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VISITORS PLACES DESTINATIONS

# CANTERBURY DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

DMP PROJECT GROUP

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# 1 THE DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN AT A GLANCE

**This is the three year Destination Management Plan for Canterbury city. The Plan leads with the visitor economy but recognises that a strong brand and an excellent experience for visitors is also good for people who live and work in the city and for those who want to study or invest in it.**

**It sets out the priorities for the next three years to help Canterbury fulfil its potential as the tourism ‘capital’ of Kent and to deliver more international and UK short breaks to the city. It builds on current plans and activity. It uses what is special about Canterbury to help it stand out from the competition. It is clear about best prospect markets, how to reach them and how to deliver an experience that will create a strong reason for them to come, stay and spend.**

**The Plan is designed to be read by a wide audience. Stakeholders have been closely involved in each step of its development. The way forward and the recommendations have been agreed with the industry and with public sector partners who will work together to deliver the actions, which are practical and achievable.**

Canterbury city is Kent’s best known visitor destination, attracting over 7 million visitors a year from the UK and internationally. Canterbury is first and foremost a historic city; visitors come to see its heritage and to enjoy spending time in its historic setting. The city is renowned for its Cathedral which is part of Canterbury’s World Heritage Site. Canterbury has invested in its wider cultural offer including the Marlowe Theatre and the Beaney Museum & Art Gallery. The city’s cultural offer includes the Gulbenkian - the University of Kent’s Arts Centre, St Augustine’s – part of the World Heritage Site, smaller specialist museums, festivals, hidden gardens and the river. The city was the birthplace of the playwright Christopher Marlowe and is famous for its association with Chaucer and the Canterbury Tales. The city is also home to two Universities; both within walking distance of the city centre whose students double the number of residents during term time. The Universities are important ambassadors for the city and generate significant visits, including VFR (visiting friends and relatives). The visitor and knowledge economies are the two main sectors for the city. These sectors shape the rhythm of Canterbury, how it looks, how it feels and how it works as a place.

## HOW WE DEVELOPED THE DMP

This Destination Management Plan (DMP) has been developed over a 7-month period. It has been steered by a Project Group comprising representatives from Canterbury City Council, Visit Kent and Visit Canterbury, leading visitor attractions, hotels, Canterbury City Partnership, Whitefriars Shopping Centre and the city’s two Universities. We have also met with further industry representatives, facilitated a workshop and two Action Planning sessions at key stages in the development of the Plan to ensure there is buy-in to the process and the recommendations. Around 50 people – businesses and people working in the public sector - have contributed their views and been involved in helping to shape this Plan.

Canterbury is a mature destination with a lot of primary research on its visitor markets and information on who is coming now. Visit Kent has gathered this existing research and brought it together to develop a clear and holistic understanding of Canterbury as a destination. (The detail of this work is available as a companion research report to the DMP). We draw on this market intelligence here to demonstrate how the DMP will add value to what is already happening and contribute to strengthening the visitor economy for Canterbury and for Kent. Critically, this market intelligence informs best market prospects for Canterbury in UK and international markets and ensures resources will be focused where they can deliver best return on investment.

We have also developed a Shared Story for the destination as a way to describe what is special and different about the city, that everyone can use when they are planning how to invest in improvements and new experiences, and when they are talking to people who don’t know the place. It has informed the DMP actions.

From the beginning of the work, the Project Group has been clear that the DMP needs to focus on two areas of work – Marketing and Place. The DMP process has demonstrated that this focus is the right one for Canterbury city and we have used it to shape the outputs developed with members of the Project Group and other key delivery partners in two Action Planning sessions.



## WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

The visitor economy and the knowledge economy are priority sectors for Canterbury. The city has also invested strongly in its wider cultural offer. It makes sense to align these sectors and it forms a central approach to this DMP. The visitor, cultural and knowledge economies are mutually reinforcing and a strong visitor brand for the city helps with wider market positioning. Visitors are an important audience for cultural programmes and venues and visiting university friends and relatives are a significant seasonal market for hotels. However, to realise this potential Canterbury needs to address some internal challenges and to position the city strongly in the face of tough competition from other UK destinations including other historic cities.

Canterbury partners want:

- ▶ To create a clear city identity - owned by all and used consistently
- ▶ To attract more visitors to stay for a leisure short break in the city and to drive higher spend through longer stays
- ▶ To prioritise international visitors – building on existing international markets and capitalising on Canterbury’s location and its relationship with Northern Europe
- ▶ To ensure Canterbury communicates effectively the full cultural offer of the city to all its target markets, and delivers on the promise with a quality offer that reinforces the distinctive experiences that are special to Canterbury
- ▶ To even out seasonal fluctuations of visits across the year
- ▶ To manage ‘place’ better
- ▶ To position Canterbury more strongly as a base to explore the wider offer of Kent.

To achieve these objectives, the partners in Canterbury will:

- ▶ Coordinate the city’s cultural experiences and deliver cultural programming that is distinctive and unique to Canterbury; developing the potential of festivals and events is a part of that
- ▶ Invest in excellent destination management and in animating and curating public spaces

- ▶ Work collaboratively on marketing activity to achieve greater impact with best prospect markets
- ▶ Evolve the DMP Project Group into a Destination Management Partnership with 3 Delivery Groups involving wider partners.

The longer term objective is for the actions undertaken by the Destination Management Partnership in the first 3 years to stimulate investment by existing businesses and to encourage inward investment in new visitor accommodation that will grow the tourism capacity of the city for short breaks and service the needs of the growing knowledge economy.

