

# **Maritime and coastal visitor destination identity study (DNA): Southend**

## **HOW TO USE THE DIGITAL TOOLKIT**

### **INTRODUCING THE SOUTHEND STORY**

Following the recent Maritime and coastal visitor destination identity study (DNA) in the Southend pilot area involving desk research, visiting the destination, and stakeholder engagement through interviews and workshops, a **new Southend story** has been created, based on a small number of themes that have emerged from ‘funnelling’ the evidence and applying insight. These are at the heart of why the place is distinct, special and reflective of its assets and character. They are the priorities for what is communicated and how the place is developed.

The study recommends greater focus in communications on the following three [themes](#):

#### **Wet ‘n wild**

Southend has such a wide range of activities available for visitors, from adrenaline pumping sports such as mounting biking at Hadleigh, various watersports and open water swimming to more leisurely coastal and marshland walks. With such a huge choice there is so much in Southend to appeal to many audiences.

#### **Culturing creativity**

Southend has always been a hotbed of music, art and culture with this seaside town attracting artists and creatives from London and elsewhere because of its vibe, quality of life and great value. Southend can champion its fantastic attractions such as Focal Point, Twenty One and Metal to build on this very different aspect of Southend.

#### **Buzzing beaches**

With 7 gorgeous beaches, 3 of which are Blue Flag, the longest pleasure pier in the world and an array of fantastic seafront experiences, Southend can delight and appeal to people of all ages and interests.

Alongside these themes is the ‘big idea’: **‘Southend: London’s seaside culture’** developed to be the ‘strategic signature’ of the place and the compelling summation of Southend’s distinctiveness. There’s no denying that Southend has always been the seaside resort for London with city and town enjoying a special relationship. However, the growth of the airport, the Thames Estuary Experience Museum, music and cultural events, development of a varied activity offer and greater awareness of what the wider coastline can provide is ensuring that Southend is London’s seaside culture.

### **COMMUNICATING THE SOUTHEND STORY**

To enhance and extend the visit or experience, link attractions and experiences together to increase dwell time and optimise the memorability of each place we have assembled a series of interesting information, tools and resources to help your business create an emotional and practical online connection with Southend as a destination.

The themes and big idea highlight the main assets of the place that emerged through the DNA study; the tools translate these findings into high impact and design led infographics and animations to help you communicate the Southend destination.

The digital toolkit for SMEs is made up of the following elements;

- **Written story** - for you to understand the story of Southend to be communicated to various audiences
- **Photobank** – of relevant images which can be used in your communications
- **Infographics** – to provide snippets of the key information
- **Animation** – a creative tool mainly for digital and social media use

Please see further information about each of these elements below;

#### **The Southend Story**

We want to make sure you can make the most of the place you are in and communicate the many special things that make up Southend.

To do this we've created a story of the place which is a forward- looking view of how Southend is different and stand out. This narrative is the driving force behind the photography, infographics and animation that are all there to help you sell the place.

To view the Southend Story please use the link available [here](#)

#### **Photobank**

The photobank provides vibrant imagery for you to use in your communications and helps to bring to life the Southend story. The photography goes beyond simply taking pictures of buildings and landscapes but instead aims to tell a more layered story which connects with the visitor experiences in Southend.

With new imagery think about clever use of foreground and background to tell more than one story, animate the images with people and experiences, for examples take photos of people taking photos of key Southend attractions and people enjoying cocktails by the beach.

The photography can be used in a number of ways alongside other elements of the toolkit, especially the infographics and could perhaps be used as imagery on websites, on posters, advertising leaflets and on pop-up banners.

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The photography has been provided into 4 different folder; one of which includes general Southend images and one for each of the three themes.

The photography can be downloaded from [here](#)

If you have additional photography images you think would be relevant and are happy to share to add to the library images then please contact Visit Essex on [033301 30277](tel:03330130277)

### **Infographics**

Infographics are preferable and keep people's interest for longer by lending a storytelling and visual element to key information rather than lengthy text containing the same content. The visuals help the reader to process the content more efficiently, making them a fantastic and relatively easy way to ensure key elements of the Southend story are committed to the audience's memory.

The infographics included within the toolkits as JPEGS can be utilised as key snippets of information and key messages to relevant audiences within your own communications. For example, they could be used alongside photography within advertising print and be used on websites.

Probably of even more importance, these infographics can be shared very easily among different social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, as a way to increase your profile and focus communications around the key messages relevant to Southend.



In addition to the JPEGS (examples shown previously), the icons have also been supplied in an .AI format alongside the designed textures and fonts, which allows you to design infographics more relevant to your own business operations yet still have the same brand feel for Southend.

To [view](#) and [access](#) all Southend infographics as designed JPEGS please go to:-  
<https://www.profitourism.eu/en/essex/innovation/innovation-tools/>

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To view and access the raw design files to enable you to create your own designs please use the [download link here](#)

### **Animation**

The animation sequence for Southend has been developed to act as a quick, fun yet effective way to give a flavour of Southend, not a pin point of every attraction and point of interest from a visitor perspective, and join up the assets to create an experience which a potential visitor would find appealing.

The intention is to create interest and intrigue in an impactful, vibrant and fun way with the viewer that would then encourage them to explore further information about the area, with the ultimate aim that they would wish to visit Southend and see it for themselves.



Watch & embed the INTERREG PROFIT animation in your website from the link available on <https://www.profitourism.eu/en/Essex/innovation/innovation-tools/> or from the [Visit Essex YouTube channel](#).

Use key Twitter and Facebook pages within your own communications e.g. Visit Essex, Visit England as well as other local organisations to communicate the joined up consolidated approach to promoting the area. Utilise relevant hashtags to increase traffic to your social media profiles and therefore increase the profile of the communications.

Be creative and use the photography alongside infographics in your printed marketing material, on your website but especially within your social media activity for which these tools are especially useful. Most of all have fun!

For further support, advice or information please contact the Visit Essex team on [03330130277](tel:03330130277)