



FAVERSHAM
ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

Faversham Area Tourism Development

**Consultancy Report
March 2005**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recognition of the need to diversify the area's economy Faversham Enterprise Partnership (FEP) commissioned a study by an independent tourism consultant to assess the potential of Faversham and the surrounding area for sustainable tourism development. If the potential existed, tourism marketing and development strategies were to be developed and priority projects highlighted for delivery over the next 6 years. It is FEP's intention to use the study as an authoritative basis for the submission of bids to public and private sector funders, to enable FEP to undertake subsequent years' on-the-ground projects that will tangibly enhance the area economically through tourism.

The study took place between December 2004 and March 2005 and included a product and service audit, consultation with key stakeholders and two industry participatory workshops.

The study clearly showed that the potential existed to develop tourism sustainably in the Faversham area. The natural ingredients of a successful tourism experience are there in abundance and the area has capacity to cater for more visitors sustainably. Key findings of the study included:

- Over emphasis on heritage/ market town product – limits value of tourism to the area as currently perceived as a day trip destination i.e. not enough to see and do to occupy a short break taker
- Important product 'underplayed' and unexploited linkages exist i.e. natural environment and rural hinterland
- Product development opportunities exist e.g. maritime heritage, green tourism, food and drink, local produce
- Little intelligence on markets/ current situation
- Untargeted approach to marketing i.e. 'something for everyone'
- Questions over 'product fit' with wider Swale product
- Committed and passionate 'tourism movement' in the area which bodes well for the future
- Questions over the effectiveness of the current tourism delivery vehicle

The marketing strategy recommended to address some of the issues raised by the study and to move the destination forward into its next stage of development is one of increasing the value of tourism to the area by encouraging visitors to stay overnight, to

increase their current length of stay and by stimulating out of season visitation. To achieve this a brand strategy has been developed to reposition the area over time as a short break destination.

The new brand positioning can be summarised as:

Faversham - Kent's charming creek side medieval market town, set amidst diverse Kentish countryside with strong heritage, quality food and drink and green tourism activities offering relaxation, rejuvenation and enrichment.

The marketing strategy also recommends that a targeted approach to marketing be adopted, with Empty Nesters¹ and Wealthy Retired Couples² (both in the UK and near Europe) as the focus for future promotional activity. DINKS³ have also been identified as an aspirational market for the future.

The area's tourism potential is currently not realised due to a lack of awareness of the Faversham area as a short breaks destination. Instead the area is perceived as a day trip location. This is attributable, in part, to the area's traditional marketing activities focusing primarily on its heritage assets. People hence feel that Faversham can 'be done' in a day. By drawing on the area's strengths (which are reflected in the new brand positioning) - a quaint, medieval, working market town; diverse Kentish countryside; a creek side / estuary position; natural, built and maritime heritage; green tourism activities; a quality food and drink and local produce offer; it's location within Kent – the Garden of England; easy access for geographic markets (London and the Continent) and its location close to the honeypots of Canterbury, Whitstable, Leeds Castle, etc. - and by promoting these assets in combination, make the area a strong short breaks contender.

Marketing activities to deliver the strategy are outlined in the report and include the consistent branding of all future marketing materials along with the use of 'on brand' images, a 'sales' orientated website, collaborative marketing with the Kent Tourism Alliance and Canterbury City Council and product alignment with Canterbury and Whitstable.

The development strategy outlines a consistent and focused effort to centre future tourism development in the area on meeting the needs of the Empty Nester/ Wealthy Retired Couple and DINKS short break markets, and in sustaining and further enhancing the area's brand values. Product development options centre, therefore,

¹ Empty Nesters - 45 - 70, AB, with children not living at home, are in, or have held middle to senior posts in professional or service industries, high disposable income for leisure pursuits.

² Wealthy Retired Couples - 55-75, AB, high disposable income for leisure pursuits.

³ DINKS - 25-45, ABC1, no children, joint income exceeding £50k, high disposable income for leisure pursuits.

on enhancing and expanding the green tourism product offering in the area, the food and drink offer, the heritage offering and in realising the destination's creek side and market town tourism potential. Recommendations include:

Rural/Green Tourism Offer:

- Creating linkages between town and rural offer – promotion and development of green tourism product
- Accommodation – Upgrading of quality; Walker's Welcome Scheme; Green Tourism Business Scheme

Food & Drink:

- Support for and expansion of 'Flavours of Faversham' programme, food and drink trails, uptake of local produce by tourism businesses, local produce retail outlets

Market Town:

- Overhaul of current market. Replace with farmers markets, continental markets, flea markets – and consistent quality branding
- Creek side tourism development at Standard Quay
- Town centre dedicated hotel development

The development strategy also recommends a review of the current tourism delivery mechanisms in the destination as the plethora of organisations involved in tourism marketing and service delivery is causing confusion amongst the tourism industry and at times a duplication of effort. For this next phase of tourism development it is recommended that FEP, with its economic development remit for the area, adopt lead role in this respect and be resourced appropriately to deliver the tourism strategy.

Of all the recommendations made in the report the key drivers for unlocking Faversham's short break potential are:

1. Creek side/ maritime tourism development
2. Town centre dedicated hotel development
3. Creating linkages between town and rural offer – promotion and development of green tourism product
4. Targeted and focused marketing strategy raising awareness of the Faversham area brand

Finally, the consultant highlights the priority projects that if delivered over the next 6 years will cement the foundation for future sustainable tourism growth. It is advised that funding be sought initially to deliver these short-term wins and, as such, funding opportunities are identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Faversham Enterprise Partnership (FEP) seeks to provide an objective, researched platform of planned Faversham area economic development work during the next 6 years. Three linked studies have hence been commissioned by FEP to help achieve this – an investigation into the retailing potential of the Faversham area, an examination of the streetscape of Faversham Town Centre, and a Faversham area tourism study.

This, the tourism study, seeks to explore the potential of Faversham and the surrounding rural areas for regeneration of the local economy through tourism. If the potential exists, the study will recommend a series of costed projects for future action to realise this potential.

FEP will use this study as an authoritative basis for the submission of bids to public and private sector funders, to enable FEP to undertake subsequent years' on-the-ground projects that will tangibly enhance the area economically through tourism.

1.1 Background

The study area consists of the market town of Faversham and the surrounding rural countryside from Dunkirk in the east to Teynham in the west and from the Swale in the north to Stalisfield in the south (Map 1).



Map 1. Study Area - Faversham and Surrounding Rural Areas⁴

⁴ Map courtesy of the Faversham Website Trust.

Certain developments are already planned for the area, and others are being investigated, which will make it more attractive for both residents and visitors, and will no doubt contribute to any future tourism offering in the area. These include a new creek-side restaurant that is already under construction, along with proposals for new visitor centres at Brogdale and Shepherd Neame, and Faversham creek developments including new visitor experiences based on maritime heritage.

In terms of tourism, Faversham has for many years serviced the local Kentish day-trip market. Whilst this market has aided the local economy, its economic contribution could be maximised further if it could be augmented by the more lucrative, and growing, short breaks market.

