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# Essex Coastal Tourism

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# Coastal Tourism in Essex

- Economy (Volume & Value)
- Supply & distribution
- Understanding demand
- Opportunities for coastal tourism

# Essex Coastal Tourism

## Coastal Tourism - from seaside resorts to rural coastal destinations

*“Seaside resorts are dying on the beaches as they become ghettos for the homeless and the unemployed... Resorts are facing the same problems as inner cities did ten years ago...”*

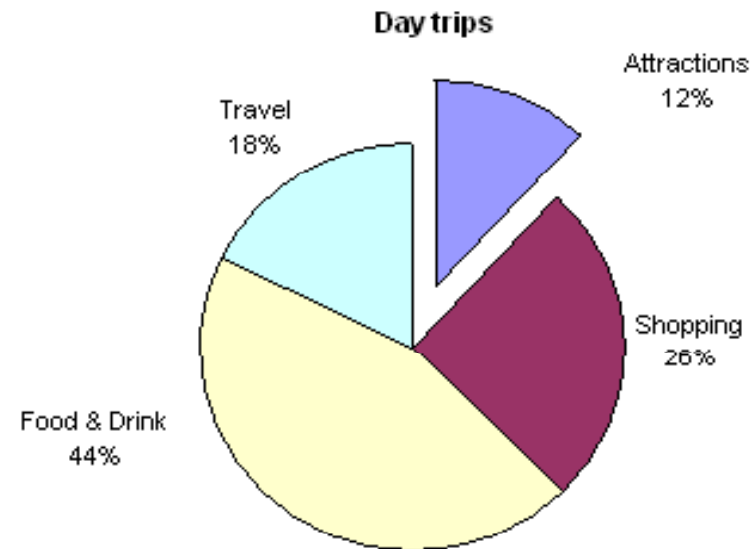
(The Times, 1999)

*“Seaside towns becoming rejuvenated: art galleries, arts festivals, designer cafés, marinas, coastal towns are busy rebranding themselves as modern and sporty-cultural destinations”*

(The Independent, 2010)

# Essex and the visitor economy

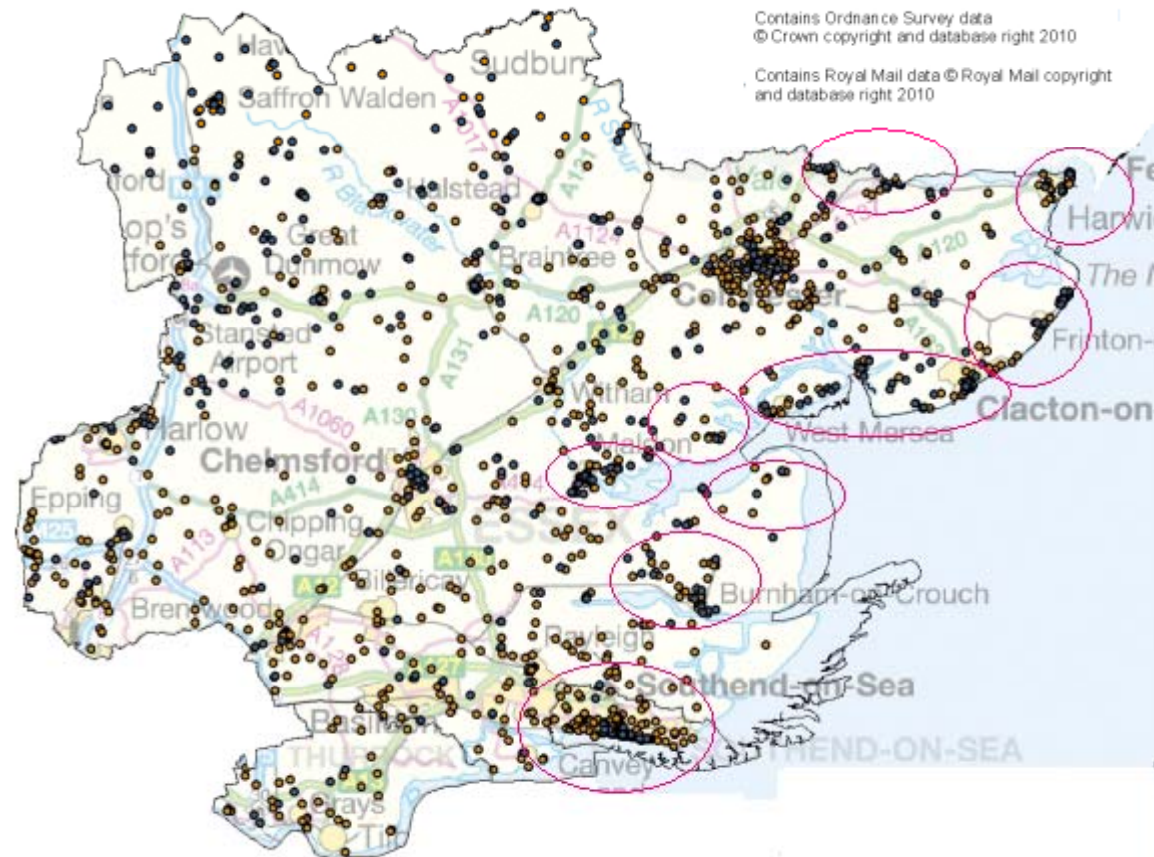
- Tourism is worth in excess of £2.5 billion to the county. 60% of this value relates to coastal districts
- It impacts many areas of coastal economies and has high multiplier effects



