also the case for MHS Homes Group (both a local and national housing developer) which has signed up as a Medway Champion, as part of the Medway Place Board.</p>
<p>7. The pandemic drives 'hyperlocalism' and reveals the true value of local communities</p>	<p>Lockdowns turned people's attention to the health and wellbeing of their local communities, in particular, the role that local businesses and public spaces play in everyday life. To support their business communities, local authorities turned their promotional efforts to stimulating demand with 'shop local' schemes, and highlighting local places to enjoy, largely through social media. Local identity, community solidarity and pride in local places have become strong, emotive themes which business and local authorities would like to build upon. Since 'hyperlocalism' is a theme which resonates strong both with residents and visitors, it highlights the importance of developing the offer and experience for both, rather than perceiving the two as separate groups with separate needs.</p>	<p>All local authorities participating in the workshops confirmed this trend, as well as their intention to continue engaging with local residents more frequently through social media.</p> <p>The Help South East to Buy Local Initiative, which was led by Produced in Kent and funded by SELEP helped to generate demand for local businesses, based on local peoples' pride in the provenance of local food.</p> <p>Since pandemic restrictions have been eased, Swale Borough Council (Kent) has been using Facebook to re-engage residents in making town centres and spaces more attractive, and to attract shoppers back to high streets.</p> <p>Basildon Council described how the town's East End connections had become a renewed source of pride, and a means of connecting emotionally with local residents.</p>
<p>8. Local authorities are taking a more holistic approach to local marketing, bringing resources for diverse audiences 'under one</p>	<p>As local authorities seek to attract new businesses and investment to their local area, they are increasingly looking to broaden the messaging and imagery used to do this. This has involved bringing staff working in tourism/leisure into economic regeneration projects, as well as setting up localised place-promotion</p>	<p>The Medway Place Board has been set up to promote the Medway area in a more holistic way, towards potential residents, students, businesses and visitors, with a public-facing site, We Are Medway.</p> <p>Tunbridge Wells Borough Council reported that human and</p>

<p>roof'</p>	<p>organisations to take a more coordinated approach to how places are presented.</p>	<p>financial resources dedicated towards tourism are increasingly being targeted at promoting the area for inward investment as well as those who are interested in flexible working. "There are skills shortages in the area and it's increasingly becoming our job to help attract people to the area to work." This sentiment was echoed by local authority (tourism) representatives from other areas.</p>
<p>9. Local businesses are seeking to widen their appeal to new audiences, based on place and provenance</p>	<p>Driven partly by shifts in consumer spending away from material goods towards 'experiences' (e.g. concerts, eating out), restrictions caused by the pandemic, many businesses in the region have built a new more diversified customer base, attracting first-time visitors who show interest in moving to the region.</p>	<p>Companies attending the workshops including Tiptree Jam and Fairfield Farm Crisps (Essex), Wine Garden of England and Kent Crisps (Kent), and Oastbrook Vineyard and Stopham Vineyard (East Sussex) confirmed that the pandemic had led them to reach new markets, and when doing so, their place of origin was critical to telling their product's story. As consumers discovered more about the product, this led them to develop a closer interest in the place and the people behind it.</p>
<p>10. The role of personal identity and values is playing a greater role in decision making - including how people identify with places</p>	<p>Places are increasingly being judged not only by aspects such as living conditions, or the quality of public services, but also by the values that they exude. For this reason, many places around the world are seeking to project a greater sense of openness to all (i.e. regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation) and to engender a sense of 'belonging' in their city or region, among their target audiences. However, to work, this must be done in a sincere and authentic way.</p>	<p>Canterbury Christchurch University: "We need to focus a lot more on showing the diversity of our culture in Kent and engendering a sense of belonging. Showing a welcoming culture is especially important for an international audience and especially among the UK BAME audience. Prospective students from London are particularly interested to know how safe they will feel in the area."</p> <p>East Sussex College Group: "Now, international (European) students are very interested in the vibrancy of local communities and understanding how they will feel when they are living in the region."</p> <p>The Historic Dockyard Chatham is seeking to broaden its appeal to more diverse audiences, and recently held a very</p>

		<p>successful exhibition focussing on the role of women working in the dockyard.</p>
<p>11. Greater awareness and interest in sustainability goes hand in hand with place, the quality of the environment and wellbeing of communities</p>	<p>Concern about climate change is leading to more conscious consumerism, and a greater desire on the part of businesses to reduce their environmental impact and adopt practices that are in harmony with their local environment. As sustainability increasingly becomes a key element of competitiveness, this demands a more coordinated way of promoting places and inspiring action, both among suppliers and customers.</p>	<p>Participants felt that those businesses with strong sustainability credentials should be positioned as leaders and help to show a more progressive side to their respective region. A growing number of car-free leisure visitors (particularly those from large urban areas) are looking to explore the region by public transport, however, price is an important factor in choosing to do this, and increases the reliance on 'final mile' transport across the region, which some participants said was lacking in many places.</p> <p>Several destinations also highlighted the need to position the natural environment more clearly as a major attraction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Association of South Essex Location Authorities put blue and green assets (particularly the river Thames) at the front and centre of their communications. The river especially is an underutilised resource, which is especially important for businesses coming to the Freeport. • In 2021 Kent's Heritage Coast received a Best in Travel Award, having been ranked 4th in its prestigious ranking of the world's best regions to visit, and was the only UK destination to have received the award. • The Kent Downs AONB has received UNESCO Geopark Status, helping to boost Kent's reputation in its offering of sustainable tourism experiences. <p>Participants talked about how they would like to develop experiences especially with operators who can offer products and experiences which are considered highly sustainable."</p>