Social and commercial trends, such as the advent of the low cost airlines, has seen a shift in recent years towards many people in the domestic market taking several short breaks of 1-4 nights away from home each year. A proportion of these leisure breaks are taken in the UK, and hence the domestic short breaks market is a strong and growing one.

In terms of tourism marketing, the area has traditionally focused on its heritage product offering and its market town status to attract visitors to the area. The future of the area's tourism industry, however, also depends upon developing and promoting other forms of tourism and leisure products that appeal to today's more discerning tourists and taps into the increase in the domestic short breaks market. To safeguard and grow the area's tourism industry, to bring added-value to resident and visitor experiences, and to create employment for a strong and healthy future, new forms of tourism need to be developed in the area, whilst at the same time acknowledging what is currently on the ground and seeking to diversify these businesses to meet the needs of new, emerging tourist markets.

With its rich and diverse natural and built heritage there is an abundance of opportunity that has yet to be drawn upon. The Oare Marshes Nature Reserve, for example, is designated internationally as a Special Protection Area (SPA) for the conservation of birds and their habitats, and is listed as part of the Ramsar Convention on the conservation of wetlands. The same marshland also forms part of the UK's most important wildlife habitats for birds, plants and invertebrates and as such is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). This natural asset has not to date been fully embraced by the area as an important tourism resource.

The purpose of this feasibility study is hence to focus upon the area's rich natural, built and cultural heritage, some of which currently remains largely hidden, unexplored and

unappreciated by both residents and visitors alike. This could present a unique opportunity to diversify the area's economy through tourism.

1.2 Tourism in Context

1.2.1 Tourism in Kent

Tourism in Kent is a billion pound industry. In 1998⁵ (most recent figures available), some 5.5 million staying trips were made to 'the Garden of England', resulting in £554 million of direct tourism expenditure. As a county Kent is second only to Devon in terms of staying trips (Devon received 6.1 million staying visitors during the same period). In addition to staying trips, 32.8 million day visitors injected a further £625 million into the county's economy, bringing total direct tourism expenditure to £1.2 billion. The greatest recipients of this expenditure were the county's catering and retail sectors, which received some £386m and £311m respectively. The importance of tourism to Kent is also highlighted by the number of jobs created as a result of tourism expenditure, calculated at 19,673 FTE (full-time equivalent) jobs directly supported by tourism, rising to 29,854 FTE jobs when linkage and multiplier effects are taken into account. Acknowledging the effects of seasonality and part-time working, this translates into 40,676 actual jobs. Tourism is thus vital to the region's economy with major linkages to other sectors of the economy.

In April 2002, in recognition of the importance of tourism to the county, a ground breaking new public/private sector partnership organisation, the Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA), was set up. The aim of this innovative enterprise continues to be to raise the profile of Kent as a short break destination, so that within 5 years Kent becomes the UK's No. 1 short break destination. The KTA has a significant marketing and promotional budget (circa. £1 million a year) to achieve this, making this a real step change in terms of tourism marketing for the county. The focus of KTA's marketing is to promote the Kent brand strategy, which is based on short breaks to the 'Garden of England' to experience countryside and gardens, heritage, maritime coast, and the emotional benefits of relaxation and revitalisation. Revenue for its marketing has been generated through individual partner (public and private sector) investment and through a EU Interreg grant. As a result those private and public sector partners who have invested in the Alliance to date, receive preferential treatment in KTA's marketing and promotional work. Neither Swale BC (due to no budget being made available for tourism marketing), nor any tourism businesses in Swale (with the exception of Shepherd Neame), has invested in the KTA to date and hence the area does not currently receive preferential treatment or profile in KTA's marketing campaigns.

⁵ Cambridge Economic Impact Model, 2000.

1.2.2 Tourism in Swale

The Borough of Swale contains a range of distinct and diverse tourism products based around the 3 main settlements of the Isle of Sheppey, Faversham and Sittingbourne. The Borough welcomed an estimated 479,000 staying visitors in 2003 (6.5% down on 1998 figures)⁶ and 3.9 million day visitors (14.7% up on 1998 figures), generating in the region of £138 million of direct tourism expenditure, and supporting 2,780 FTE (full-time equivalent) jobs directly. Taking into account part-time and seasonal workers this equates to 3,760 actual jobs. The majority of staying visitors (91%) in 2003 were from the domestic market.

Despite the importance of tourism to the local economy, Swale BC currently allocates only a small budget to tourism marketing (to support partnership marketing initiatives) and has only a limited budget for tourism development work and one dedicated tourism officer.

The visitor product offering in Sittingbourne (predominantly business tourism) and on the Isle of Sheppey (traditional C1/C2 sea-side caravanning holidays from the London market) is very different to that of the Faversham area, yet traditionally, despite each settlement having a distinct tourism product, the 3 areas have been marketed together due to their location within the political boundaries of Swale BC.

1.2.3 Tourism in Faversham

It is believed that local Kentish day-trippers account for the majority of Faversham's current visitor base. Tourism is currently centred on 'Medieval Faversham', the area's diverse range of tourist attractions, and the town's festivals and events calendar. Consumer research on visitor motivations for visiting the area, visitor profile, length of stay, satisfaction, spend etc. has not been undertaken, nor economic research on visitor volume and value. Reliable and accurate data on the status of the area's current tourism base is not, therefore, available to inform the study.

1.3 Study Aims

This study seeks to explore the potential of the Faversham area's tourism industry to deliver sustainable economic benefit.

In particular the study will:

- Identify current tourism product/provision in the study area along with gaps.
- Assess whether the potential exists to develop the area further through tourism.

If it is concluded that such potential exists, the outputs of the study will:

⁶ Cambridge Economic Impact Model, 2003 data.

- Identify the most appropriate (and realistic) target market segments to achieve sustainable tourism growth for the area.
- Identify which elements of the area's current tourism offering would motivate these target markets to visit.
- Explore 'linkages' with other products and destinations in the locality (but outside the study area).
- Outline a product/service development strategy that would increase visits to the area from the target markets.
- Outline a marketing strategy that would motivate the target markets to visit.
- Research and develop a brand strategy for the area, which will underpin all future marketing communications.
- Provide indicative costings for key development/marketing initiatives highlighted in the strategies.
- Explore potential funding avenues.

2. METHODOLOGY

Data to inform the outputs of the study were collected by a variety of complementary methods, including a product audit, participatory industry workshops and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders. This multi-faceted approach was adopted to ensure that the views and aspirations of industry representatives and key stakeholders in the area both informed and were incorporated into the outputs of the study. This participatory approach to the consultancy not only makes for a more rigorous and robust study, drawing on the knowledge and expertise of people who are currently engaged in, or are affected by, tourism in the area, but also gives 'ownership' of the outputs to the people living and working in the Faversham area. In this way the recommended development and marketing strategies are sustainable, not only economically and environmentally, but of utmost importance, socially and culturally.