## HOW WE ARE GOING TO GET THERE

Canterbury will:

Establish new **ways of working which are driven by collaborative partnerships** between all the different sectors involved in the visitor economy within the city

Tackle some of the barriers to making things happen

Align and **pool skills and resources effectively** to work smarter and achieve more

**Involve and equip local businesses to help drive quality** and support creativity and further collaborative working.

## THE BIG PICTURE

Britain's heritage continues to be a major draw for our international visitors and an important part of the cultural experience that UK visitors seek. Over the last decade there has been substantial investment in our cultural venues and experiences, in particular by larger metropolitan cities that have used culture and cultural tourism as major planks for regeneration. These large cities have provided historic cities with new competitors that are well placed to take advantage of increased demand for cultural experiences. Historic cities are often defined by their

iconic heritage and not seen as places that offer a contemporary cultural offer. They also face the practical challenges of narrow historic streets, small and often walled city centres and a concentration of small historic buildings not best suited to meet the demands of modern living. There may also be limited space for new build. Large volumes of visitors can often exacerbate traffic and pedestrian management issues. Small cities such as Canterbury can be particularly challenged by these constraints.

Notwithstanding increasing competition, historic cities remain popular destinations. The HLF Economic Impact Study 2013 estimates heritage tourism is worth £26.4bn to UK economy and that heritage has become more important in people's holiday choices. Five of Britain's historic cities have consistently featured in the International Passenger Survey (IPS) Top 20 UK Cities list. Canterbury also appears in that Top 20 but not consistently year-on-year.

### CULTURAL INVESTMENT IN CANTERBURY

The city is making significant investment in its heritage and culture relative to its size. This provides a strong basis on which to grow the city's visitor potential and an opportunity for Canterbury to optimise the benefits of that capital investment including in the visitor economy. Major current and recent investments are:

- ▶ The new Marlowe Theatre which opened in 2011. Funding came from a mix of public and private contributions with Canterbury City Council's £17 million leading the investment. Kent County Council and SEEDA also supported the project and a major fundraising campaign set up by The New Marlowe Theatre Development Trust raised an impressive £4.5 million through a campaign that attracted high profile support.
- ▶ The Beaney Museum & Art Gallery, which also houses the city's TIC, reopened in 2012 following a £14 million restoration project (£7 million of which was provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund).
- ▶ Canterbury Cathedral is currently developing a major Heritage Lottery (HLF) bid to invest in significant repair to the building infrastructure and visitor interpretation.
- ▶ Westgate Gardens is undergoing a major refurbishment with funding from HLF and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) as part of a project to create 'a major green heart' for Canterbury, where residents and visitors can enjoy leisure and recreation in a tranquil setting and learn more about the city's rich history. The project covers four distinct parks – Westgate Gardens, Tannery Field, Toddlers Cove and Bingley Island – which will be linked together to form a larger, major park for the city.

## HEADLINE OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

We benchmarked the performance of Canterbury against a selection of other UK historic cities, chosen by the project group as examples of places that are performing well as visitor destinations and cultural centres. The findings highlight some of the challenges Canterbury needs to address.

- ▶ Canterbury has a population of c. 40,000 but around 6.5 million day visitors – that translates into a ratio of 150 visitors to 1 resident – possibly the highest in the UK. This brings significant management issues, especially because those visitors are concentrated into a small number of streets and frequently arrive and depart at similar times because they are part of an organised group
- ▶ Canterbury is a gateway from mainland Europe to London and beyond but, like all gateways, visitors are passing through and may not spend a full day in the city. As a result Canterbury has fewer overnight visitors than many other historic cities and a lower per head day visitor spend.
- ▶ Overnight visitors to Canterbury have a high per head spend – on a par and above some other historic cities. The economic potential of overnight visitors is strong.

There are four main areas of consideration for the DMP; each is both an opportunity and a challenge:

### The high quality of the city's heritage but it brings challenges too

Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey, and St Martin's Church make up Canterbury's World Heritage Site and are testimony to the international quality of the city's heritage, but while the Cathedral is well known and well visited, the other parts of the World Heritage Site and other heritage experiences are not. Canterbury is a compact, walkable city on a human scale. It invites exploration and there is plenty to discover. Canterbury has a maze of historic streets and alleys that lead to small hidden gardens, interesting buildings and to the river but these routes are relatively unexplored by visitors and there is little information to provide you with a reason to seek them out. Heritage is the city's strongest appeal but it brings challenges too:

- ▶ The city is constrained by its walls and heritage – there are limited sites to build hotels, create new attractions or additional retail
- ▶ The traffic around the city cuts off St Augustine's and other heritage assets from the city heart
- ▶ The Cathedral and its grounds are contained within walls within the centre – that can make them feel inaccessible and more like a gated attraction than part of the city heart

- ▶ A concentration of small independent hotels and B&Bs located in historic buildings means less reliable and consistent quality of supply and there are limited hotels in the centre able to accommodate larger groups
- ▶ The narrow streets invite you to wander and have retained an old world feel but the street entertainment, street vendors and the design of the temporary market stalls detract from that environment, though offer the potential to reinforce sense of place
- ▶ Some of the city arrival points need polishing to deliver a first impression and welcome commensurate with the importance of the city's heritage status.

### Canterbury's size and location are a strength but bring challenges too

While its gateway location provides challenges it is also a major opportunity for Canterbury. The city is easily accessible and familiar to a significant catchment of Northern European as well as to a large Kent and London catchment. The challenges are:

- ▶ The pressure cooker effect of large numbers of people concentrated in too few streets – opening up the city and encouraging wider exploration can help disperse visitors more effectively
- ▶ Insufficient 'must sees' and a limited number of places to stay overnight reinforces the perception that you can 'do Canterbury in a day'
- ▶ To change these perceptions by communicating better the wider cultural offer in a way that is distinctive from other cities and provides reasons to visit and to stay.