# Tourism as economic driver in coastal areas

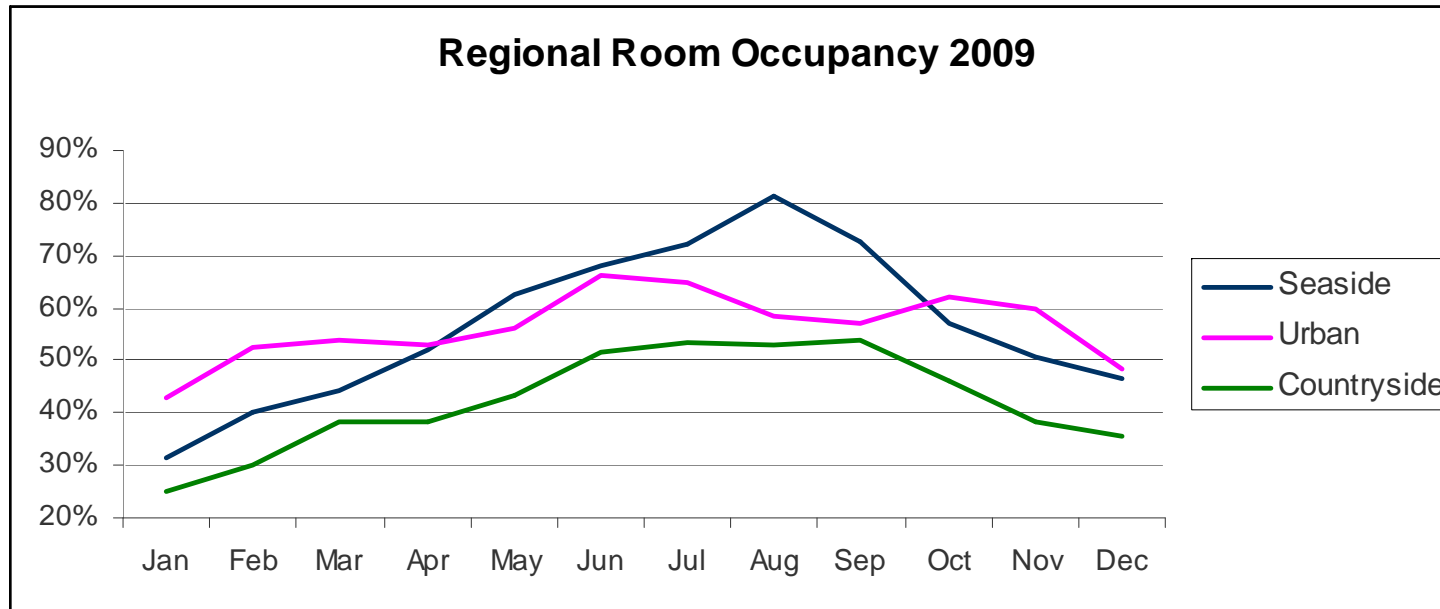
## Distribution of Accommodation and Attractions in Essex

Map shows the location of accommodation providers and venues in Essex known to East of England Tourism



# Accommodation occupancy in seaside areas

Extending the season is a must for a sustainable tourism economy



## What we know about consumers:

Consumer research conducted by EET identified the visitor 'journey'

- VisitEngland research
- Visitor survey with over 1000 face-to-face interviews
- Focus groups with visitors and non-visitors
- Online research
- Visit Essex

*(Key message: Understanding consumer demand is key)*

# What we know about consumers:

- Understanding visitor motivations when planning a short break

Importance

Higher



Lower



# What do consumers want:

## Escapism

- From regular activities
- Change of scenery

*"I go on a trip with a collection of other guys who you know want to play golf. So you have an intense weekend of golf and drinking and then back to reality two days later"*

## Relaxation

- Always to relax mentally
- Sometimes to relax physically

*"It's just emptying your mind. You're not under pressure, you can relax if you're not under pressure"*

## Luxury

- Pampering
- Facilities

*"Somebody else waiting on you, making your breakfast, your lunch, your dinner"*

**CREATING SENSE OF WELLBEING**

# What do consumers want:

- Visitors require richer engagement with destinations and host communities
- Whilst seeking memorable experiences, visitors are also looking for holidays that are authentic, original, sincere and genuine



**CREATING SENSE OF AUTHENTICITY**

# How do visitors fulfil these motivations?

## Eating out and drinking

Not necessarily expensive 'fine dining'

Local / different important

- Fish and chips / seafood
- Traditional pub / beer
- Fresh

## Shopping

Demonstrate 'different to home'

- Independent shops
- Local produce
- Ambience
- Better service

*" I would rather have fish and chips on the sea wall with a good looking woman, then be in a five star hotel having a great meal with an ugly girl"*

*"I prefer localised shops that have got a lot more atmosphere, you get a lot more service, people are a lot more pleasant, they're not 18 year olds on minimum wage. These are people's livelihoods and they put their effort into these businesses"*

# What do consumers think of the Essex coast?

## Visitor perceptions of Essex coast:

- Beaches
- Unspoilt coastal and riverside areas
- Traditional seaside
- Clean air from the sea
- Big skies and open spaces.



# Opportunities / markets

**Aim:** Stay a bit longer, extend the season, increase expenditure

**Opportunities / markets:**

- Activity tourism (walking / cycling)
- Water sports (sea kayaking, windsurfing, etc)
- Arts & heritage (including events and festivals)
- Meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions (unusual venues)
- Cruise industry (Harwich International UK's third busiest cruise port)





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