2.1 Product Audit

A product audit was undertaken to identify current tourism product provision in the study area and to identify gaps. The product audit covered both 'hard' (accommodation, restaurants, shopping, visitor attractions, etc.) together with 'soft' aspects of the product (nature product, informal 'attractions', etc.). It also explored 'linkages' with other products and destinations in the locality (but outside the study area). The audit was achieved via fieldwork, consultation with key stakeholders, a participatory workshop with industry representatives and via a web and literature search. The gaps in current provision were fed into the product development strategy.

2.2 Key Stakeholder Interviews

A series of face-to-face, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the area over a 2-month period. In total 22 stakeholders were consulted, with individual interviews lasting circa. 1 hour. Consultees ranged from small to large tourism businesses, public sector organisations, tourism associations, and individuals who have an keen interest in the area. A list of consultees can be viewed at Appendix 1.

The interviews sought to draw on the knowledge and expertise of the consultees in understanding the current strengths of the tourism offering in the area and identifying any gaps in provision. Consultees were also asked to comment on the profile of current visitors and what motivated them to visit. The interviews also provided consultees with an opportunity to express their views on the current weaknesses of the tourism offering in the area and the current effectiveness of tourism delivery vehicles, along with

articulating their vision for the future development of tourism in the area and priorities for funding.

2.3 Industry Workshops

Two participatory industry workshops were held during the course of the study to inform the outputs, with 8-10 stakeholders participating in each (see Workshop Participants List in Appendix 2).

2.3.1 Product / Markets Workshop

A participatory workshop with key stakeholders representative of the tourism industry in the study area was held in December 2004 to solicit their views on the tourism offering in the area (strengths and weaknesses) and to evaluate the most appropriate (and realistic) future target market segments for the area.

At this workshop a presentation was given aimed at providing participants with a better understanding of Kent's target consumer markets, along with the groups market, so as to ensure that Faversham's future marketing strategy would be in harmony with, and benefit from, the wider Kent tourism strategy.

2.3.2 Branding Workshop

A second participatory industry workshop was held in January 2004. The aim of this workshop was for participants to input into the formulation of a brand strategy, and brand positioning statement for the Faversham area, which would underpin all future marketing communications.

At the workshop, a presentation was given detailing Faversham's potential future target markets and marketing strategy, along with a talk on branding to achieve a common understanding on what branding was, and importantly, was not.

2.4 Progress Meetings

Regular progress meetings were held throughout the life of the study with the FEP Manager. These also served as an opportunity for the consultant to receive regular updates on tourism developments in the area to feed into the study.

3. CURRENT TOURISM OFFERING

3.1 Product

The product audit, industry workshops and stakeholder interviews clearly identified the strengths of the tourism product and tourism service offering in the study area as well as identifying weaknesses and gaps in product/service provision.

So as to facilitate the accessibility and usability of the product audit, product 'clusters' are detailed in the SWOT analysis that follows, rather than providing an exhaustive list of all attractions, accommodation providers, etc.

3.1.1 Strengths

The key strengths of the tourism product/service provision in the area, in no particular order, are:

- Medieval market town associations
- Attractive market place/Guildhall
- Heritage offering (Historic streets/buildings; Gunpowder product; Ancient church; Museum; Guided town walks, etc.)
- Quality/architecture of Abbey Street
- Creek side location
- Some nice Kentish villages and hamlets
- Rural, Kentish countryside
- Peaceful/leisurely pace/friendly service/old-fashioned/traditional/quaint area
- Green tourism product and activities (walking, bird-watching, cycling, sailing, golf); Perry Woods, Blean Woods, Oare Marshes, AONB (Kent Downs), Pilgrim's Way, Saxon Shore Way
- Home of Shepherd Neame, Britain's oldest independent brewer
- Range of visitor attractions e.g. Farming World, Belmont House and Gardens, Doddington Place Gardens, Mount Ephraim Gardens, Brogdale Horticultural Trust, Shepherd Neame Brewery Tours, Sandhurst Farm Forge, Beech Court Gardens, Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre, Shrine of St Jude, St Mary of Charity, Oare Gunpowder Works, etc.
- Active festival and events programme (Hop Festival, Classic Car & Bike Show, Medieval Pageant, Carnival, Open House, Secret Gardens, Creek Raft Race, Flavours of Faversham, Events/Concerts at individual attractions, etc.)

- Growing speciality shopping/retail offer
- Growing quality food and drink offer – Read's, Ardennes, new creekside restaurant, quality pubs (The White Lion, the Dove at Dargate, etc.), CAMRA pubs (Shipwrights, etc.), growing range of quality cafes (Cosgroves, etc.)
- Active and growing local produce movement e.g. Macknade Farm Shop, Flavours of Faversham Festival, Shepherd Neame using local produce in managed pubs, network of local Faversham area producers
- Old-fashioned, locally owned, quaint town centre cinema
- Leisure facilities (sports, swimming etc.)...but limited
- Own Tourist Information Centre (TIC)
- Stock of serviced and non serviced quality graded accommodation
- Situated within the strong 'Kent – Garden of England' brand
- Location (close to visitor 'honeypot' destinations of Canterbury, Whitstable, Leeds Castle; close to London and the Continent i.e. easy access to large market catchment areas)
- Product synergies with nearby honeypot destinations of Canterbury (heritage destination) and Whitstable (nostalgic, slower pace of life destination)
- Has a key flagship attraction in the wider area – Canterbury Cathedral

3.1.2 Weaknesses

The key weaknesses of the tourism product/service provision in the area, in no particular order, are:

- No flagship attraction in immediate local area (but one in nearby Canterbury!)
- Limited linkages currently exist between market town product and surrounding rural tourism/countryside offer
- Creek side not exploited for tourism development; visitors currently 'fall upon' Standard Quay by accident; actual creek silting up and not functional
- No town centre dedicated, larger hotel (visible indicator of a short break destination) i.e. have high quality pubs with rooms e.g. The Sun Inn, Railway Hotel, but no dedicated, larger facility that could accommodate groups and short break takers.
- % of highest quality graded accommodation stock is low (i.e. 4 diamond and above for B&Bs and guesthouses)

- Opening hours of cafes/restaurants. Limited availability on Sundays and after 4pm other days
- Poor quality market offer. As a key aspect of the area's product is its market town status, the poor quality offering and appearance of the town's weekly markets is a major negative
- No facility to 'turn up and go' for Shepherd Neame brewery tours

Specifically for Faversham town centre:

- Parking provision (for visitors and coaches) suitable for current tourism demand but limits future expansion. Parking also 'unwelcoming' in that visitors need to pay on Bank Holidays
- Vehicles still access town centre pedestrian area despite restrictions
- Anti-social behaviour of youth in evenings in town centre could deter visitors
- Empty shops gives a run-down, non-vibrant appearance to certain parts of town centre
- Streetscape in initial approach to town from station, the Mall, the town centre car park and along Preston Street is uninviting. Lacks 'sense of arrival' and a warm welcome for visitors
- No signage off the M2. Lost opportunity for capturing transient visitor traffic
- Inconsistent service provision of TIC. During the study several 'mystery shops' and 'mystery phone calls' were made to the TIC aimed at soliciting information as a short break taker to the area. The service provided was very inconsistent i.e. on some occasions it was very good, but at others it was very poor in terms of the quality of information given and the customer service approach. This in part is perhaps due to the current staffing system where volunteers are used to man the centre for short periods at a time. Under this scenario it is challenging to train all staff to the service level required by today's more discerning tourists.
- Lack of commercial TIC services. The TIC does not currently operate a 'Book A Bed Ahead' service or actively 'sell' tourism product in the area (in a marketing sense rather than a transactional one). Its current role as purely an information provider means that it is a) missing an opportunity to become more financially sustainable and b) not providing the range of tourism services needed by today's tourists (e.g. Book A Bed Ahead, online accommodation booking services, etc.)

