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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...”

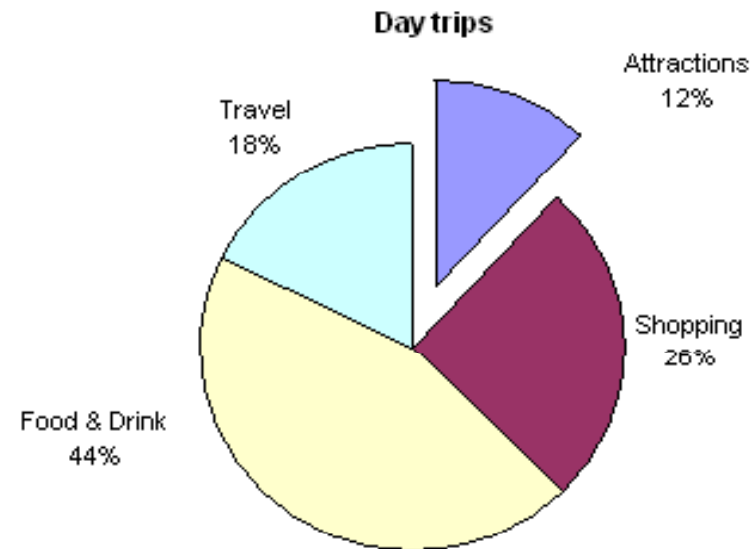
(The Times, 1999)

“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

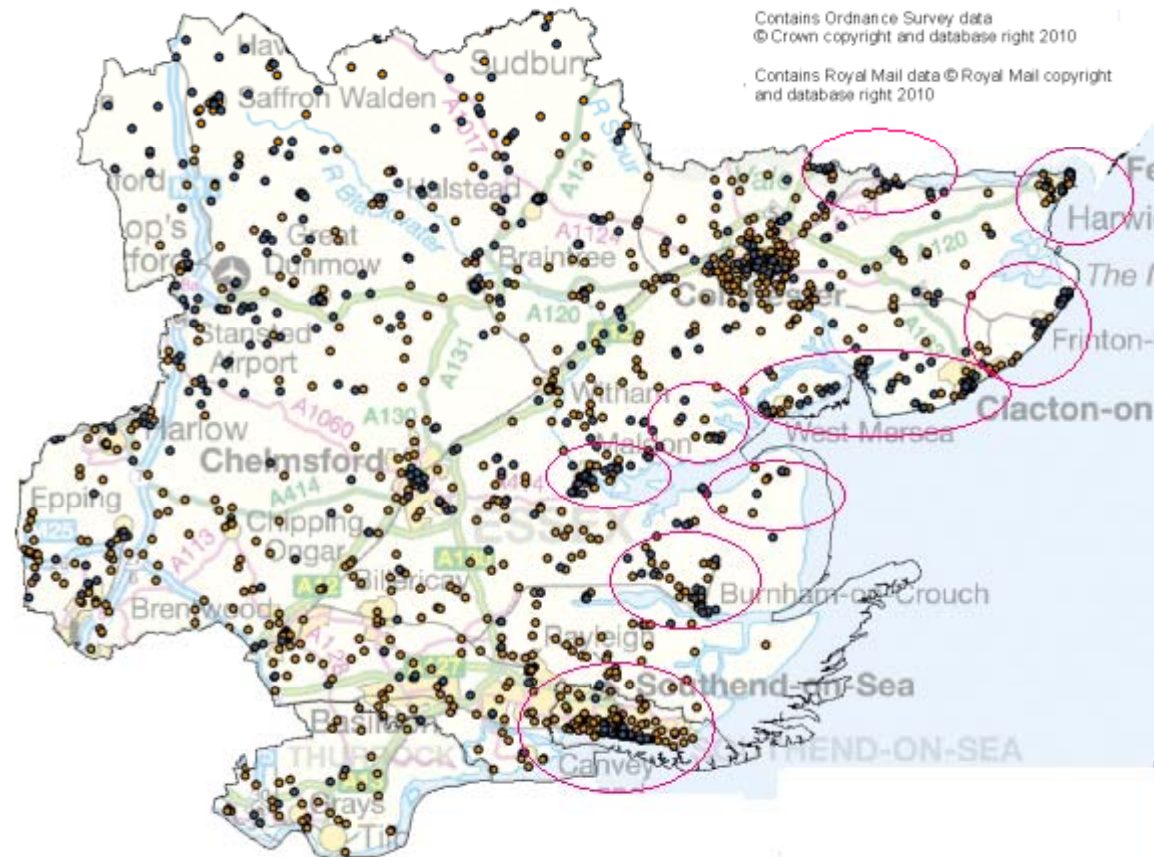
- Tourism is worth in excess of £2.5 billion to the county. 60% of this value relates to coastal districts
- It impacts many areas of coastal economies and has high multiplier effects



