

1066 Marketing Action Plan 2017/18

Year one of a new 10-year plan

The 1066 Country Marketing Strategy was agreed unanimously at the special exec board on 28 November 2016, and sets out our strategic direction and focus for the next 10 years.

Following the big 950th anniversary, and all the activity and ‘buzz’ it has created, 2017 will be lower key in terms of direct marketing. Instead we will focus on repositioning the brand, investing significantly in external resources to help us develop our narrative and improve the Visit 1066 website.

<p>Short term (1-2 years) <i>This section is explored in greater detail later on pages 2 to 9 of this document</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify short term target markets (Cultural Explorers & Families) and costed tools and tactics. • Review website requirements and determine options for future delivery including adaption of existing platform or the need for a new platform. • Develop the 1066 Country brand, narrative, imagery and tone of voice. From this, develop a marketing toolkit for business and intermediaries with a clear narrative, images, video to ensure that consistent messages are given. • Develop itineraries and content for target markets with a focus on thematic strengths highlighted out of the marketing toolkit. • Develop a digital marketing plan (Year 2, with the iGeneration at its heart) and either identify capabilities within 1066 Country or commission delivery.
<p>Medium term (3-5 years) <i>Further detail to be established in 2018 update</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build itineraries and expand thematic approach for all content outlets. • Engage with all 3rd party providers of content and promote the toolkit to them, adding other tools and content as needed. • Expand digital performance with a particular focus on the iGeneration (Mosaic Group O ‘Rental Hubs’).
<p>Long term (5+ years) <i>Further detail to be established in 2020 update</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product development to align to market opportunities (health & wellbeing, water based activities, walking & cycling, quality accommodation). • Continued event development to continue to address weaker periods of demand. • Continued improvements to the road and rail infrastructure, public realm and key gateways to support growth. • Monitor and review market performance through visitor surveys.

Visitor numbers

We don't yet have figures for visitor numbers in 2016, but we expect these to be very positive as a result of the 950th anniversary.

According to Tourism South East, just over 1.1 million overnight trips were taken to 1066 Country in 2015, up by 1.8% on 2014. Domestic overnight trips increased marginally by 0.9%, while overseas trips increased by 7.5%. Overall, staying trips resulted in an estimated 3.9 million visitor nights spent in 1066 Country in 2015, up by 1.7% compared to 2014.

Approximately 9,500,000 tourism day trips were made to 1066 Country (lasting more than 3 hours and taken on an irregular basis) in 2015 generating an additional £234,285,000 in visitor trip expenditure. Compared to 2014, the volume of day trips fell by 2.9% and trip expenditure fell by 1.9%.

Trip expenditure increased from £218 million in 2014 to £222.7 million in 2015 (up 2.1%), driven by a 1.3% increase in trip expenditure among domestic and a 4.1% increase in trip expenditure among overseas visitors. Total expenditure by visitors in 2015 (overnight and day) is estimated to have been in the region of £456,914,000, almost unchanged compared to 2014. This is expected to show a rise in 2016.

Short-term actions: 2017/18

This year we will:

- **Invest in brand, tone and narrative (est £18,000) – Develop the 1066 Country brand and invest in tone and narrative** – Develop a clear narrative, imagery and tone of voice. From this, develop a marketing toolkit for business and intermediaries with a clear narrative and an image/video gallery to ensure we are delivering consistent messages.
- **Invest in website (est £20,000) – DC/Exec Board** – Review website requirements and determine options for future delivery including adaption of existing platform or the need for a new platform.
- **Focus on families and cultural explorers**
Identify costed tools and tactics. Develop itineraries and content for target markets with a focus on thematic strengths highlighted out of the marketing toolkit.
- **Understand the iGeneration**
Develop a digital marketing plan (Year 2, with the iGeneration at its heart) and either identify capabilities within 1066 Country or commission delivery. –

External expertise

Much of our activity in 2017 will be carried out in consultation with external experts – developing our brand, tone and narrative, and reviewing our website. This will require significant investment, so we will scale back on direct marketing and ride the wave of an excellent 2016.