		<p>The Visit Kent Interreg Experience Development Programme has helped to coach businesses that were looking to capitalise on new consumer interests, and who wished to attract visitors during low season. This resulted in over 100 businesses developing their product range in the area of wellbeing, outdoors and creative experiences.</p>
<p>12. Business refurbishments, expansions, upgrades help to form a new narrative about specific places</p>	<p>During the pandemic, many attractions and hospitality businesses took the opportunity to upgrade or repurpose their premises resulting in an increase in visits by younger, higher-spending guests from London. Some workshop participants observed how these were often travellers who might otherwise have travelled abroad or visited Devon or Cornwall, and were pleasantly surprised by what they found. Often first-timers took day visits to attractions such as vineyards, which during the consultations observed how they appeared to be gateway attractions for this audience to discover more of the region in the future. This highlights the opportunity presented by considering visitors as potential future residents.</p>	<p>Oastbrook Vineyard, East Sussex: “Our vineyard has become a gateway attraction to engaging with the surrounding region, and we are helping young visitors from London buy into this rural idyll”</p> <p>Farley’s House and Gallery, East Sussex: “We’re looking at developing a better offer around wellbeing and mental health, so we’ve been working with Combat Stress charities, offering forest bathing, and yoga. With this, we are looking to reach a younger audience. We fit in well with Wealdon’s image and new campaign ‘Naturally Inviting”</p>

2.2 Mapping key stakeholders in place marketing, and their audiences

The following pages set out a map of the main groups of stakeholders that have been engaged in this project to date, as well as an *indicative* list of their main audiences, as identified by workshop participants, and through desk research. Further, in-depth information on stakeholders' audiences may be collected through in-depth interviews, which will take place at the next stage of this project.

As a prompt, all participants were asked to briefly describe their organisation's main audiences who were typically located *outside* of the region (whether elsewhere in the UK, or overseas), and where these were located. It is however critically important to underline that **nearly every stakeholder type highlighted local residents as a key audience** (whether as consumers, constituents or even as ambassadors), and, reflecting the trends described in the section above, an audience that had grown in importance during the pandemic.

Sector	Stakeholder groups	Audiences & general approach marketing
Local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - County councils - City councils - Unitary Authorities - District, Borough & Parish councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting UK & international investment - Attracting new residents - Attracting UK & international business & leisure visitors - Stimulating local demand - Generating pride of place - Encouraging responsible resident/visitor behaviour
Place promotion, development and business agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Business investment promotion agencies; - Business Improvement Districts; - Chambers of commerce; - Trade associations; - Tourism development & promotion - Destination Management Organisations - Film/TV location promotion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting UK & international investment - Promoting specialised local industries based on place identity - Attracting skilled workforce - Attracting business & leisure visitors - Attracting business events and conferences from key sectors - Attracting film and TV production
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ports and airports - Ferry, rail and bus operators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting business and leisure visitors to use port/airport based on local surroundings

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building relations with local businesses - Encouraging frequent commuter use - Encouraging exploration for leisure visits - Encouraging footfall at station outlets
Commercial property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commercial builders/developers - Retail outlets/shopping centres - Commercial real estate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting investors in further developments - Promoting specialised local industries based on place identity - Attracting retail/office tenants
Residential property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing developers - Estate agents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting new residents - Attracting investors in further developments
Manufacturing, farming & processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Industrial & tech manufacturers; - Food & drink production and processing (vineyards, breweries, food producers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting skilled workforce - Promoting goods based on distinctiveness of their place of origin - Developing local and regional sales demand
Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NHS Trusts; - Local authorities; - Specialised care providers (e.g. - residential and nursing homes); - Private health providers - Healthcare education providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting qualified workforce to relocate - Attracting medical students to gain experience and develop their career in the region - Attracting patients/residents to private/residential healthcare properties
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Higher education/ universities; - Further education/ colleges; - Specialised FE (e.g. agriculture); - Language schools - State primary and secondary schools - Private primary and secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting UK & international students - Attracting friends and relatives of UK & international students - Attracting specialised teaching and support staff - Engaging with UK and international alumni to attract financial support and business partnerships
Media & comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional and local newspapers - Trade/B2B publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Generating sales based on news, adverts and event coverage - Promoting pride of place / articulating and representing local identity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PR and communications agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting specialised local industries in the context of where they're based - Supporting business community with PR & comms based on place identity
Arts & culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Museums and galleries - Studios and designers - Cinemas, theatres & entertainment venues - Art foundations / collectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting leisure visitors - Attracting student/academic visitors - Generating pride of place through local engagement - Attracting investment in arts/culture
Heritage & conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual landscape and gardens - Individual castles and historic properties - National/regional organs (e.g. NT, EH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting UK & international leisure visitors - Promoting use for film/TV location - Developing links with UK and overseas partner properties/foundations
Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional/city sports clubs - Sports grounds (racing tracks, golf courses, stadiums) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting staff/players - Attracting UK & international fans to attend matches - Attracting new members and regular spectators - Attracting concerts and major events
Hospitality & attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hotel groups and individual properties - Hotel associations - Restaurant chains & individual properties - Vineyards, breweries, food producers - Spas/pool/gyms - Event venues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attracting UK & international business and leisure guests - Attracting business events and conferences - Encouraging investment in hotel/restaurant properties - Selling tours and tastings at properties - Attracting weddings, events and film/TV location