### Canterbury has a strong cultural offer for a city of its size but that cultural offer is hard to find

Canterbury could make much more of its existing cultural offer as part of the visitor offer – its theatre, museums, art gallery and art centres, its hidden gardens, its events and festivals, and its literary connections including Marlowe and Dickens. There is **potential to present a more contemporary cultural offer in a heritage setting** as part of a distinct positioning of Canterbury as a destination. The challenges are:

- ▶ To bring together culture partners to work on programming across venues to create a stronger critical mass
- ▶ To develop and deliver festivals that are special to Canterbury with the potential to attract visitors from outside Kent and therefore enable them to form part of the market positioning of the city
- ▶ To capitalise on the opportunities of Canterbury's specialist festivals to present a distinctive contemporary cultural offer. These festivals are Wise Words, Sounds New and the Jewellers Festival.

### Canterbury has limited capacity to grow the overnight market

There are 12 hotels in Canterbury and the immediate surrounding area with a total of 453 bedrooms<sup>1</sup>. The supply is largely 3-star, with one 4-star, a boutique hotel and two budget hotels. There are also 40 self catering properties in the city that offer 168 rooms. Capacity is boosted when the university accommodation available during holiday periods. There is also good camping and caravanning options in the immediate area and these are particularly popular with Dutch and German touring visitors.

Within the hotel sector, Canterbury has very high room occupancy at weekends reflecting its largely leisure-driven visitor economy. Mid-week occupancy is more variable with some seasonal lows between November-March including around the Christmas period. UK and Northern European leisure break markets not tied to travelling at weekends are an important mid-week market along with local business visits and group tours. Graduation ceremonies provide a significant and reliable annual boost. This market is predicted to grow as the city's universities expand further.

Canterbury's hotels turn away business at peak times in the summer months with a subsequent economic loss to the city. The newly opened Premier Inn will provide much needed additional rooms but also competition for smaller independent city centre B&Bs and hotels. New competition often encourages investment by existing businesses, helping to drive up quality, but can impact negatively on room rates too.

Despite a patchy occupancy picture across the year, there is demand for more hotels in Canterbury now, and longer term Canterbury needs to grow the number of hotels to enable further expansion into short breaks. There have been several proposed hotel developments over the last 5 years but these projects have not come to fruition for a number of reasons and one site is now lost to residential development. Like many historic cities, Canterbury has a shortage of suitable hotel development sites in the centre and the Council Planning Department should support and prioritise appropriate sites and planning applications. Canterbury should also look at the potential to repurpose buildings for visitor accommodation. Older buildings can offer the potential to create distinctive or unusual places to stay.

In the first three years, the partners will target markets that have the flexibility to travel mid week and prioritise new activity that takes place out of season to maximise capacity currently available.

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<sup>1</sup> Canterbury Hotel Market Fact File March 2011, VisitKent, Tourism South East, Locate in Kent

## 2 CANTERBURY'S VISITORS

### CURRENT VISITORS

#### Numbers and spend

Canterbury has high volumes of *day visitors*. Many of them are from within Kent. But some are from further afield, including from Northern Europe.

The *total spend* that these day visitors bring into the city is very important but their individual *spend per head* is relatively low<sup>2</sup>. This may be because of the length of the trip, lack of opportunities to spend, and/or the types of people (not least the high volume of school trips and coach parties – which both have a relatively low per-head spend in the city).

Less than 10% of Canterbury's 7 million visitors stay overnight. But those *staying visitors* bring in 36% of all visitor spend. Only 1 in 4 staying visitors to Canterbury come from overseas, yet they bring in nearly half of all staying-visitor spend.

In contrast to day visitors – Canterbury's *staying visitors' spend per head* is relatively high.

Staying visitors are exceptionally important for Canterbury's economy and international staying visitors are particularly valuable.

### CURRENT VISITORS

- 7 million visitors
- 8.5% stay overnight – 36% of spend is by staying visitors
- 25% of staying visitors are from overseas – contributing 48% of staying visitor spend
- Motivation - heritage (83%) followed by shopping (49%) and culture/arts (44%)
- Activities - Eating out (79%), Shopping (67%) and Visiting an Attraction (57%)

*From: Visit Kent DMP Research 2013*

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<sup>2</sup> Compared to four English cities and towns selected for benchmarking with Canterbury for this process: Bath, Brighton, Cambridge and Norwich. The five (including Canterbury) are all university cities. They all use the same system of measuring visitor numbers and spend (The Cambridge Model), allowing direct comparisons.

### Types of people

People currently visiting or planning to visit the city for leisure come from all types, age ranges and life stages. Research indicates that Canterbury appeals particularly to *middle-aged & older people*, and to people of all ages who are *relatively affluent, well-educated, independent and self-reliant*.

This fits with the types of people who are most likely to spend money on heritage, arts and culture and that take UK domestic short-breaks. It also describes the type of overseas visitors to Britain who are most likely to want to explore beyond London.

### PRIORITISING MARKETS – THE RATIONALE

When planning investment and marketing, it makes sense:

- ▶ To have in mind and target people who will bring money into the local economy to support local jobs and services
- ▶ To target those people who will enhance the place and local people's quality of life and so be welcomed by the community
- ▶ To prioritise people who will be easiest to persuade – that is, people who are already receptive to the idea of visiting places like Canterbury, or are already looking for a break that features one or more of the special activities and experiences Canterbury can offer
- ▶ To target people who will really enjoy visiting the city – and so will recommend it to others and may become repeat visitors
- ▶ To prioritise people who can visit at times when the city's serviced accommodation has capacity.