Until this work is done, there are some limitations on our other activity – for example precise arrangements for digital marketing can't be made until we know what's happening with the website.

Audiences

We will focus our attention on two audiences we already understand well; family groups and cultural explorers, on both day trips and holidays. We will also continue to cater to foreign language students, though this will be a lesser focus. The iGeneration are an emerging market, so this year we will work on understanding them better, and working out how to target them effectively from 2018/19.

A detailed breakdown of who these groups are and how we will target them follows below. Running throughout all our planned activities, the following points should be considered.

We will continue to work closely with Tourism South East, Visit Britain, Visit England and trade partners to identify trends. Press and PR activity to promote the sector will continue to be a focus, including appropriate social media activity for each segment.

Continue to invest in TripAdvisor advertising (£7,000 a year), as this is proving successful.

Themes

The brand narrative work will help determine themes. From initial discussions we believe the following points will be key:

- Contemporary culture needs to be promoted as a theme throughout all our marketing activity, given equal importance to the traditionally rich heritage offering.
- There is an appetite to refocus on individual town identities, what makes them unique and how they fit into the larger area of 1066 Country.
- Nostalgia is sweeping the nation, and people are attracted by the idea of a retro seaside experience reminiscent of what they experienced as children.

Membership

We will continue the strong working relationship with the attractions group, working together to promote each other and the area as a whole.

As ever there is a balance to be struck between promoting the area as a whole and ensuring that Visit 1066 members feel they are getting the full benefits of membership. As such, we will promote all events that are relevant and of interest, whether the organisers are members or not. As a general rule we will only actively promote attractions, accommodation and hospitality providers if they are members.

Family holidays

The 1066 Country Marketing Strategy, read alongside Tourism South East's recent visitor survey, has shown that many of our visitors stay longer than we'd previously thought, with an average stay of 5.45 nights.

They are also less AB-focused than we had realised: the largest socio-economic group is C1 (supervisory, clerical, and junior managerial and junior administrative) at 38%, followed by AB (higher and intermediate managerial, administrative or professional level occupations) at 31% and C2 (skilled manual workers) at 26%. Many of these visitors are staying in caravan and holiday parks, and we will be targeting these locations harder in response.

Family groups tend to have children aged up to 14 and are mostly from the UK. They travel between 60 and 90 minutes by car to get here and stay in holiday parks, caravans, campsites or budget serviced accommodation. They come to Hastings and Camber in particular, and some are familiar with the area from their own childhoods and motivated by nostalgia.

They may be travelling with other friends and relatives, and are generally self-catering. They're looking for fun, exciting activities that are accessible and convenient, as well as some quality experiences to create memories. They like the sea, Hastings Old Town, fish & chips, amusement arcades and heritage sites.

Existing activity:

- Continue with appropriate press, PR and social media activity, at a slightly reduced level. **JME**
- Continue working with TripAdvisor. **DC**
- Continue wide distribution of Visit 1066 guide. **DC**
- Continue to work closely with Tourism South East, Visit Britain, Visit England and trade partners to identify trends. **JME**

New activity:

- Develop a programme of engagement for improving links with camping and caravanning parks in 1066 Country. **ALL – initial contact in Jan 2017, meet in February**
- Target reciprocal marketing via websites, where the parks recommend things to do in the area, and the attractions recommend places to stay in the area. **– end of March and on-going**
- Seek agreements with caravan parks that they'll display a poster advertising 1066 Country, to be updated quarterly.
- Explore vouchers and special deals for guests at these sites.
- Make sure the Visit 1066 guide is available at each park, along with other relevant marketing material.

Reduced activity

To free up officer time and resources for focusing on the new activity outlined above, we will make savings by:

- Doing slightly less press and PR activity (this will naturally be lower than the 950th anniversary year).
- Only doing press and PR activity that targets our five key markets for this year.
- Only attending events and exhibitions that target our five key markets for this

year (for example not attending Excursions, which focuses on group travel).

Family day trippers

The same group as above also visit 1066 Country on day trips, travelling up to 60 minutes to get here. They are mostly from the UK, and travelling either from home or from holiday accommodation in a neighbouring county.