2.3 Implications for campaign and asset development

Based on the findings presented above, a number of overarching conclusions and implications can be drawn for the development of campaigns and place-based marketing assets in the next stage of the SELEP's COVID-19 Business Support Fund Programme for the visitor economy. These implications are presented on the assumption that:

- I. Each Revi-VE consortium partner will choose their specific audience, messaging and collateral based on the findings presented in their specific report, as well as their own background research and strategic objectives
- II. Further work will be done locally to build on the findings of this report, and map potential campaign partners and their audiences
- III. Specific recommendations on the development of place marketing / place recovery networks will be made in the final report to this project, once in-depth research has been conducted through a survey and rounds of interviews

The main implications from the findings in this report, are set out in points A to G below:

- A. In order to build on the experience already gained in place promotion at county level, and build on work undertaken to date, formalised partnership building should take place between investment/promotion agencies and trade associations (e.g. Visit Kent, Locate in Kent. Produced in Kent, Kent Film Office) in order to assess where strengths and synergies lie, pool maps of partners and target audiences and identify gaps that can inform future partnership working
- B. At the next level, further work will be needed to map the various types of resident engagement (i.e. local promotion campaigns, research on resident sentiment, pride of place schemes) being undertaken by city, district and borough councils, as well as to identify the main challenges that they face in carrying out place marketing activities.
- C. Further research on resident sentiment, in particular how local people perceive where they live, what they appreciate most about it will also help to ensure that campaign content featuring specific places in each county will be authentic and reflective of the real lived experience 'on the ground'
- D. Messaging: While most themes or key messages were specific to each county (covered in each report), some common themes across the SELEP region could be identified, and which could help to guide the key messaging in place-based campaigns. These included:
 - a. Liveability - a good quality of life is achievable at a relatively short distance from London
 - b. 'Ex-commuters' and 'ex-Londoners' with skills and a higher disposable income represent a valuable market for rejuvenating local economies - with further scope for development

- c. Local people are vibrant, diverse and entrepreneurial - the people making up the region's identity are also ethnically diverse, younger, progressive and entrepreneurial than media coverage sometimes conveys
 - d. Good schools and universities and significant investment in research, helps to make a very attractive environment for businesses.
 - e. In addition to open countryside, the region's coastlines, wetlands, riversides (Thames and Medway) and the places along them are long, easily accessible and still relatively underappreciated assets that make for an attractive environment to live near, and to visit
 - f. Sustainability (e.g. carbon footprint of journeys, food miles, care for local countryside) matters to consumers as a mobilising theme, though more work is required to understand this in depth and map the 'offer' in the region
 - g. Thriving communities are assets in themselves, and more should be done to capture images that convey this in marketing collateral
- E. Aside from the place promotion agencies (i.e. Visit Kent, Sussex Modern, Visit Essex) local authorities have traditionally been the main commissioning bodies for marketing content and collateral. Several challenges related to this were identified by the local authorities in the workshops:
- a. This content tends to be highly localised, only relating to what was needed by the local authority at the time of commissioning this work
 - b. Image galleries and similar content banks can be expensive and time consuming to maintain
 - c. They require preparation, strategic planning and sometimes various bureaucratic procedures to allow images to be shareable
 - d. Where content is available for marketing purposes, awareness about it can sometimes be limited
 - e. Copyright and fair use policies were sometimes unclear (particularly for commercial /heavy users of content such as estate agents who could otherwise commission content themselves)
 - f. Crucially, local authorities increasingly lack the resources to commission new material
- F. The types of required content and collateral identified across the SELEP region includes still images, however there is a major need for video footage, given how widely used video has become on social media. Required content includes:
- Busy town centres, seafronts and other public spaces
 - Daily community life, clubs and societies
 - Businesses and their employees
 - New businesses that represent growing sectors in their local area, and business success stories
 - Schools and universities
 - Infographics with useful statistics about the region that can be easily shared

- Soundbites or quotes from local people on their recommended places to visit, eat out etc.

G. The number of organisations that have declared that they can share footage is so far relatively small, however it is hoped that this can be mapped more broadly during the next research phase of the project (the [National Experience Content Initiative](#) in Australia shows a scaled-up example of what content collection could look like)

SECTION 3 - Revi-VE place marketing - project next steps

The next steps of the project as established with Visit Kent at the project start are set out below.

Project stage	Timeline
Confirmation of project evaluation framework (submitted 22-03-22)	By 8th April 2022
Marketing campaigns implemented by Visit Essex, Visit Kent and Sussex Modern	June 2022 onwards
Carry out online survey of participants to gather feedback on workshops and place-marketing activities conducted since	September 2022
Research interviews with a sample of participating organisations to take place immediately after campaigns end, to gather feedback on campaign impact and form recommendations for future activity	October 2022
Final project evaluation report to be submitted	End November 2022
Final presentation of project impacts	Early December 2022

The following sections (4-6) of the report present a summary of workshop findings by county, broken down in chronological order, according to when the workshops took place.