3.1.3 Opportunities

Key opportunities that could effect/influence tourism product/service provision in the area, in no particular order, are:

- Growth in short breaks market
- Growth in consumer demand for local produce/healthy living
- Growth in green tourism/ecotourism market
- Growth in internet access and on-line bookings of short break product
- Product synergies with Whitstable and Canterbury
- KTA's marketing activities
- House building – growth of town/area population – changing social profile
- Proposed new visitor centres and experiences at Brogdale (new visitor centre, gourmet restaurant, cider/juice bar) and Shepherd Neame (expanded brewery tours, state of the art bar, High St retail outlet)
- Creek side tourism developments (linked to SBC's Creek engineering study)
- Arrival of Graveney Boat to Faversham
- Launch of Oare Gunpowder Works
- Move by Shepherd Neame to promote local produce in its pubs
- Shepherd Neame's 1698 beer and short breaks promotional activity
- Streetscape improvements triggered by FEP Streetscape Consultancy Study
- FEP Retail Study recommendations

3.1.4 Threats

Key threats that could effect/influence tourism product/service provision in the area, in no particular order, are:

- Increasing marketing activity of competitor destinations in Kent
- Further downturn in retail sector resulting in more empty shops and further degradation of the tourism offer
- Decline in antiques market trade through High Street retail outlets i.e. trend towards antiques fairs
- Decline in traditional market trade i.e. new retail outlets such as Matalan and George at Asda taking traditional market clothes business

- Anti-social behaviour of youths in Faversham town centre deterring tourists
- Inflexibility in local approach to planning in the town/area limiting product development opportunities (e.g. Shepherd Neame visitor centre plans, expansion of food and drink offer, etc.)
- Trend to increased internet usage and on-line booking of short break product
- Potential loss of suitable tourism development sites to housing/industry

3.2 Accommodation

The Faversham area had 588 serviced bed spaces (B&Bs, guesthouses) as at August 2003 (most current figures available). 79% of these conformed to one of the national quality grading schemes. It also had 119 self-catering bed spaces (73% were quality graded) and 132 caravan/camping spaces (only 38% quality graded). For comparison purposes the breakdown of accommodation in the Faversham area is compared with the rest of Swale in Table 1.

Table 1. Breakdown of Accommodation in Swale as at August 2003

Geographical Location	Total Serviced Beds	% of Serviced Bed Spaces Graded	Total Self Catering Bed Spaces	% of Self Catering Bed Spaces Graded	Total Camping/ Caravan/ Chalet Spaces	% of Graded Spaces
Sittingbourne	332	24%	17	2%	74	0%
Faversham	588	79%	119	73%	132	38%
Isle of Sheppey	357	41%	70	83%	5095	24%
TOTAL	1277	54%	206	71%	5301	24%

Source: Swale BC

In terms of occupancy, this varies throughout the year as depicted in Table 2, with the winter and spring periods being the worst times for occupancy levels.

Table 2. Average % Occupancy

Period	% Occupancy Rate
Winter (Dec-Feb)	10%
Spring (Mar-May)	30%
Summer (Jun-Aug)	60%
Autumn (Sep-Nov)	50%

Source: Faversham Area Accommodation Survey 2003 (B&Bs and Self-Catering)

As can be seen from the occupancy levels in Table 1, the Faversham area has an adequate accommodation supply to meet current and future medium-term demand.

Encouraging short breaks to the area will increase occupancy rates, and promoting out of season breaks will considerably boost business in the quieter shoulder months.

As the short break market to Faversham grows, new accommodation stock will need to be steadily developed. The real step change sought, however, needs to be a rapid growth in the number of serviced accommodation establishments that are quality graded at the 4 diamond level, as the short breaks market is very discerning and a 4 diamond grading for B&Bs is the quality desired by this market. Although 79% of the serviced accommodation stock in the area is quality graded, much of this is below 4-diamond status presently.

Although there are many B&Bs and pubs with rooms in the area, the absence of a dedicated hotel⁷ in the town centre precludes larger groups staying overnight in the town. Faversham also needs a town centre quality dedicated hotel to establish itself image-wise as a short breaks destination worth staying in. This important tourism development would also have the additional knock on effect of benefiting all other accommodation providers in the area.

3.3 Tourism Delivery Vehicle

There are many different organisations that implement or influence the delivery of tourism services in the destination (see Table 3) i.e. tourism development, tourism marketing and visitor information provision. This has further grown in recent years with the emergence of the Faversham Enterprise Partnership (FEP) and the Faversham Area Tourism Association (FATA).

Several impacts and concerns regarding this multi-faceted tourism delivery vehicle approach emerged during the stakeholder interviews. On the positive side the destination's tourism industry benefits from, and has largely developed because of, the variety and scale of individual local peoples' and local organisations' commitment to, and passion for, the area. This bodes extremely well for the future development of tourism to the destination. The downside of the current approach is, however, that there is some confusion amongst the tourism industry of the responsibilities of each organisation and the objectives of each in terms of tourism delivery. Additionally, there is in some cases overlap between the different organisations' responsibilities and this has resulted in a duplication of efforts and delivery conflicts in certain instances relating to consumer facing activities and services (as the different organisations have different objectives and 'raison d'être'). This has unfortunately resulted in an unfocused, and at times conflicting approach, to developing and marketing the area for tourism.

⁷ Railway Hotel and the Sun Inn are pubs with rooms

Additionally tourism businesses are not clear where to spend their advertising budget – with FATA, with Medway and Maritime Kent, with Swale BC, etc.

Table 3. Tourism Delivery Vehicles

The Faversham Society

Founded circa. 40 years ago the Faversham Society is a conservation organisation that has been instrumental in securing the preservation of the town's heritage and streetscape. They have been involved in the marketing of the town through their production of literature and interpretative tools concerning the heritage of the area, along with running tourism attractions of their own (the Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre and Museum, the Chart Gunpowder Mill etc.). They also manage the area's Tourist Information Centre.

Faversham Town Council – Town Marketing Group

The Town Marketing Group is a sub-group of Faversham Town Council. The group currently has a budget of approx. £7,000 to market the town and is involved in the commissioning of tourism marketing communications for the area. This group commissioned the work on designing the most recent Faversham logo.

Faversham Enterprise Partnership (FEP)

This not for profit limited company was set up in March 2004 and is a pro-business growth development organisation. SEEDA, KCC, SBC and the Faversham Town Council have funded the partnership to date. In terms of its involvement in tourism, FEP currently provides support to the Town Marketing Group and FATA, along with commissioning this tourism study.