Existing activity:

- Continue with appropriate press, PR and social media activity, at a slightly reduced level. **JME**
- Continue working with TripAdvisor. **DC**
- Continue railway poster campaign(s). **JME**
- Continue wide distribution of Visit 1066 guide. **DC**
- Continue to work closely with Tourism South East, Visit Britain, Visit England and trade partners to identify trends. **JME**

New activity:

- Develop a programme of engagement for improving links with camping and caravanning parks within two-hour radius of 1066 Country. **– from January 2017**
- Ensure that camping and caravanning parks within a two-hour radius receive the attractions guide and events information. **- DC**
- Explore working with tie-up providers, such as magazines, Day Trip Finder and Groupon. **– DC**
- Target reciprocal marketing via websites, where the parks recommend things to do in the area, and the attractions recommend places to stay in the area. **- DC**

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Cultural explorers on holiday

These are largely couples with grown-up children, staying in high-quality accommodation (often in Rye, as the kind of accommodation they like is often booked up elsewhere) or with friends. They come all year round, and are high spenders. They aren't easily impressed but they like the cultural, heritage and food offering in 1066 Country, particularly in Battle and Rye.

They may be from the UK, France, Germany, The Netherlands or Belgium. They like gardens, castles, historic sites, galleries, museums, theatre, vineyards, farmers' markets and independent shops and restaurants. We already market well to this group, and will continue to focus on them.

Existing activity:

- Continue to attend appropriate trade and public exhibitions, whether in person or by third party, particularly targeting the Dutch, Belgians, French and Germans. - JME
- Continue to work with Norman colleagues where appropriate. - KB
- Continue developing the Japanese and Chinese markets when opportunities arise, as well as Scandinavia and the US to a lesser degree. - JME
- Continue with appropriate press, PR and social media activity, at a slightly reduced level. - JME
- Continue working with TripAdvisor. - DC
- Continue wide distribution of Visit 1066 guide. - DC
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New activity:

- Improve brochure distribution to cultural venues – galleries, museums and libraries. - DC
- In the long term, work to secure external funds to incentivise 1066 as a place to set up hospitality businesses, to improve the offering of high-quality accommodation in the area. – KB/EW - ongoing

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Foreign language students

Our longest-staying visitors are a combination of school-age students and adult professionals, visiting the area (mostly Hastings and Bexhill) to learn English. These groups come from both short and long-haul markets.

The younger students stay between one and three weeks, while the professionals, who often work for the government or military or in aviation, may stay up to six months. They are interested in historic attractions, entertainment and events.

They travel to other parts of 1066 Country by coach, particularly Bodiam, Battle and Rye. Many become fond of the area and visit again in future.

Existing activity:

- Continue the strong working relationship with the Hastings Overseas Student Advisory Council (HOSAC) and all major language schools in the area. – DC/KB
- Continue with appropriate press, PR and social media activity.
- Continue working with TripAdvisor. - DC
- Continue distribution of Visit 1066 guide to language schools. - DC

iGeneration

In 2017/18 we will investigate this newly emerging market and seek to understand what makes them tick and how best to target them. We will use this research to develop a digital marketing plan for launch in 2018/19, either identifying capabilities within 1066 Country or commissioning delivery from external experts.

This group are in their 20s to early 30s, and don't yet have children or mortgages – meaning they have some disposable income. They don't tend to use 'official' tourist information, preferring to discover places independently (or at least to think they have). They're looking for 'something different' and they get their information via social media and recommendations from friends. This makes them very valuable, as if they start coming others will follow.

They're willing to travel 60 to 90 minutes, as often by public transport as by car, and stay for the weekend or a short break – mostly in Hastings and Bexhill. They travel as couples or small groups of friends, and prefer quirky or unusual accommodation such as glamping, boutique accommodation, budget hotels or hostels.

They like cultural and heritage attractions, and simple pleasures such as the beach, countryside, walks and pub lunches. They are active, enjoying boating, watersports and cycling during the day, and live music, good restaurants and casual nightlife in the evening.

More detailed analysis is required to understand how to reach them. We will present a tailored action plan ahead of year 2 (2018/19).