Tourism as economic driver in coastal areas

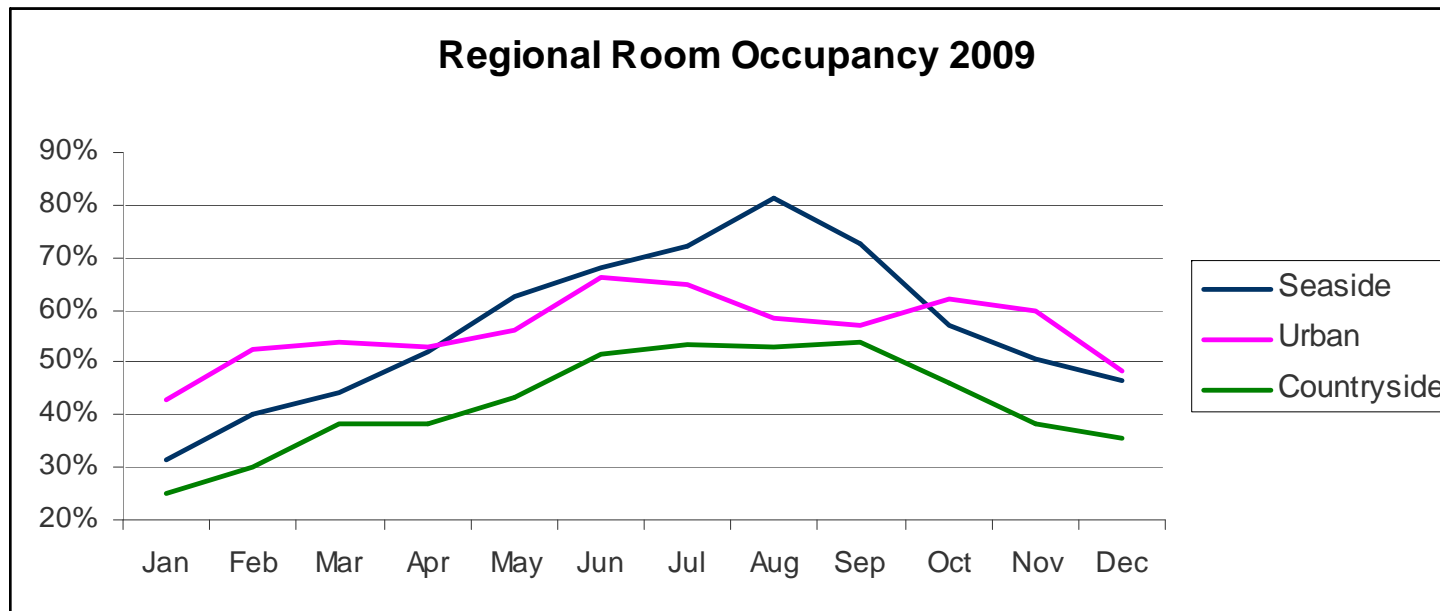
Distribution of Accommodation and Attractions in Essex

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)

End - Questions?





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