This does not mean that other people won't come. It is just a question of targeting finite resources where they will have most impact.

Individual organisations and businesses will continue to invest in their own specific markets. The DMP is about the destination as a whole, and where best to put joint effort.

### GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Because of its near-Europe location and its strong knowledge economy, Canterbury's potential growth markets are different from those of many other English historic towns.

## UK Markets

The continuing 'staycation' trend (since the economic downturn, many more British now holiday in Britain) and the new high-speed rail service to Canterbury offer opportunities to attract more UK visitors.

Most of Canterbury's current UK visitors that travel from outside Kent come from London and the home counties. This should continue to be a fruitful area because:

- ▶ It is densely populated with a relatively affluent population
- ▶ Canterbury is relatively easy to get to for people living in this area
- ▶ Awareness of Canterbury is in this area higher than in other parts of the UK.

Persuading these neighbours to stay overnight may be more challenging, as they are quite likely to see Canterbury as a day trip destination. They may also have a limited understanding of what Canterbury has to offer and have other options that are equally easy to reach for a short break.

In order to attract staying visitors from London and the surrounding counties, it will be important to communicate the full range of things to do and the idea of using Canterbury as a base for the Garden of England's coast and countryside.

When it comes to attracting people from further afield in the UK there is significant competition for domestic short breaks from other well-known and long established destinations including other historic cities. Places such as Bath, York or Stratford are much easier to get to for people living in Scotland and Wales, the North of England, Midlands and South West.

So to reach further into the UK, Canterbury will need to differentiate itself strongly from the competition and provide compelling reasons to visit.

### International markets

Awareness of Canterbury in near Europe is very high; attracting more international visitors is a real market opportunity, in a way it is for only a few UK destinations.

- ▶ *Belgium* and *Netherlands* are obvious nearby markets for Canterbury – awareness is high and accessibility (in terms of both travel and cultural fit) is relatively easy.
- ▶ *USA*, *Germany* and *France* are very important. These three are by far Britain's biggest overseas markets in terms of value and they are forecast to remain so for years to come – to at least 2020. VisitBritain has a strategy to encourage them to visit beyond London. Canterbury already attracts visitors from these markets – indeed Germany is the city's largest international market when it comes to staying visitors.

There is an opportunity to reach deeper into all these 'mature markets' for staying visitors, with VisitBritain's help.

### Primary segment – Cultural boomers

Cultural boomers are baby boomers (born 1946-64) who are cultural tourists. They are an attractive segment and your best prospect market because:

- ▶ They will be most interested in what Canterbury has to offer
- ▶ They are most likely to have the disposable income and the time to stay overnight in serviced accommodation
- ▶ They tend to have more freedom to travel at different times throughout the year, as they are less likely to be restricted by school holidays – that makes them particularly appealing to Canterbury that has capacity mid-week and out of the peak season
- ▶ They are most likely to deliver good return on market investment (plotted on a matrix of *visitor spend: ease of reach*).

This generation is a rich seam for UK short breaks: Boomers are 20% of the UK population and hold 80% of the wealth. VisitBritain identifies Cultural-Boomer-type segments in each of Canterbury's key overseas markets (Germany, France, Belgium, Netherlands, USA) too - and they tend to be the ones most interested in travelling outside London and exploring Britain.



## Related niches – Learning families and others

### **Learning families**

Heritage towns and cities are not usually popular family destinations. However, Canterbury's near-Europe location and its knowledge sector, with its student population, make it potentially attractive for a niche that is related and complementary to Cultural Boomers – *older learning families*:

- ▶ These are educated parents in their mid 40s-50s whose children are age 10+, looking for learning experiences and activities that will enrich their children's lives. They are looking for destinations with opportunities to explore, discover and learn new things, distinctive cultural heritage and attractions, live events and activities (including living history), and fresh air activities.
- ▶ There are learning families in the UK and international markets. VisitBritain has identified this segment as particularly fertile in at least two of Canterbury's European markets – Germany and France – where there are parents who want to introduce their children to British history, language and culture.
- ▶ This segment has good potential in terms of lifetime value, and should be positive for the Universities when positioning the city with potential future students and their families – both within the UK and internationally
- ▶ The opportunity is independent visitors travelling as a family, not school groups.

### **Other related niches**

There are other related niches that it could be fruitful to target with tailored messages, ideas, itineraries and offers e.g.

- ▶ Alumni Groups
- ▶ Visiting Family & Friends of University students
- ▶ Pilgrims
- ▶ Historians
- ▶ Mature learners (U3A Groups, empty nesters and seniors studying history, world religions, sacred music, etc)

## WHAT THIS MEANS IN PRACTICE

Focusing on attracting and satisfying these priority target markets will mean that Canterbury's offer and communications are much more clearly defined and distinctive, and this should prove attractive to other market segments too. Positioning Canterbury for *Cultural Boomers*, *Learning Families* and other related niches will reinforce the important culture and knowledge messages that the city wants to promote.

### What this means for marketing communications

To reach these markets, Canterbury needs to develop 'rich content' that draws people at the stage when they are looking for ideas and planning their trips. This should be supported by pro-active PR (using both traditional and social media channels), customer data collection, and targeted, tailored e-marketing.

Collaborative marketing will be essential, in order to have impact. Using the Shared Story and promoting the Story's themes more widely will help Canterbury to achieve cut-through in a crowded marketplace. And the rich marketing content can be shared across partners' digital platforms and promoted via partners' databases.

Focusing on these markets should immediately suggest appropriate marketing partners who will enhance Canterbury's offer and/or brand, and provide new routes to market. External marketing partners could be tourism agencies such as VisitBritain, cultural heritage partners beyond the city such as the Turner Contemporary or Chatham Historic Dockyard, or commercial partners linked with the Garden of England such as Chapel Down.