Faversham Area Tourism Association (FATA)

Launched in July 2004, FATA is a marketing organisation formed in response to the growing concern by many in the local tourism industry of the effectiveness of marketing the area under the Swale brand i.e. alongside Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey. FATA's subscription membership has grown rapidly and it now services over 50 members ranging from visitor attractions and accommodation through to event organisers and food and drink establishments. Outputs to date include the new events guide for 2005 (What's On 2005), the 2005 Area Guide, and a programme of attendance at groups' day out fairs along with a leaflet (Faversham – A Great Day Out – 2005) aimed at the groups market.

Faversham Website Trust

This independent trust owns and manages the Faversham area website (www.Faversham.org) and as such plays a key part in the marketing of the area for tourism.

Swale Borough Council

The remit of Swale Borough Council's tourism unit is to deliver regeneration through tourism in the Swale area. The tourism unit, however, has only one member of staff charged with delivering tourism services across the whole borough and does not have a specific tourism marketing remit. It does, however, produce and distribute an annual mini guide to Faversham, Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey, along with operating a tourism website for the borough (www.swaletourism.co.uk). It does not have adequate resources to promote increased visitation to this website, however, and the bookable accommodation feature on the site is not currently well supported by the industry and does not operate effectively.

Swale Tourism Association

SBC co-ordinates and financially supports the Swale Tourism Association, of which some tourism businesses in the Faversham area are members. The Association's remit is to represent the interests of tourism providers in Swale.

Medway Council

Medway Council's well-resourced tourism unit include a section on Faversham within their Medway and Maritime Kent annual visitor guide. Tourism providers in the Faversham area can take out 'paid for' advertising in this publication.

Other

There are other groups influencing tourism development in the area e.g. Friends of Faversham Creek, Faversham Chamber of Commerce, etc.

3.4 Tourism Marketing

The area's marketing has been strengthened over the past few years by investment in a new, motivating logo for the area, its own award winning website (www.Faversham.org) and in production of its own dedicated marketing literature. The recent formation of the Faversham Area Tourism Association further serves to strengthen the area's marketing potential. The key thrust of the area's marketing to date has been focused on the heritage of the area.

In terms of weaknesses, the area is currently perceived as a day trip destination and little awareness exists of its potential for short breaks. The traditional, predominant

marketing focus on heritage, as opposed to the area's other product strengths, has served to limit the destination in the minds of potential visitors. Additionally, whilst the area has adopted a logo, it does not have a distinctive brand identity. This is in part due to the absence of a brand strategy for the area, but in reality is more due to the way it has been traditionally marketed as "Swale" (due to its location within the political borough of Swale). Visitors do not see nor are interested in political boundaries. They are motivated by product and by the credible marketing of that product. Faversham's product offering lacks synergy with that of Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey (although once the Isle of Sheppey develops and markets its ecotourism product there will be a fit here), and additionally the types of visitors that are motivated by each are again very different. In terms of local synergy, and potential partnership marketing opportunities, Faversham's product, and target markets, fit better with Canterbury and Whitstable, yet these linkages have to date been largely unexplored.

Due to limited marketing budget and knowledge, the area has not been able to make inroads into the lucrative short breaks market. There is the concern that following the product's 'natural fit' (i.e. not marketing the area as "Swale") will limit funding opportunities available from Swale BC. This need not be so if Faversham and Swale BC share and commit to the new tourism strategy. The Council is committed to regeneration in the borough and if the most effective way of achieving this for the Faversham area is by the destination marketing its short break tourism offer as a distinct brand, then the Council should be supportive of the new strategy. Faversham and Swale BC need to address this issue together in partnership, as in the past the relationship between the two has been perceived by some as negative. Indeed the approach to the Swale Tourism Association from FATA for collaborative working was formally declined.

Through the stakeholder consultation process, there was evidence to suggest that at times Faversham's tourism industry has a tendency to be parochial and in-ward looking. Instead, it needs to remain receptive and open to outside influences and ideas if it is to prosper into the future.

No marketing plan exists for the destination that drives the production and targeted distribution of its marketing collateral. This needs to be addressed if the destination's marketing budget is to be spent in the most effective and targeted way. Current marketing literature is of variable design quality and its effectiveness in terms of its distribution strategy should be questioned.

Finally, the destination's website has served the area well and has contributed greatly to its development over the past few years. Now that the area is moving into its next

phase of tourism development, the website also needs to move forward to take on a 'selling' role along with its current information giving role (i.e. short break packages, online accommodation booking, etc.). It also needs to be integrated into the overall marketing mix rather than being managed as currently as a stand-alone facility.

4. MARKETS

4.1 Current Consumer Markets

Limited analysis of current consumer markets has been undertaken for the Faversham area in terms of visitors' demographic and geographic profiles, their life stage, their motivations for visiting the area, their length of stay or their level of satisfaction with their visit.

Anecdotal information gathered from the industry workshops and stakeholder interviews did, however, highlight that current visitors to the area were generally of an older age profile (over 45-50 years old) and were quite well educated. The majority were also cited as day-trippers, with events and existing visitor attractions being cited as strong motivating influences for their visit. In terms of other motivations for visiting the area, interviewees felt that visiting friends and relatives, heritage, the countryside (walking and cycling) and food and drink (an emerging product in Faversham) were of importance as was the opportunity to relax and distress in the traditional, slower paced environment of a 'quaint market town'. Many were deemed to be on a transient stopover on the way to and from a Channel crossing, whilst those staying in the area were thought to be predominantly visiting friends and relatives. Many felt that current visitors believed that there was not enough in the area to keep them in the destination for longer than a day.

In terms of other profiles of current visitors, younger professional couples were cited as beginning to visit the area, particularly for events. The area was deemed as not particularly strong for the family market, with the exception of Farming World.

Current marketing for the area was seen as untargeted – as appealing to all people with the offer of 'something for everyone' – and as focusing primarily on 'heritage' and hence not drawing on all of the key strengths of the area.

As can be seen from the above, responses that came back from the consultation phase were varied and broad but not particularly deep in their descriptions of current target markets. In summary they included:

- 45+ older couples
- Professional young couples (few – mainly for events)
- Families (to Farming World)
- Visiting Friends and Relatives Market (VFR)
- Group visits likely to be either special interest – heritage - or connected to an event

- Domestic visitors
- Londoners
- Near European visitors
- History buffs
- Business tourism and special events (weddings)/venue hire.

Few of these represent true segments. The descriptions are too brief, too general and too broad. Some attractions were able to define their markets according to age, geographic origin, interests and income but many did not go that far. It is clear that some support is needed to select segments more accurately.

4.2 Future Target Consumer Markets

Identifying which market segments should be targeted into the future is important for Faversham. It will not only help to focus resources on the most productive markets but will also enable the area to benefit from the marketing efforts and large marketing budget of the Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA). Additionally it will help to bring the area's tourism providers together in collaborative marketing activities, working with common targets not just because of their geographic proximity. No one will be compelled to restrict themselves to these markets, but those who focus on them will know they have been selected as showing the most potential for Faversham. Organisations coming together to promote to these chosen markets will hence get the best return on their investment of time and money.

