

Tourism recovery plan for Portsmouth



**Putting the wind back in the
sails of the visitor economy**

Introduction

The current pandemic has had, and continues to have, a devastating effect on many businesses, with those in the tourism, entertainment, cultural and hospitality sectors being especially hard hit.

Before the Covid19 pandemic Portsmouth welcomed around 9 million visitors a year and the visitor economy supported over 12,000 jobs and created over £610,000,000 income annually for local businesses.

This plan outlines how we will help businesses restart, grow and flourish as we move through this global period of recovery.

The recovery of the visitor economy is key for the city of Portsmouth and also for the strategies, plans and partnerships for the future that it is a part of, including:

- **Imagine Portsmouth 2040, Vision for Portsmouth**
- **Southsea Seafront Strategy**
- **Regeneration Strategy**
- **Portsmouth Creates**
- **City Centre Plan**
- **Portsmouth Local Plan**
- **Cleaner, Greener and Safer – Transport Plan**
- **Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

It is essential we get the visitor economy back on its feet and thriving. To help businesses achieve this we have developed a seven point action plan. Our current Marketing and Communications Plan 2021-22 will support the marketing activity and our newly developed 'Portsmouth, Put the Wind in Your Sails' creative and toolkit will enable businesses across the city to join campaigns and maximise the benefit of marketing activity.



Seven point action plan

- 1 Support local tourism businesses through recovery**
- 2 Demonstrate the value of tourism across city strategies**
- 3 Build confidence so people choose Portsmouth as a safe place to visit**
- 4 Be the national voice to lobby and raise the city's profile**
- 5 Regain Portsmouth's domestic market**
- 6 Continue international marketing**
- 7 Support the recovery of business events tourism**



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Support for local tourism businesses through recovery

Supporting the wide range of businesses, big and small, that form part of our visitor economy is essential. As businesses follow the roadmap out of lockdown and re-open and restart activity, the Visit Portsmouth team can provide assistance to help negotiate the guidelines and restrictions to enable safe opening and operation. Our colleagues across the Directorate for Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services are key to this and bring a wealth of knowledge and advice to help businesses move forward. The PCC Business Support Team can also signpost to available funding opportunities.

The Visit Portsmouth team offer all tourism related businesses free promotion on the Visit Portsmouth website, including free event listing. We will also support your activity with regular social media and E.Newsletter promotion to consumers and trade. If you have a virtual offer during lockdown we can also promote this on our Virtual Portsmouth pages.

Our campaigns will provide opportunities for partners to join and amplify our messaging, both at free entry level and with paid promotional opportunities. The **'Portsmouth, Put the Wind in Your Sails'** toolkit will outline our marketing plans and aspirations and enable partners to use destination assets for their own marketing purposes.

Demonstrate the value of tourism across city-wide strategies

It is clear that tourism has a crucial role to play in both the economic and the social wellbeing recovery of the city. The many businesses that make Portsmouth a great place to visit are also what makes it a great place to live. Without a healthy visitor economy many of the attractions, events, entertainment and cultural activities that local residents love would not be sustainable.

There are obvious strategies, plans and partnerships that the visitor economy is integral to such as the Southsea Seafront Strategy, The Regeneration Strategy and the Portsmouth Creates, Imagine Portsmouth and Shaping the Future of Portsmouth programmes. But tourism also plays a part in other areas across services, for example plans for changes to transport and parking and plans concerning the general health and wellbeing of city residents.

We will work with our colleagues across Portsmouth City Council to ensure the visitor economy is considered and included in strategies and plans going forward and we will act as a conduit, to ensure tourism businesses can have their voice heard and the opportunity to engage with plans and consultations about future developments.

Build confidence and provide a great welcome

Consumer sentiment continues to highlight safety as a key factor for consumer planning for future visits.

Many of our tourism businesses adopted Visit Britain's '**We're Good to Go**' standard during 2020 and we will encourage more to do so this year. This industry standard and consumer mark provides a ring of confidence for businesses, attractions and destinations, as well as reassurance to local residents and visitors that clear processes are in place to keep everyone safe. '**We're Good to Go**' has now been recognised by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) as meeting its international global standardised health and safety protocols. This means '**We're Good to Go**' businesses will automatically be issued the WTTC '**Safe Travels**' stamp to ensure global recognition of safe standards.