Destination partnership work targeting travel trade should have a specific focus on increasing per head spend, rather than large-volume lower-spending short-stay groups. So the focus of any destination travel trade marketing should be on working with travel trade whose customers are FIT (independent travellers), and/or higher-spending, upmarket groups, international staying visitors and others likely to stay longer and spend more across the city.

### 3 THE CANTERBURY CITY STORY

The most successful places have a simple Shared Story to tell. It is a commonly agreed way of describing the place, that everyone uses when they are planning how to invest in improvements and new experiences, and when they are talking to people who don't know the place.

It is a short and simple story that makes it clear what is special and different about the place. It does not overpromise; it goes with the grain of the place and it is authentic and true. It focuses on the distinctive qualities that capture the essence of the place: it isn't a list of everything that is on offer. If everyone uses the same broad ideas to develop the place and then uses some of the same concepts and phrases to talk about it externally, the image of Canterbury and the experiences in the place will be much stronger. That leads to greater impact, which means more visitors and stronger investment.

This is the Shared Story for Canterbury city, developed with local stakeholders. It has helped shape the DMP actions and should continue to inform business decisions, investment, marketing and management priorities.

There is a separate paper that sets out the rationale and thinking behind the Story.

“Canterbury's past is as rich as it comes” says the latest Lonely Planet guide to Britain. This world-famous cathedral city was one of medieval Europe's great places of pilgrimage and knowledge. Today – with its international visitors and two Universities – it still has a distinctly cosmopolitan feel. Less than an hour from London, it's in that corner of England that's almost touching France.

People come here from across the globe for world-class heritage, for culture and festivals, to visit and to study, to shop, eat and hang out. The extraordinary Cathedral dominates the medieval streets within the city walls. Among the listed buildings, a boldly modern theatre – named after the city's famous son Christopher Marlowe – has been built on the river bank, and an art museum has been restored and doubled in size. To the south is St Augustine's Abbey, part of the World Heritage Site, and England's first seat of learning.

There's something warm and mellow about this intimate European city. Crowds throng around the entrance to the Cathedral and in the busy high street. Thousands of students add to the vibe. It's lively and fun. But it's also remarkably easy – in a moment – to step off the beaten track into some quiet oasis where you'll hear nothing but birdsong, and the splash of oars on the narrow, gently flowing River Stour.

You may be in a city, but you get a strong sense of being in the Garden of England too. There are riverside gardens and even a cider-making orchard within the city itself. Then there's all the local produce in cafes, pubs and restaurants: Romney Marsh lamb, Kent cherries, ale from local hops, award-winning fizz from Kentish vineyards. To the north of the city is one of England's largest ancient woodlands, the Blean. And, less than a 7-mile cycle away at Canterbury's coast, there's the seaside town of Whitstable, for England's finest oysters.

## 4 COLLABORATIVE MARKETING

This Plan proposes that the key partners in the city agree and resource a new Collaborative Marketing Programme that will build on and add value to what each partner is doing individually.

### USING THE SHARED STORY

The Collaborative Marketing Programme will be underpinned by the Shared Story, which provides strong themes and concepts to use in marketing communications. The next step for its wider use is to put together an online Shared Story Toolkit that includes downloadable marketing copy of different lengths (tailored and translated for use in different markets) and images based on the Shared Story.

### JOINING-UP THE OFFER

The Collaborative Marketing Programme will establish and manage a system to collect, collate and curate rich content that people are drawn to and which inspires them. This content will be shared widely between the partners, who will publish it online and use it in their marketing and PR. 'Widgets' can be developed and shared that enable live content feed – e.g. a 'what's on' widget that sits on all the partners' websites. Videos and podcasts can be embedded on partners' sites (rather than simply links).

### Collaborative marketing actions\*



\* Using Shared Story themes & focused on priority markets

The content will be easy to find and of a quality that attracts potential customers. Various methods will be used to draw in people to consume it.

A key principle of this approach is to collect data from interested people with permission to mail them. This makes it possible to send tailored, targeted e-shots. These can be distributed via partners' databases as well as through a central destination site.

The partners will agree systems and protocol for collecting (and possibly sharing) customer data – e.g. they may agree a standard list of 'killer questions' to identify priority targets.

As part of this joined-up approach, partners will develop incentives and offers aimed at priority markets that can be used online and included in social media and e-news. This should involve partners outside of the city to expand the Canterbury offer to include countryside and coastal experiences where there is good market-fit.

#### Rich content ...

- ▶ inspires people to share, *and* is easy to share
- ▶ means words *and* images - photography, video, graphics, podcasts, music
- ▶ includes Stories & Experiences – with emotional and personal connections
- ▶ is compelling, and high quality – it should have journalistic values
- ▶ includes itineraries & curated lists e.g. "Top 10s" "5 reasons to" "Best place to"
- ▶ is topical – taps into Zeitgeist, Trends, Seasons (e.g. 10 things to do in the autumn, 5 places for a hot choc, 5 cosy pubs)
- ▶ includes offers, competitions, and things of value to download
- ▶ is up to date, accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

## CITY-WIDE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

As part of the Collaborative Marketing Programme, Canterbury will become a key partner in *Visit Kent's London campaign*. This is a gateway to closer working with VisitEngland and VisitBritain, and should increase Canterbury's visibility in key international markets as well as in London.

Another important element of the programme will be to commission a specialist agency to deliver *proactive consumer PR* – using both traditional and social media.