The usual approach to segmentation is to respond to market segments that are already visiting the destination, by identifying them and then focusing on these existing markets, rippling outwards from that point to expand.

There is also an opportunity, however, to access new segments, either through product packaging or specific marketing activities. These could also be those segments where product developments fit comfortably with the needs of local people as well as visitors to the area. They could also be segments with the greatest economic benefit or visitors that are most sensitive to the area, for example appreciating and helping to preserve the area's natural and cultural heritage.

4.2.1 Market Segmentation Tools

There are essentially 4 different ways to segment markets – geographic, demographic, life stage factors and typologies.

Geographic segmentation is necessary as a starting point. It helps to determine catchment areas, distribution channels and routes to market, and is particularly useful for overseas marketing. However geographic location isn't the sole definer of markets. Until recently many marketers relied on postcode analysis to determine their segments, but this doesn't work for areas like London where people of very different backgrounds and interests live within the same postcode area, yet have varied holiday-taking habits and needs.

Many tourism organisations still use the traditional **demographic segmentation** method, based largely on socio-demographic or geo-demographic criteria. However, whilst these might sometimes offer a good basis and framework, they don't help to create a true picture of target markets and are now deemed unreliable when used in isolation.

The next development in market segmentation was to profile people according to **life stage factors**, hence tags such as "DINKS" (Dual Income, No Kids) or "Empty Nesters" when children have left home. Whilst life stage is very important and a good segmentation tool it again should not be taken in isolation, but in combination with geographic and demographic segmentation and additional factors that take into account people's interests and motivations, and why they choose to visit certain places (**typologies**).

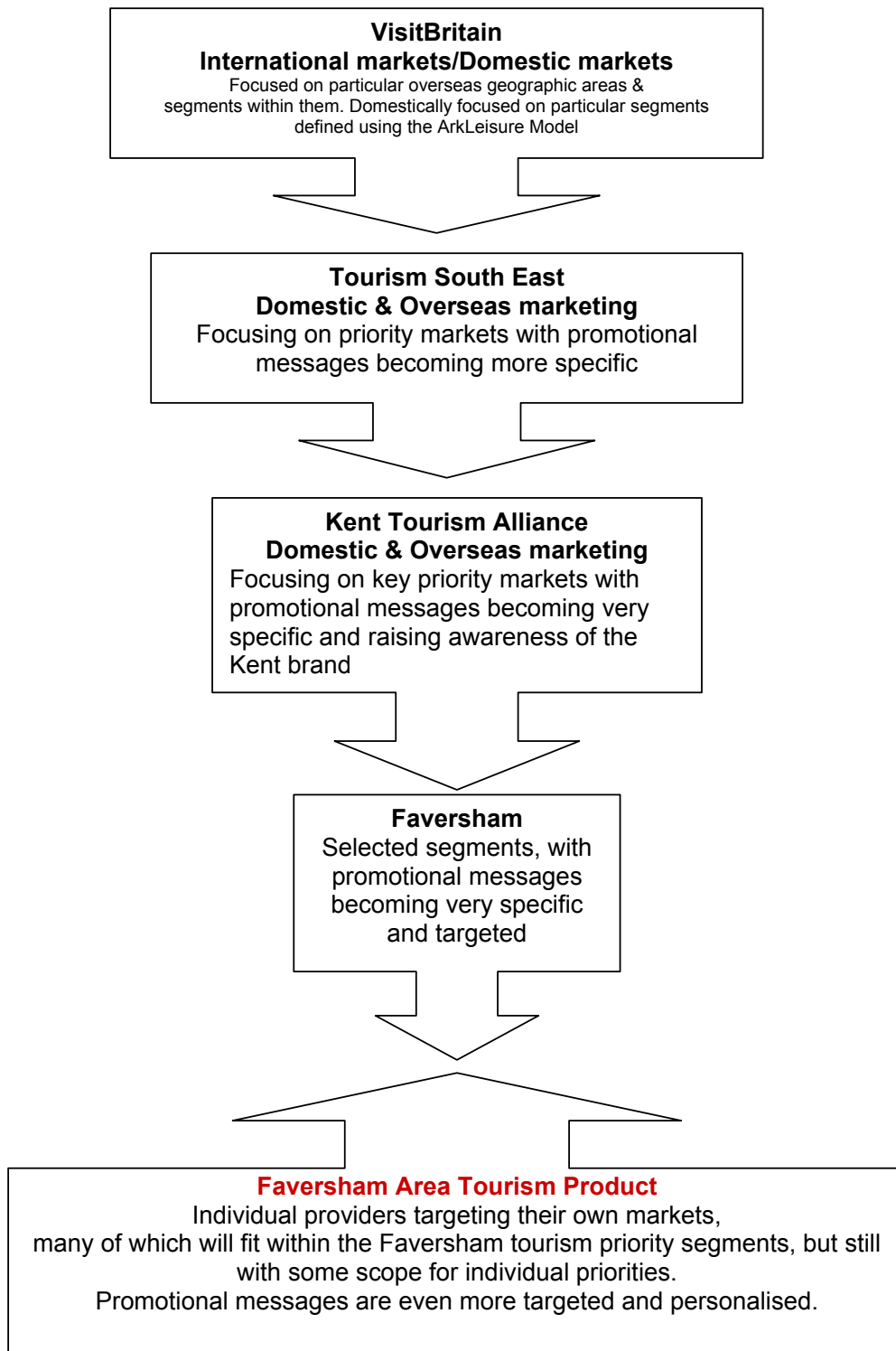
4.2.2 The Segmentation Funnel

A number of different organisations are effectively all working to eventually funnel visitors into Faversham's accommodation, attractions, etc.

The following flow chart (Fig. 1) shows how this works, with each "layer" fitting within the framework of the previous one. As the promotional activity gets nearer to the tourism product, target markets become more specific and marketing messages need to be more personalised and specific.

At each level of marketing, visitors are moved on to the next, so they receive increasingly detailed information. At the final level, the destination's own marketing needs to start to reach out to visitors and take over. At earlier stages marketing is concerned with increasing the size of the overall market. At the later stages it becomes more concerned with taking market share. Many of the target markets for the Faversham area tourism suppliers should match those of the destination, hence the matching arrows at that stage.

Fig. 1 The Segmentation Funnel



If Faversham is to grow its tourism industry sustainably and really maximise the return on its marketing investment, it needs in the future to target its limited resources on appealing to those market sectors which a) have best product fit, b) are high spending and take frequent short breaks, c) visit all year round, and d) are attracted to the wider 'Kent – The Garden of England' destination. In this way Faversham will be able to focus its resources on attracting affluent, frequent short break takers that are motivated by the Faversham product offer by aligning its marketing efforts with that of the Kent Tourism Alliance (KTA). The KTA have a significant marketing budget (circa. £800,000 a year) and hence is able to run major marketing campaigns (both domestically and internationally) to attract visitors into Kent. Faversham needs to position itself (both product and marketing wise) to tap into selected KTA target markets.