SECTION 4 - KENT Place Marketing Workshops - Summary of Findings

4.1 Kent workshop participants

- Ashford Borough Council
- Canterbury BID
- Canterbury Cathedral
- Canterbury Christ Church University
- Canterbury City Council
- Creative Estuary
- Dreamland
- East Kent College
- English Heritage
- Explore Kent
- Folkestone & Hythe District Council
- HS1
- Inside Kent
- Kent Agricultural Society/ Kent Event Centre
- Kent County Council / Kent & Medway Cultural Transformation Board
- Kent Cricket
- Kent Crisps
- Kent Downs AONB
- Leeds Castle
- Locate in Kent
- Macknade Fine Foods
- Maidstone Borough Council
- McArthurGlen / Ashford Designer Outlet
- Medway Place Board
- MHS Homes
- National Trust
- Pillory Barn (Representing place-branding projects delivered for Ashford Borough Council, Dover District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, including Otterpool Park and Sevenoaks District Council)
- Prince's Golf Club
- Produced in Kent
- Romney Marsh Partnership
- Sevenoaks District Council
- Shepherd Neame
- Southeastern
- Swale Borough Council
- Thanet District Council
- The Historic Dockyard Trust
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- University of Kent
- Visit Kent
- Wine Garden of England

4.2 Overview

Kent workshops were divided approximately by area; a general Kent workshop, followed by a workshop for East, West and North Kent. Common themes which emerged included the challenges of attracting skilled employees to jobs in specific sectors, as well as the increased demand for tourism teams in local authorities to support colleagues in other areas such as inward investment and local regeneration projects - two factors that suggest that the shift towards place marketing is already occurring by necessity.

A consensus emerged between the workshops that Kent's offer of easily accessible coast and countryside aligned well with Londoners' (and locals') need for a better work life balance, and a greater interest in outdoor activities. The affirmation that 'Kent is many different places' was also confirmed, as well as a general agreement that while the county *brand* was relatively well

established, more could be done to familiarise audiences with the diversity of what the county can offer at local level (see 'partnership opportunities, point II in section 4.5 for more information).

4.3 Highlighted audiences

During the workshops, participants were asked to indicate any 'non-tourism' audiences that they communicate with about Kent. The following audiences can be highlighted (NB: a more complete picture for the SELEP region in general is provided in section 2.2, 'Mapping Key Stakeholders in Place Marketing, and their Audiences'):

- Local residents in all parts of Kent
- Individuals (based in or beyond London) who are skilled in those sectors where there is a need to fill vacancies or support growth (e.g. medical staff, university teaching staff, legal, accountancy and senior management positions)
- Businesses in specific sectors, especially those in the creative sector supply chain, and in professional services
- Londoners in general seeking to relocate to larger properties and seek a better work/life balance
- Commuters who travelled frequently to London who now seek flexible workspaces closer to home
- Prospective students and their families in the UK and overseas
- Commercial property developers interested in investing in flexible working spaces in Kent's rural areas or town centres
- Wine lovers (as a 'hook' to visit and potentially move to the county)
- Digital followers of iconic Kent businesses and attractions (e.g. those following Canterbury Cathedral's regular services online during lockdowns)

4.4 Core messages: what are participants telling their audiences about Kent?

During the workshops, participants were asked what messages *outside of the 'traditional' tourism proposition* they use to communicate with 'non-tourism' audiences about Kent. The following messages can be highlighted:

- Kent has a ready pool of talent, as well as supply chains that are ready to service businesses that want to move to the county
- Kent has a great range of heritage buildings that host modern industries
- Kent hosts an increasing array of high-quality cultural venues (e.g. the Turner Contemporary in Margate)
- Kent has excellent connectivity not only to London but also to the rest of the UK and continental Europe via rail, as well as a very dense public transport network within the county
- Kent is a place to feel welcome, safe and part of the community
- Kent has hospitality, food and drink that can compete with London
- Kent has a beautiful and diverse landscape that can be enjoyed in different ways

- Behind successful Kent businesses are real people with passion and a story to tell

4.5 Place marketing challenges and opportunities identified

During the workshops, participants were asked what aspects of Kent (beyond the traditional tourism proposition) were underappreciated, or what aspects of Kent could be promoted more effectively.

These are summarised below:

Underappreciated Kent attributes / assets worthy of more attention

- The work-life balance offered by living in a place with easy access to coast and countryside
- Local people and their pride in their local area (as a means of projecting a sense of belonging)
- Kent's leading brands (food, drink and other sectors) and the opportunity to put their place of origin more front and centre in their marketing ("we want to show Kent at its best")
- Familiarising Kent residents with Kent brands, and encouraging them to buy local, in order to support local jobs and reduce carbon kilometres
- The availability of flexible workspaces (as and when these become available), to encourage people to meet their colleagues in Kent rather than travel to London
- The true diversity of Kent's people. In light of demographic changes in the county, content will increasingly need to become more representative of different ages, ethnicities people of different sexual orientations and backgrounds in order to engender a sense of belonging
- Underpinning the Kent brand with the affirmation that Kent is, in reality, many different destinations

Marketing collateral required

In addition to marketing collateral identified in the section 'Implications for campaign development', Kent participants highlighted the following requirements:

- Short videos, of the type that would fit well on TikTok including footage of thriving town centres
- Personal testimonials from local businesspeople / 'a hub of sound-bites'
- Curated user-generated content (on the basis that UGC varies in quality, so some filtering is needed)
- High quality imagery showing the county in its best light (request from a food manufacturer)
- (Suggestion) podcast content, particularly for younger audiences

Place marketing challenges

- Attracting residents to areas that are already experiencing sharp rises in house prices could risk exacerbating the problem further for local communities, hence the need to take a highly targeted approach
- Attracting residents and visitors to locations that occasionally experience 'overtourism' risks exacerbating damage to the local environment and communities
- The current reflection of Kent's people, or its cultural offer is not considered to be fully reflective of its true diversity

- National press coverage of specific issues that affect Kent (e.g. traffic at channel ports, migrant channel crossings or the 'Kent' variant of COVID) can tend to dominate the news agenda and leave a lasting impression, hence the need to be highly agile and responsive
- 'Flagship' businesses with a significant following, selling products that have a strong Kent place identity aren't always fully aware of their role in representing the county