Several of the partners are already targeting the travel trade jointly. The new Collaborative Marketing Programme should include a *travel trade strand*, but specifically focused on increasing per head spend – e.g. working with FIT (fully independent travel) as well as groups, pro-active targeting of upmarket groups, focus on international staying visitors, producing itineraries to encourage longer visits etc.

## 5 PLACE

We have divided 'place' into two broad areas:

- ▶ Place management – with a focus on welcome & arrival, wayfinding & information and curating & managing public spaces
- ▶ Cultural activity – coordinating and developing the cultural offer to deliver contemporary cultural experiences to complement the city’s strong heritage offer and in particular developing the potential and opportunities of festivals and events.

### PLACE MANAGEMENT

The City Centre Partnership is developing a Business Improvement District (BID) for the city and there has been detailed discussion about city centre management issues as part of that process. The delivery of these actions will benefit everyone in the city including visitors. The DMP focuses on city centre actions which are aimed primarily at meeting visitor needs.

- ▶ **Audit all of the main arrival points in the city** – the coach park, 2 railway stations and the park and ride - to ensure first impressions are consistent, relevant and begin to embed the Shared Story into the visitor experience. That way visitors experience the promise from the moment they arrive.
- ▶ **Develop a wayfinding & information strategy** that provides a plan of coordinated action to roll out as funding becomes available – it will make links with other types of information provision including the information service available at the TIC and at the coach park. It will look for opportunities to deliver live information to visitors about what is happening on the day of their visit. Canterbury has already invested in pedestrian

### Place actions - place management



signing, this strategy is about reviewing, refreshing and adding value to what is already in place.

- ▶ **Curating and managing the public spaces** – Canterbury’s historic streets, hidden gardens and the river all present opportunities to add to the visitor experience. Banners, themed shop window displays and curated buskers and street theatre can animate the centre throughout the year. This is about strong partnership working between the BID, local businesses and Canterbury City Council. Modest budgets and reviewing policies on public entertainment and street vendors can transform the experience and ensure it is quality driven and uses the Shared Story to prioritise themes and ideas.
- ▶ **Welcome and ambassador programme** – managing and curating the space will be complemented by ensuring a warm, professional and knowledgeable customer service. That means everyone who comes into contact with visitors should be an ambassador for the city, know all about the city’s attractions and present a genuinely warm welcome and friendly face to all visitors. That product knowledge and good practice should start with the Project Group and their businesses and widen out to include all accommodation establishments, visitor attractions, shops, cafes and bars, students and volunteers as well as bus and taxi drivers and security staff that come into contact with the public. Familiarisation visits, walking tours as well as welcome training workshops will provide business networking opportunities too.

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

A key strand to the DMP is realising the cultural potential of Canterbury, through making more of what is happening and developing new content and festivals where there is opportunity and demand.

- ▶ **Coordinating the cultural experience** is an important starting point – establishing a cultural tourism delivery group will provide a forum to bring together people with shared objectives and purpose.
- ▶ **Taking a themed approach** – the group needs a way to channel its creative ideas and energies. For each of the 3 years of the DMP life, the group will agree an annual theme and use that as a way to curate a joined up cultural programme. That theme can play out in special exhibitions, live performance and festival content. An annual theme will create critical mass of experience to take to market and help with funding and sponsorship. The theme can be

## Place actions – cultural activity



taken up by other businesses to strengthen it further. Themes need to be strong to Canterbury to reinforce what is special to the city and link with the Shared Story. Potential themes might be literature (Marlowe, Chaucer, Dickens, Wise Words Festival), music (choral, Sounds New) and food & crafts (Jeweller's Festival, Garden of England).

- ▶ **Develop cultural packages and trails** – the annual themes provide opportunities for packaging but there will be others, inspired by the Shared Story, which can become a strong ongoing part of the Canterbury cultural experience. Trails which connect different venues and spaces using culture as their link will encourage visitors to explore further and do more. Trails can complement the wayfinding & information strategy and marketing activity. They can be built up over time.

## Events & Festivals

Events and festivals are an important part of the cultural mix. For this DMP we define them in the following way.

- ▶ **Events** are activities which visitors enjoy during their stay – they tend to be small scale and may be seasonal, annual or one-off. An audit of events will identify gaps in the calendar, in types of event and then match the appeal of current activities to Canterbury's best prospect markets. Growth opportunities can be picked up by the Cultural Delivery Group as part of the annual theme programme and also form part of the actions undertaken to animate public spaces. Events development workshops will encourage more local businesses to become involved and develop their own events.
- ▶ **Festivals** are those events which create a reason to visit Canterbury. They are attractions in their own right. We have further divided festivals into:
  - **Major Events** that are one-off opportunities with national and possibly international appeal. They generate significant media coverage and have the potential to attract significant volumes of visitors as well. They may be bought in or developed in the city or nearby. Major events require significant funding, management and content development and a long lead in from concept to delivery. They are not part of the DMP action plans but the city should be alive to their potential.
  - **Signature Festivals** that recur regularly – usually annually – enhance sense of place, are special to Canterbury and provide a high quality, distinctive experience for visitors and local people. They draw on visitors from a national catchment. The Canterbury Festival is the signature event for the city. There may be potential to grow either Sounds New or the Jewellers Festival into signature festivals overtime by building their scale, content, programming and market reach or potentially to explore a new signature festival.

- **Regional Festivals** that draw on a regional market and may face competition from other similar festivals elsewhere. This includes book and food & drink festivals. They remain an important part of the festival mix for Canterbury and should continue to be supported.

Canterbury will focus initially on building up the potential of its existing signature festival and those festivals with growth potential including identifying business packages to encourage wider engagement with festival activity by the local business community.