4.2.3 KTA's Target Consumer Markets

KTA's consumer life stage target markets are:

- Empty Nesters/ Wealthy Retired Couples
- DINKS
- Caring Parents

Geographically KTA's target markets live within a 3-4 hour drive time of Kent - London and the Home Counties through to Birmingham and the East Midlands in the UK (along with the local Kent market) and France, Belgium, Holland and Germany in Northern Europe.

Descriptions of each of Kent's target markets, including information on demographics and motivations for taking a short break/ types of destinations they are attracted to (typologies) follows in Table 4.

Table 4. Kent's Target Markets

Life Stage Market Segment	Demographic Profile	Motivated By
Empty Nesters	45 - 70, AB, with children not living at home, are in, or have held middle to senior posts in professional or service industries, high disposable income for leisure pursuits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor activities • Good hotels/food • Culture and arts • 'Living' History • The need to feel enriched and rejuvenated
Wealthy Retired Couples	55-75, AB, high disposable income for leisure pursuits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor activities • Good hotels/food

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture and arts • 'Living' History • The need to feel enriched and rejuvenated
DINKS	25-45, ABC1, no children, joint income exceeding £50k, high disposable income for leisure pursuits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events and sporting activities, both participating and as spectators • Socialising with friends • The need to feel rejuvenation
Caring Parents	25-45, ABC1, one or both working, children 5-15 years, interested in their children's education at both school and play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids attractions • Culture • Coast • Out-door activities • Fun and the need to feel rejuvenated (because the kids have been enriched)

All of KTA's priority market segments are in harmony with those selected by Tourism South East and Visit Britain.

4.2.4 Faversham's Target Consumer Markets

In terms of the Faversham product offering, it can be seen from Table 4 that there is a strong match with the needs and motivations of Empty Nesters and Wealthy Retired Couples. With a concerted marketing effort, DINKS could also be attracted to the area, particularly for the events programme, but this market should be currently seen as an aspirational market as considerable product development and marketing resource would be needed to attract this market. There is poor match between Faversham's current product offering and the Caring Parents market. Hence recommended future target market segments for the Faversham area are:

Primary markets:

- Empty Nesters, 45-70, AB, children left home
- Wealthy retired couples, 55-75

Secondary market (aspirational):

- DINKS, 25-45, ABC1, joint income > £50k

Geographically these people will be living domestically within a 3-4 hour drive time of Faversham (including the local Kent market for day trips) and overseas markets will include Northern France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

These segments are not restrictive: It is important to bear in mind that these segments are intended for the whole of the Faversham area. Discounting certain markets because they are not the priorities for promotion of the area does not mean those markets are not important. The choice of these segments as area priorities does not prevent individual tourism providers from promoting to their existing or different markets. However, they will gain additional benefits from also promoting to the area's market segments. For example, Farming World would benefit enormously from collaborating with FATA's marketing to Empty Nesters and Wealthy Retired Couples, stimulating these people to visit Farming World with their grandchildren.

There are only a few segments: One of the key difficulties encountered by organisations starting to work with segments instead of mass markets is how they manage to actually target the segments. The whole premise of focusing on particular segments is that it then becomes easier to have more complete understanding of each market and to target them appropriately. It is usually more effective to offer a precise marketing message to a small market and then ripple outwards than to target one big market with a diluted and bland message.

4.3 The Groups Market

The Faversham area currently attracts groups business, but no research exists as to its impact on the area in terms of its volume and value. Anecdotal evidence from the stakeholder consultation suggests that in overall terms its current impact is low, but that some individual visitor attractions that have the facilities to host larger groups (e.g. Farming World, Brogdale, Shepherd Neame) do benefit from this market. The town itself receives limited group business, and that which does exist is predominantly via the Fleur de Lis and town walks programme.

During the consultation process some stakeholders expressed an interest in developing the coach market further and FATA is already taking steps in this direction by a programme of attendance at group organiser day out fairs and distribution of a 'Faversham – A Great Day Out – 2005' publication, aimed at linking attractions in the area for group day out packages.

Looking further a field, whilst individual attractions in Kent have been successful in attracting coach business through their own marketing efforts, these in the main have been well-known flagship attractions (e.g. Canterbury Cathedral, Leeds Castle,

Chatham Historic Dockyard, Hever Castle, Dover Castle, etc.) who have invested considerable time and effort in developing relationships with the key coach operators and group travel businesses. It is a difficult market to penetrate, but the rewards are high if successful.

Those areas in Kent that have been successful in attracting group business to the wider destination are limited. This is due to the fact that heavy investment in coach infrastructure and marketing is required. Coach parking and visitor car parking can often be in conflict, therefore it is imperative that dedicated coach parking facilities are provided. Rochester, for example, has won international awards as a coach friendly destination after investing £650,000 in a 37-bay coach park at Acorn Wharf including the provision of drivers' rest facilities, where complimentary tea/coffee is provided, and facilities for drivers to wash vehicles and empty their waste tanks. Public conveniences are also provided on site for passengers. The coach park is manned Mon-Fri 10am-4pm and during out of hours coaches can get access to the parking area via remote controlled bollards operated via CCTV. Other facilities include a dedicated coach drop off point comprising 4 bays (at the rear of Medway Visitor Information Centre) so groups can arrive/depart in complete safety. From this point they walk straight into the VIC and then onto the High Street. Along with a heavy investment in coach infrastructure, Medway has dedicated resource working on coach market development and marketing including a PR representative in Germany.

The type of group business attracted to Medway varies and consists of organised school groups visiting Rochester Castle during weekdays, tour and coach operator excursions and special interest groups (e.g. literary tours due to the town's Dickens connections). Due to its location off the motorway between London and Canterbury (as well as the Channel Ports) it has been successful in recent years in attracting 'Meal Stops' for coaches travelling to/from the Channel Ports or following a visit to Canterbury or Leeds Castle. Visitors have a meal in Rochester followed by sightseeing. Rochester's events programme also attracts significant coach business. Their Dickens Christmas event attracts circa. 400 coaches in two days and the economic impact from coaches is some £450,000. However, to some extent they have been a victim of their own marketing success and are now trying hard to de-market the festival, as they cannot cope sustainably with this high volume.

Investment in the coach market over the last decade has resulted in significant economic returns for Medway. For example, economic data indicates that in 2003:

- Approximately 2,500 coaches visited Rochester bringing an average party size of 40 passengers per vehicle, rising to 49 passengers during major events. Hence total number of visitors arriving by coach is 105,000 per annum.
- The average length of stay of a coach visitor has been recorded as between 3.5 and 4 hours, rising to 6.4 hours during major events.
- The average spend per coach visitor (including admissions to local attractions) is estimated at £15 per person, this figure rising to £24 during major events.
- Direct visitor spend of £1.8m, of which the day-trippers visiting outside of major festivals generate £1.2m of this. Using the industry multiplier (of 1.4) to take account of indirect spend, coach day visits to Rochester equate to a total of **£2.52m** i.e. an average of £7,000 per day going directly into the local economy in Rochester High Street.
- In 2000 Medway Council carried out an Economic Impact Study on tourism in Medway, which reported that overall staying visitors expenditure generated in the area was £76.2m. 7% of this staying visitor's direct expenditure was spent in group accommodation, equating to £5.3m (*Cambridge Economic Impact Model 2000*). Using the industry multiplier (of 1.4) to take account of indirect spend, the overnight visitors generated **£7.42m**. The total expenditure from the coach sector in Medway was **£10m** overall.