Place marketing partnership opportunities

- I. **Formalised partnership [mid-long term]:** At present, an informal 'Promoting Kent' group exists, and is composed of Locate in Kent, Kent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Produced in Kent, Explore Kent, the Universities and the Kent Film Office, and is chaired by Visit Kent. In order to address the strategic challenges highlighted in this report, build a wider consensus about the marketing challenges and opportunities faced by Kent and support the organisations in the county that could benefit from targeted support, it would be beneficial to:
 - A. Develop a broader, more formalised partnership between the major public and private sector organisations that have a stake in Kent's image (e.g. major employers, 'flagship' Kent brands and producers, and the major public services), and;
 - B. Undertake a deeper and more comprehensive consultation to gather the views of these stakeholders and understand the major challenges and opportunities faced when engaging with their audiences about Kent. (The workshops undertaken in this project offer a preliminary diagnostic, which would need to be developed further in deeper conversations with individual entities). One of the aims of this consultation would be to enable a more cohesive narrative for Kent as a place to live, work, visit, study and invest

- II. **Coordinating place marketing across Kent's districts:** The workshops revealed that Kent's local authorities are already engaging in place marketing activities in different ways, however this work tends to be highly siloed, even within organisations. Following an extensive consultation with local authorities at different levels, there is a potential opportunity to support local authority officers working in the area of economic development, planning, urban regeneration, environment and tourism/culture with place marketing guidance and collateral. For example, Visit Kent could play a vital role in coordinating a shared content hub, identifying gaps in content available, pooling resources to commission further content, and developing toolkits to guide businesses and local authorities on how to use content more effectively. Two important points should be considered when adopting this approach:

Firstly, there is a strong rationale for developing campaigns and associated assets as part of the 'nested brands' framework that Visit Kent has developed as part of its Visitor First Strategy, through which separate brands were created for North, West and East Kent, and;

Secondly, this collaboration process should be two way, allowing Visit Kent to share resources with local authorities, and local authorities to share their own assets with Visit Kent. The aim should be towards local authorities (and other local partners) 'layering' their own brands and messaging with content produced by other partners, rather than duplicating

or replacing it.

- III. **Supporting employers in attracting skilled staff:** This could involve targeted work with public sector organisations (e.g. NHS, schools, universities) to coordinate work in attracting skilled staff from the UK and overseas. This would require consultation with employers to identify the place image challenges experienced when recruiting and developing supporting marketing collateral that major employers could use in their own campaigns.
- IV. **Mapping Kent's offer in emerging areas:** The workshops revealed two areas in particular which could require further mapping (whether for tourism promotion or place-based initiatives) in order to identify gaps and articulate Kent's product proposition more clearly:
- Sustainability leaders - companies setting a leading example in their approach to managing their environmental impact and extending their community involvement (NB: HS1 appealed for attractions leading on sustainability to get in touch)
 - Flexible working/meeting spaces - both attractive to business visitors and locals seeking to stay local and work, rather than go to London (thus keeping their spending local)

SECTION 5 - ESSEX Place Marketing Workshops - Summary of Findings

5.1 Essex workshop participants

- Adventure Island
- Anglia Ruskin University
- Archant
- ASELA
- Basildon Council
- Braintree District Council
- Brentwood Borough Council
- Business Time in Essex
- C2C
- Chelmsford BID
- Chelmsford City Council
- Colchester Borough Council
- Countryside Properties
- Epping District Council
- Essex County Council - Sector Development
- Essex County Council - Comms
- Essex County Council - Inward Investment
- Essex County Council - Business Support
- Essex Housing Developers Group
- Essex Rural Partnership
- Fairfield's Farm
- Firstsite
- Greater Anglia
- Haven Gateway
- Hedingham Castle
- Holiday Inn Southend
- Hyde Hall
- Layer Marney Tower
- Maldon District Council
- Metal
- Milsoms
- Our Colchester (BID)
- Rochford District Council
- Sally Carpenter
- Southend BID
- Southend Borough Council
- Stephen Bromberg
- Surya Hotels
- Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community
- Thurrock Council
- University of Essex
- Uttlesford District Council
- Wilkin and Sons
- Willmott Dixon
- Writtle College

5.2 Overview

Essex workshops were divided approximately by area; for participants clustered in and around the following towns/cities, in the following order: Colchester, Southend, Chelmsford and Braintree. Each workshop offered a variety of perspectives on what Essex has to offer potential residents, investors, students and visitors and how organisations of different types are marketing the county to their audiences now. Given that some preliminary work had been done by Essex County Council on developing Marketing Essex, these workshops were used as an opportunity to familiarise a wider group of stakeholders on the subject of place marketing, and to understand which areas participants would like to see Marketing Essex focus on, as and when it is set up.

A common theme that emerged through the workshops included the extent to which stereotypes of the county and its people play in successfully marketing the county to audiences in the UK and

overseas. During 2021 Visit Essex had launched a This is Essex campaign, aimed at challenging the 'TOWIE' stereotype, and refreshing perceptions of Essex's people, with further activities planned in the coming year. Opinions on this emotive subject varied considerably, with some organisations (e.g. in the arts and culture sector), using the TOWIE/Essex girl stereotype as a subject to explore and question in greater depth, while other participants highlighted the risk of becoming too fixated on stereotypes which some audiences (particularly younger generations and audiences overseas) were not even aware of.