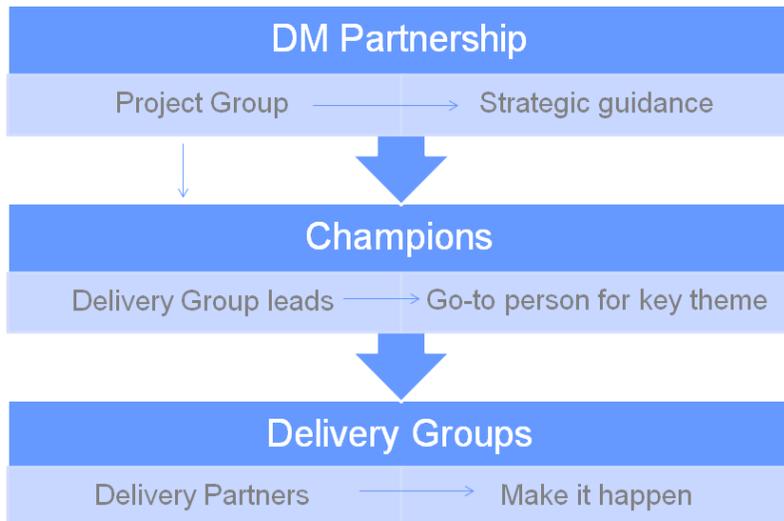
## 6 MAKING IT HAPPEN

### WORKING TOGETHER

The process of developing the DMP has strengthened joint working between the Project Group partners around shared objectives and priorities. These partners have committed time, expertise and costs into developing the Plan. They represent all the main visitor economy interests for the city and it makes sense for this group to evolve into a partnership to oversee the delivery of the DMP.

Running in parallel with the development of the DMP, the city is also developing a BID, which if successful, will be an important partner in the DMP. The momentum of the BID is growing and the DMP Project Group included several lead BID support partners. Canterbury City Partnership is leading on the BID development and coordinated the DMP development process on behalf of the Project Group.

The visitor economy is an important sector for Canterbury City and forms an important part of the BID Business Plan. The recommendations and actions of this DMP will create the content for the ‘Strong Brand, Superb Destination’ strand to the BID programme. This strand will have an annual budget of around £140,000. For DMP planning purposes, it is assumed that this will translate into £60,000 per annum for collaborative marketing activity and £40,000 for development for place based investment (representing £200,000 investment in new tourism development over the 5 year life of the BID). This provides important additional funds and funding leverage to deliver the DMP actions.



The DMP Project Group will become the DM Partnership. Effectively this Partnership will act as a steering group providing strategic guidance on delivery. Members of the Partnership will be chosen to lead one of 3 Delivery Groups and act as ambassadors for it. These Delivery Groups relate directly to the recommendations and actions for the DMP and are:

- ▶ Collaborative Marketing
- ▶ Place Management
- ▶ Cultural Activity

Delivery Groups will draw their members from a wider range of local businesses and tourism interests including looking to businesses and organisations who took part in the Shared Story workshop and Action Planning sessions, because these individuals have already demonstrated an interest in becoming involved.

This approach plays to the strengths of individuals, taps into local talent and capabilities, encourages everyone to own and become part of the DMP delivery and shares ownership across the city. It helps joint working between existing organisations and groups and avoids duplication of effort. Here is more detail on how that structure will work and the terms of engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS	RATIONALE
<b>DM Partnership - Strategic Management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Strategic Group of 13 senior people with decision making powers for their organisation – in effect the current Project Group Membership</li> <li>▶ Membership of the group to always include – as a minimum - one representative CCC (Economic Development), CCC (culture), VK, VC, CCP/BID, University of Kent, Christ Church Canterbury University, representative from retail sector, representative from attractions sector, representative from accommodation sector</li> <li>▶ Should a member leave then their interests will be represented by a colleague from their organisation of a similar seniority. Other members of the group will need to agree with the suggested replacement. If the organisation is unable/unwilling to field a suitable replacement the remaining members will agree by vote a new organisation/individual to replace them. The choice will ensure the balance of sectors (set out in the previous bullet point) is retained</li> <li>▶ 6 meetings p.a. to a schedule, papers in advance, key actions and responsibilities 'professionally' noted and circulated within 1 week of meeting</li> <li>▶ The Partnership will by mutual agreement select a Chairperson to be elected/re-elected annually. The chairperson will be a member of the Partnership Group.</li> <li>▶ Lead/ambassadors for the 3 Delivery Groups will be agreed by mutual consent at the first meeting. Their commitment will be for 3 years, at which point the Partnership will determine how these groups will continue. If the lead/ambassador chooses to step down before the DMP 3 years is completed, the partnership group will agree a replacement by mutual agreement or vote if required.</li> <li>▶ Delivery Group leads report back at each meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Smaller core group, meeting regularly, with clear processes, enables firm strategic direction and decision-making</li> <li>▶ 13 people - an odd number to prevent stalemate when voting - keeps the group lean, but should still provide depth of strategic experience and enough people if absences occur</li> <li>▶ Standing orders ensure transparency and compliance with accountable body procedures</li> <li>▶ Regular communications following Partnership meetings build trust (in a news style rather than minutes, which are not easy to digest)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Where there is not universal agreement on a decision it is agreed by a majority vote</li> <li>▶ Emergency decisions kept to a minimum, taken by 'virtual' meeting</li> <li>▶ Standing orders about finance and award of contracts are held by BID on behalf of the Group</li> <li>▶ E-news sent to wider constituency following each meeting – including to 3 x Delivery Groups</li> <li>▶ Present budget, progress and proposed programme part of e-news.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Delivery Groups – Operational</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 3 Delivery Groups established by the Partnership, each to focus on one of the 3 DMP core delivery areas, to develop a detailed delivery plan and take responsibility for delivery - contracting delivery support where needed.</li> <li>▶ Membership of Delivery Groups will be by invitation and self-nominated from the widest possible constituency. Delivery Groups may recommend actions to the Board for approval and resources, then develop and implement the programmes</li> <li>▶ They will meet a minimum of 6 times a year but may choose to meet more frequently.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Draws from wider pool - new skills and expertise</li> <li>▶ Enables people to volunteer for Delivery Groups according to their interest and skills - so adds energy and enthusiasm</li> <li>▶ Practical focus of Delivery Groups will appeal to more people</li> <li>▶ Provides extra resource - spreads the load</li> <li>▶ Frees Partnership to focus on strategic management and developing the Partnership further.</li> </ul>
<p>CCP/BID Coordinator appointed to run the day to day business of the Partnership. Coordinator to cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Admin for Partnership meetings</li> <li>• Financial management &amp; admin</li> <li>• Communications and general meetings</li> <li>• Support for the Delivery Groups</li> <li>• Managing contracts / contractors</li> <li>• Coordinating bids for external funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Coordinator provides professional basis for developing the Partnership</li> <li>▶ Coordinator provides resource to improve the communications and industry engagement, and one point of contact for industry</li> </ul>