As well as building confidence in Portsmouth as a safe destination it is key that visitors experience a great welcome and customer service during their visit. To help up-skill existing and new staff, across the city in businesses who interact with visitors, we are re-launching the **Portsmouth Champions** online training scheme in early April. This updated training will give staff who are key to the destination offer the information, knowledge and skills they need to provide a great welcome and play their part in selling the city.

National voice

The Visit Portsmouth Team will be the national voice for the city's tourism businesses. We will be active members of regional and national bodies including Tourism South East, England's Coast, Visit England and Visit Britain. We will make sure that Portsmouth is at the table by joining discussions and highlighting local concerns. We will meet regularly with Tourism staff at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and will continue to engage with the Solent LEP. We will keep partners updated with opportunities for marketing and collaboration as these arise. We will also update you on national policy and use our membership of these organisations to lobby on your behalf as appropriate.

We will send monthly updates to all the Visit England and Visit Britain team, highlighting Portsmouth's wide offer and we will be asking you to send us all your news to make sure your business is included.



Regaining the domestic market

Making sure we regain Portsmouth's domestic market is our first priority. Visit England's forecast from December 2020 is that domestic spend will be only 67% of the level seen in 2019. This forecast was published before the new UK strain of coronavirus was a factor and as such the reality may be an even lower percentage. It is expected to take a number of years for domestic tourism across the country to return to pre-covid19 levels.

The 'Portsmouth, Put the Wind in Your Sails' kicks off with a campaign running from 22 March and through the Easter weekend. This campaign will use digital marketing in the form of social media advertisements, promoted posts and 3 large scale digital advertising boards located in the London area, on the M3, Inbound and Outbound sites and at Richmond Park. The initial campaign messaging will have a clear 'Plan Your Summer' call to action, as the country remains in lockdown.

As we move through the re-opening period, Visit Portsmouth, with the support of our major destination partners such as Gunwharf Quays, Spinnaker Tower and Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, will continue marketing to our key day visitor and short break markets to encourage safe visits. Marketing will be agile to ensure we can respond to any changes in restrictions.

Digital marketing will of course be key and we will promote our newly refreshed Visit Portsmouth website and social media channels to raise the destination's profile and drive visits to the city.

We will also work regionally with partners promoting Portsmouth via the Visit England's 'Escape the Everyday' messaging and will jointly bid for campaigns as and when funds become available.

Marketing activity will continue to our group markets which may take a little longer to recover. Online marketing events and activity will continue engagement with tour operators and group organisers along with regular trade newsletters. We have plans for a trade familiarisation visit to the city in the autumn or as soon as it is safe to do so, which will enable tourism businesses to showcase their product to the group market.





International marketing

Visit Britain estimates that inbound tourism – visitors from overseas – will be even harder hit this year at around only 23% of the 2019 level. The forecast assumes some recovery, predominantly from European markets, in the second half of the year. This will of course depend on agreements regarding the opening up of international travel.

The Visit Portsmouth team will continue to market Portsmouth to the inbound markets by joining online events such as the recent Explore GB which included 70 face to face meetings with tour operators and travel agents from across the world. Through new monthly communications with Visit Britain's

global staff and inbound operators we will ensure Portsmouth is on the table when future itineraries are planned. We will also welcome press trips and familiarisation visits once it is safe to do so and host these along with partners in the city.

The team continue to work closely with the International Port, especially around the recovery of the cruise market and maximising the benefit of Portsmouth visits for the wider destination.

We are also planning a marketing campaign in Normandy later in the season, when the time is right, to encourage future visits.



Business events and conferences

The business events and conference activity has been one of the most seriously hit by the pandemic and also one that may see future changes such as hybrid events – a mix of in person and online for example. To support this market through recovery we have a new 'VIP' Venues in Portsmouth, section on our website to promote the offer in the city. We are also working closely with Visit Britain to gather support for future international events and raise the profile of Portsmouth as a venue for these.



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