While there was consensus on the opportunities offered by Essex's major ports (two Freeports in development), airports, rail connections (with Crossrail due to be opened in 2022), some participants highlighted the importance of constantly challenging perceptions of 'industrial Essex' with better coverage of rural and coastal Essex which presents a compelling alternative to Cornwall or Devon as a place to live in or visit. The high quality of Essex's universities, colleges and schools was also seen as a strong selling point for the county's audiences.

5.3 Highlighted audiences

During the workshops, participants were asked to indicate any 'non-tourism' audiences that they communicate with about Essex. The following audiences can be highlighted (NB: a more complete picture for the SELEP region in general is provided in section 2.2 '*Mapping Key Stakeholders in Place Marketing, and their Audiences*')

- (Universities) students from UK and overseas (recently, India and West Africa), UK businesses seeking research partners, UK businesses seeking apprentices, global alumni, academics seeking research opportunities
- UK and international consumers of food and drink produced in Essex
- UK and international graduates seeking job opportunities
- Advanced manufacturers
- Investors in commercial office property
- Skilled healthcare staff to work for local NHS Trusts
- Professionals based in London seeking to relocate
- Ex-frequent commuters spending more time in Essex
- Specialist sports enthusiasts (paddleboarders and canoeists - Lee Valley Regional Park)
- Potential tenants of city centre offices (Chelmsford Borough Council), buyers of retail and commercial outlets, and investors in homebuilding
- Digital businesses seeking superfast broadband (Epping Council)
- Cycling enthusiasts based in London seeking to explore via cycling routes to Essex
- International artists

5.4 Core messages: what are participants telling their audiences about Essex?

During the workshops, participants were asked what messages *outside of the 'traditional' tourism proposition* they use to communicate with 'non-tourism' audiences about Essex. The following messages can be highlighted:

- Essex has huge potential based on its major transport and logistics infrastructure (incl two Freeports in the county), dense road connectivity and easy connections to London (incl. Crossrail soon)
- Essex has a strong knowledge economy, based on its educational providers across the county, including grammar schools, universities and agricultural universities, with many academic success stories
- Essex is an attractive place for highly skilled workers to build their career
- Essex has a strong traditionalism of radicalism, we don't accept the status quo (appealing to younger audience)
- Essex is interwoven with 20th century heritage and post-war perseverance (related to its New Towns)
- Essex has a wide range of natural assets, particularly its rivers and coastline
- Essex's people are proud, hardworking and friendly (i.e. "TOWIE is a good thing")
- Essex is the gateway to East Anglia

5.5 Place marketing opportunities identified

Underappreciated attributes / assets worthy of more attention

- Rural Essex's landscapes, as well as its long coastline ('Thames Estuary Wilderness' huge open skies; Rochford's largest wetlands project in Europe)
- Agricultural Essex and its food producers
- Food, drink and hospitality businesses that are on a par with London
- Essex's coastline is not just the closest coastline for much of London but also for those in surrounding regions (Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex, Cambridgeshire)
- Essex's dense road network and good connections with London
- Essex's bonds (esp. Basildon, New Towns) with East London, and its 20th century heritage (e.g. in agriculture and manufacturing - gives scope for many more stories to be told)
- Essex's people and distinct identity - not something many other regions in England can claim

Marketing collateral required

In addition to marketing collateral identified in the section 'Implications for campaign development', Essex participants highlighted the following requirements:

- Videos that show what it is like to live in Essex and work in Essex (two different approaches)
- The need for a common content hub that local authorities and colleges lacking budget could tap into
- Drone footage highlighting rural and coastal Essex
- Images of Essex's best schools and universities (need to overcome issues around privacy)

- Easily shareable infographics explaining some of Essex's liveability stats in an attractive format

Place marketing challenges

- The stigma -often perpetrated by the national media- that persists around Essex as a place, and its people (with a pejorative/judgmental aspect too). Some participants highlighted that stereotypes seemed to come from a particular period (1980s?), as younger generations seemed unaware of them, while many visitors were unaware or un-opinionated
- Lack of available/affordable housing for new arrivals coming to work in Essex
- Lack of connectivity *within* Essex (difficulty of getting from place to place, potentially hampering its cohesiveness as a place?)
- Some institutions (e.g. universities) were used to continually explaining where they were based in the context of London, however they highlighted the need to communicate better about their surrounding area
- Capturing the millions of potential investors/residents/visitors who fly into Essex airports/arrive at ports but don't stop as they travel through to London
- (Incorrect assumption) that much of Essex is industrial sites
- Overtourism could hamper the attractiveness of some locations and cause tension with local residents (reported by Maldon and Rochford)

Partnerships

Using input from these workshops and other sources, work is expected to continue, led by Essex County Council, on developing the remit and operational structure of Marketing Essex. This is being done on a principle of co-designing a Marketing Essex strategy and organisation model, by agreeing together priority target audiences, market positionings & narratives, quick wins, a joint marketing plan and by influencing place development priorities.

During the period March to September 2022, the aim is to co-develop a coordinated and focused approach to the promotion of Essex that links to place-making policies. The next stage of development is expected to follow, from Sept 2022 to March 2023 to build partnership working arrangements and explore joint funding, build the Marketing Essex community, and deliver joint initiatives to build momentum and visibility. It is hoped that Marketing Essex will be fully operational from early 2023, to deliver ongoing joint promotion and place-making activities.