The members of the DM Partnership will agree to abide by the terms of engagement and that agreement will be formally noted at the first meeting.

The first DM Partnership meeting will be convened in December 2013. At that meeting members will:

- ▶ Agree and sign up to the terms of engagement
- ▶ Agree the chairperson for the DM Partnership and confirm membership names and organisations
- ▶ Agree the lead/ambassadors for the Delivery Groups
- ▶ Agree the recruitment process for Delivery Group membership..
- ▶ Discuss and plan the business and media launch of the DMP
- ▶ Determine any costs associated with servicing the DMP Partnership and Delivery Groups and how this will be met
- ▶ Identify how the costs for the foundation actions (see below) will be met in Year One and therefore prior to the BID being in place.

### WORKING WITH EXISTING ORGANISATIONS

The DMP delivery mechanism works alongside existing organisations in the city. The current City Partnership, which will evolve into the BID, is a natural partner to coordinate the new DMP Partnership and to take a lead role on the delivery of place management actions to ensure they are closely linked to wider city centre management.

Together the Cathedral, Canterbury City Council and the universities are the custodians of the city's major heritage and cultural attractions. A cultural delivery group ensures they work effectively together and provides a way for other cultural partners to become involved.

Destination marketing will benefit from a more collaborative approach. We recommend that the relevant partners explore the potential for closer working between Visit Canterbury and Visit Kent in order to deliver the more ambitious collaborative marketing programme the DMP sets out. A new approach should take full advantage of Visit Canterbury's keen understanding of the day-to-day running of Canterbury as a visitor destination and its strong business networks and could see a key staff member from Visit Canterbury based at least one day a week in the BID/Visit Kent offices, dedicating time to supporting the delivery of the DMP and helping drive involvement by local SMEs. In this new scenario, Visit Kent could take on delivery of international and national destination marketing for the city, allowing Visit Canterbury to continue to lead on local tourism business support, including being the holder of visitor data and information. The Visit Canterbury website will need to

accommodate the increased marketing push for the city, reflecting the Story and new content, and potentially a navigation rethink to separate out the city from the other elements of the district.

## FOUNDATION ACTIONS

It is essential that the DMP delivers from day one to maintain the momentum of collaborative working between partners and to inspire confidence more widely among the industry that this DMP is about making things happen. With that in mind we have identified two foundation actions to widen involvement and build on what achieved through the DMP development process. These are:

- ▶ Familiarisation trips for the DM Partnership and subsequently for businesses and local residents – to ensure everyone has the information and knowledge to be an ambassador for Canterbury
- ▶ Shared Story Toolkit - an online business resource supported by workshops on how to use the Shared Story.

## DMP REVIEW

The DMP is for 3 years but the BID will be voted in for 5-years. We recommend the DMP undertakes a progress review at the beginning of Year 3, to agree what happens next. Key questions to address at that review will be:

- ▶ What has worked well and why?
- ▶ What has worked less well and why?
- ▶ What can we learn to inform priorities for the next stage of the DMP?
- ▶ What external factors have changed and how do these influence what the DMP does next?
- ▶ What internal factors have changed and how do these influence what the DMP does next?
- ▶ Will the DM Partnership/Delivery Group model continue to be the best way to coordinate and enable delivery? If not, what might a different model look like?

## HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS

We will use the following indicators to measure progress. They provide valuable indicators for undertaking the progress review.

- ▶ Higher profile of Canterbury as a city to visit for contemporary culture in a heritage setting among best prospect markets
- ▶ Growth in average per head spend of day visitors
- ▶ Growth in numbers of short breaks
- ▶ Higher bedroom occupancy between November - March
- ▶ Numbers of businesses engaged in projects and taking part in training
- ▶ Volumes of visits to visitor attractions, cultural venues and festivals.

We will use the Cambridge Model to measure growth in volume and value and use visitor surveys to measure perceptions of Canterbury as a destination for contemporary culture. We will ensure that we use a standard way to measure the impact of our events and festivals.

Disclaimer: All information and analysis supplied by Blue Sail Consulting Ltd and our sub-contractors is done in good faith and represents our professional judgement based on the information obtained from the client and elsewhere. The achievement of recommendations, forecasts and valuations depend on factors beyond our control. Any projections, financial or otherwise, in this report are only intended to illustrate particular points of argument and do not constitute forecasts of actual performance