SECTION 6 - EAST SUSSEX Place Marketing Workshops - Summary of Findings

6.1 East Sussex workshop participants

- Bexhill College
- Charleston
- Cooden Beach Hotel
- Depot, Lewes (Arts/cinema venue)
- Director of Public Health, East Sussex
- Ditchling Museum of Arts & Crafts
- East Sussex College Group
- East Sussex County Council
- English Heritage Trust
- Farleys House & Gallery Ltd
- Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)
- Hastings Borough Council & 1066 Country
- Lewes & Eastbourne Councils
- Little Monkey PR
- Locate East Sussex
- Oastbrook Vineyard
- Playne Design
- Plumpton College
- Rathfinny Estate, vineyard
- Rother District Council
- South Downs National Park Authority
- Stagecoach Southeast
- Stopham Vineyard
- Sussex Past, the Sussex Archaeological Society
- Swallowtail Hill
- Team East Sussex
- The Relais Henley Hotel
- The Relais Retreats
- Towner Gallery
- Wealden District Council

6.2 Overview

Two workshops were held for a mix of participants from across East Sussex, including healthcare, transport, education, agriculture/vineyards, art galleries and local authorities. The workshops were a valuable opportunity for Sussex Modern to include members from the organisation's own network and engage external stakeholders that have a strong interest in how East Sussex is perceived. Common themes that arose during the workshops included: the effect of changing demographics in the county and its effect on the cultural and entrepreneurial landscape; the role of culture and quality of life in attracting people to work in East Sussex and the opportunities offered by positioning the county better in the area of sustainability. Sussex Modern also delivered a presentation explaining the ways in which it has worked with partners to modernise perceptions of Sussex in recent years.

6.3 Highlighted audiences

During the workshops, participants were asked to indicate the main tourism and 'non-tourism' audiences that they communicate with about East Sussex. The following audiences can be highlighted (NB: a more complete picture for the SELEP region in general is provided in section 2.2 'Mapping Key Stakeholders in Place Marketing, and their Audiences'):

- Business investors in counties around East Sussex's borders, and businesses seeking premises and staff in the area
- International university/FE college students, and international language students
- Creatives from UK and overseas to work in creative industries locally
- Medical students and qualified workers to work in local NHS Trust
- International academics (interested in archaeology)
- Visitors associated with Sussex's wine export markets
- [UK and international leisure visitors]: ABC1 consumers, wine lovers, adventurous travellers who are culturally engaged and seeking creative ways to spend their leisure time

6.4 Core messages: what are participants telling their audiences about East Sussex?

During the workshops, participants were asked what messages *outside of the 'traditional' tourism proposition* they use to communicate with 'non-tourism' audiences about East Sussex. The following messages can be highlighted:

- Sussex has a dense and vibrant cultural offer (including some of the best art and cultural venues and events in the UK) which make it attractive both as a place to live and to visit
- Sussex has a diverse and distinctive landscape, and a sunny climate and there is a strong relationship between this and the region's viticulture
- The county has many business success stories, both by locals and people who've moved to the area
- The county has easy direct access by road and rail from London and Gatwick
- The county is thriving and a progressive and a place where international students can integrate easily

6.5 Place marketing opportunities identified

Underappreciated attributes / assets worthy of more attention

- Drawing a stronger relationship between the good climate and varied landscape and the food and drink produced there
- Framing (and developing promotion) around vineyards, galleries and major attractions as 'gateway' attractions that visitors come with the express intention of seeing before considering what else there is to do in the area
- The density of the cultural offer across the county (music, art, food, wine) since few other parts of England appear to offer this, and doing so as a means to engage visitors and encourage them to explore further
- The need for the county to be viewed as a much cooler place to live
- The need to identify, curate and present the county's 'sustainability leaders' much more effectively, in light of the fact that consumers take the issue increasingly seriously

Marketing collateral required

In addition to marketing collateral identified in the section 'Implications for campaign development', East Sussex participants highlighted the following requirements:

- Images and videos of busy places (town centres, sea fronts, events, clubs)
- High quality imagery that shows the region at its best (i.e. it would have to stand out to cut through the large amount of UGC available)
- Content that is highly targeted at Sussex's most desired audiences

Place marketing challenges

- The region faces skills shortages in a variety of sectors, but often finds itself competing for skilled labour with both London and West Sussex
- The academic offer (HE places) is reducing due to cuts at some universities, so there is a need to counter this and continue to attract students
- It's not especially clear if the county has a business sector that it's well known for (and questions over it needs one/several, and what it should be)
- Healthcare students/professionals may potentially view the county as unappealing due to some of the locations that experience poor outcomes, but there is a need to turn this on its head because it offers experience (and the landscapes offer great opportunities to keep well)
- An ongoing need to counter the occasional perception that the county's cultural offer or attractions are outdated
- Similar to other areas of the SELEP region, demand for housing among new arrivals is putting pressure on an existing shortage of affordable housing for local residents

Partnership opportunities

Sussex Modern is due to use the findings of these workshops and input from local partners to continue its work to promote East Sussex as a modern, outward looking region that can offer a high-quality visitor experience. Several key takeaways from these workshops could help to support this process further:

- Engagement with the local community as ambassadors for the region (in particular, to highlight success stories from new and long-term residents)
- The workshops revealed that while employers face recruitment challenges for jobs at various levels (not least in the public services) to compete with London, positioning the county's easy connectivity, cultural offer and quality of life were useful tools in attracting a skilled workforce. This underlines the importance of continued collaboration with partners from within and outside the culture and tourism sectors to ensure that this offer is well understood and articulated.

ANNEX 1 - Cross-cutting tourism takeaways (across the SELEP region)

While the focus of this project has been on broadening the focus from *tourism destination* to *whole place*, a number of common trends and issues in tourism arose that were common to Kent, Essex and East Sussex. Common tourism trends observed included:

- **Meeting the needs of staycation visitors:** COVID-19 restrictions decimated international arrivals but boosted the staycation market, drawing day-trippers from the local area and London but also first-time, longer-stay visitors from the Midlands and Northern England too. Staycationers (particularly Londoners) are increasingly young and tech-savvy, used to planning and finding their way around as they go, rather than planning and researching in advance. This points to the need to ensure that content is well curated and easily searchable
- **Food and drink, outdoor activities and wellness activities** only seem to increase their appeal among the UK market and act as 'gateway experiences' for discovering the region beyond since visitors often come for one purpose only, and then consider what else to do in the area. Leisure visits are also acting as an introduction for prospective residents too, underlining that visitors rarely sit in one silo alone (potential resident/student/investor...)
- **Mobility expectations:** Visitors who live in built up areas such as London are used to being highly independent and rely on good public transport and other mobility options. Discovering poor 'final mile' solutions for getting to their chosen attraction or hotel in rural or coastal areas can occasionally be a shock - and highlights the need for this to be addressed as an essential part of the visitor experience
- **Engaging the local market reaps rewards:** Getting local residents on-side - either to make more of their surrounding area, or to build a greater appreciation for tourism as an important economic sector reaps rewards, particularly in mobilising demand in low season, or in supporting product diversification (small scale events, food takeaways etc)
- **Social sustainability is critical too:** Surges in demand during the pandemic highlighted the challenges that some places can face in managing visitor demand during busy periods (occasionally creating 'overtourism'). In managing this, local authorities and promotional agencies will need to consider resident sentiment first, and be sensitive to marketing busy locations, or those vulnerable to environmental damage - and be ready to support visitor education schemes and promote alternatives
- **Collaboration among local authorities is key:** While some local authorities are collaborating to address issues such as visitor management or local promotion, many local authorities in the region find themselves competing to address common issues - such as to attract skills and investment, or visitors. This points to the need for local authorities to combine efforts to support tourism destination and place-based marketing

- **New digital audiences:** During successive lockdowns, many major attractions in the region switched to engaging with their audiences online, attracting followers from the UK and overseas who, through targeted promotion, could potentially be converted into visitors. Regional tourism promotion agencies could therefore work with these attractions to explore the characteristics of these audiences more deeply, and develop collaborative marketing to attract these visitors

Annex 2 - Questions used to guide workshop discussion

- Which audiences (UK and worldwide) are you communicating about East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent to?
- During the last couple of years, have you switched to target any new audiences with messages about East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent?
- In the coming year, do you hope to reach any new audiences with messages about East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent?
- What are the key messages that your organisation communicates about East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent as a place to live/work/study/invest?
- Has this changed in recent years? If so, how?
- Which 'East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent assets' do you place front and centre in your comms? (e.g. landscapes, quality of life, education...)
- Are you trying to change perceptions of East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent? If so, how are you doing this?
- What do you think is great about East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent as a place to live, work, study or invest that we should be shouting about?
- Are there any narratives about East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent that are underexploited?
- What would help you to communicate about East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent more effectively? What marketing collateral or content might help?
- If we were to work closer together on place marketing in the future, how could we add value to your business/organisation?
- Would you be able to share any of your marketing assets with other organisations to promote East Sussex/ Essex/ Kent?

Annex 3 - Post workshop survey questions

QUESTIONS [East Sussex example]:

1. **To what extent did you find the approach to 'place' marketing discussed in the workshop (as opposed to traditional 'destination' marketing) relevant to your organisation?** (1 = not at all relevant, 10 = extremely relevant)

2. **What did you find particularly useful or interesting in the workshop?**

3. **Do you target people to ... (all that apply)**

Live in East Sussex // Work in East Sussex // Study in East Sussex // Invest in East Sussex // Visit East Sussex // Meet in East Sussex (i.e. at business events) // Buy local produce // Engage with their local community (join community groups, encourage shopping locally) in East Sussex // Other _____

4. **Which of the following geographical locations do you target?**

East Sussex residents/businesses // London // Southeast England (excl. London) // Wider UK domestic // Europe // Rest of world

5. **Which key themes do you talk about when targeting audiences outside East Sussex?**

Local heroes // Diversity of East Sussex' people // Community solidarity // Landscapes and coastline // Built heritage (e.g. castles and houses) // Arts & culture // East Sussex food and drink // Good transport links // Proximity to London // Proximity to EU markets // Leading East Sussex businesses // East Sussex leisure attractions // Other ____

6. **What do you think is great about East Sussex as a place to live, work, study or invest that is sometimes underappreciated?**

7. **Do you have any examples of local heroes (e.g. outstanding residents or businesses) that help showcase what's special about East Sussex?**

8. **What would help you to communicate about East Sussex more effectively? What marketing assets from Sussex Modern or its partners might help? What type of marketing content featuring East Sussex would you find useful?**

Images of businesses // Images of specific destinations (places, towns, landscapes) // Images of local people // Videos of local heroes // User-generated content // Soundbites // Business case studies // Destination itineraries / content // Destination marketing resource hub of shared assets // Other

9. **If a place marketing network for East Sussex was set up in the future, what would you find most useful? What would you like it to do?**

- 10. Does your organisation currently share any copyright-free content featuring people/places/experiences in East Sussex? If yes, how can it be obtained?**

- 11. Does your organisation share user-generated content featuring East Sussex specifically people/places/experiences? Can you share any examples?**

- 12. Would your organisation be able to share any of your marketing assets with other organisations in order to promote East Sussex? Are there any barriers that would make this difficult?**

- 13. Do you have any other comments about place marketing in East Sussex?**