Turning back to Faversham, it can be seen from the above that choosing to target coach business, although rewarding, demands considerable investment in facilities and marketing. If Faversham is to elect to become active in this market it will, therefore, need to secure significant investment to do so. It should also be mindful of the negative impacts of this type of tourism on the destination i.e. exceeding carrying capacity, small spend of certain types of groups, congestion, conflicts with local community who see the destination as 'over run' by large groups, etc. Realistically, it is recommended that Faversham pursues purely a low key groups acquisition strategy, focusing primarily on increasing coach business to those attractions located outside of the town that have group facilities and coach parking. The educational groups market should also be targeted in this vein, as product exists that would be particularly motivating for this sector e.g. Farming World, etc.

As the food and drink offer develops in the town, a 'Mealstop'/Kentish market town experience for coaches on route to/from the Channel ports could be considered for marketing. This would necessitate the expansion of current coach parking bays in the town and the development of an 'incentive scheme' for drivers for stopping in the destination (e.g. food and drink voucher/rest facility, etc.).

The main thrust of the area's marketing should, however, be concentrated on the short breaks consumer market as it is this area that will bring greatest economic impacts, with least negative impacts, to the destination.

5. DESTINATION MARKETING

Drawing on the research undertaken in this study a marketing strategy has been formulated to establish the Faversham area as a short break leisure destination.

5.1 Marketing Strategy

The aim of the tourism strategy is to increase the value of tourism to the Faversham area by encouraging consumers to:

1. Stay overnight
2. Increase their length of stay
3. Stay in low season

The key thrust of the marketing strategy must be, therefore, to position the Faversham area as a short break leisure destination in the hearts and minds of its target markets, thereby enabling consumers to actively choose the area when planning a short break.

Key geographic target markets are London, the Southeast and the area up to the Midlands along with near Europe (France, Holland and Belgium). In terms of life stage, the primary target markets will be Empty Nesters and Wealthy Retired Couples, with DINKS as an aspirational market for the future. As discussed in Section 4 of this report, all target markets fall within Kent's priority market segments.

To catalyse this repositioning of the destination for short breaks, a key element of the marketing strategy is to develop, adopt and promote a new tourism brand strategy for the area, which will motivate the target markets to visit the area for a short break. The marketing strategy hence centres on:

- a. A focused approach – marketing efforts centred on Empty Nesters and Wealthy Retired Couples (and DINKS in the future once more product has been developed suitable to their needs and marketing budget is available) in London, the South East and near Europe.
- b. Development of a strong, differentiating, credible and motivating brand positioning for the destination that taps into the target markets' needs and motivations for short breaks.
- c. Encouraging adoption of this brand positioning by all tourism providers in the area, as only through its consistent and accurate promotion will it become cemented in the hearts and minds of the target markets leading to increased business for all.

- d. Creating awareness, and understanding, of the brand positioning amongst the destination's target markets so people are aware of the short break potential of the area.
- e. Stimulating visitation through tactical promotional activity (once the target markets are aware of and understand the brand).

As can be seen from the above strategy it will take a concerted marketing effort to establish Faversham as a short break destination. It is important that all steps (a-e) of the strategy are followed sequentially, as if one step is omitted (e.g. tactical promotional activity is carried out before the target markets are aware of and understand the destination) then the strategy's effectiveness in delivering increased economic benefit from tourism to the area will be diminished.

5.2 Brand Strategy

A brand strategy and positioning has been developed for the Faversham area following the consultation process and a Branding Workshop with industry representatives. The brand is described and explained in detail in the text that follows.

5.2.1 Why Develop a Brand?

A brand is an essential element in promoting any product in the 21st century.

Identifying a destination brand and creating a logo that visually represents it can create a number of benefits if used consistently, including:

- Potential visitors looking at promotional literature or web sites of the destination will receive a positive first impression of the area - essential in deciding where they will spend their money
- Visitors, seeing the same brand and logo on marketing communications produced by different attractions, accommodation providers, pubs and restaurants in the destination will get a sense of belonging – the area has a common offering and message
- Repeat visitors will find that the logo evokes instant memories of the brand and their last visit

In summary, a consistently promoted brand and logo provides a destination with a competitive advantage that translates into increased numbers of visitors and economic return to an area.

5.2.2 What is a Brand?

A destination brand is the total response of a customer - past, present or future - to the positioning that describes the destination and what it has to offer, and that which

differentiates it from the competition. A successful brand is well known, credible and inspirational.

A brand is not a logo. A logo purely acts as a signifier, visually representing the brand's values i.e. both the tangible benefits of visiting the destination and how the destination makes the customer feel.

The advantage of adopting a logo, however, is that over time, if promoted consistently alongside the brand's values, potential customers begin to recognise it and associate feelings with it; the logo begins to conjure up the brand's values.

A brand's values are a combination of:

- a) **rational values/benefits** i.e. the **key** strengths of the destination - the tangible reasons why a customer visits a destination.
- b) **emotional values/benefits**, i.e. how the destination makes the customer **feel** when they visit.

Combined these rational and emotional brand values make up the **personality of the brand** i.e. that which makes it unique.

5.2.3 The Faversham Area Brand

The following combination of values and personality constitute the Faversham area's brand. This is summed up in the positioning statement that follows and in Fig. 2. and depicted visually in Pic. 1.

A brand needs to offer uniqueness and therefore the Faversham area brand does not include all the opportunities available in the destination, but only those that in combination offer differentiation from competitor destinations.

a) Rational values

- Quaint, 'working', medieval market town
- Natural, built and maritime heritage
- Diverse Kentish countryside (marshlands, Kent Downs, hop farms and orchards)
- Creek side / estuary position
- Green tourism activities (e.g. bird-watching, walking, cycling, etc.)
- Quality food and drink + Kentish local produce ('Taste of Kent', Kentish ales, locally sourced food in restaurants)

- Location within 'Kent - the Garden of England', a strong tourism brand that is well-known and motivating for the target markets
- Accessibility - easy to reach for the target markets i.e. close to London, Northern Europe, and Canterbury and Whitstable (honey-pot destinations for visitors to Kent)

This creek side destination, set amidst diverse Kentish countryside, with a quaint market town at its heart, has a strong heritage, quality food and drink and a green tourism offering. This, combined with its closeness to Canterbury and Whitstable, and its location between London and the continent, provides a uniqueness and differentiation from competitor destinations.

b) Emotional values

By experiencing the destination's rational values visitors will gain the emotional benefits of:

- Relaxation (peace, quiet, slower pace of life)
- Rejuvenation (uplifting of the spirits)
- Enrichment

These emotional values are known to be extremely motivating for short break takers in the area's selected target markets.

c) Personality

The Faversham area's personality can be defined as *charming*.

In all communications about the destination this charming personality needs to come across i.e. in all copy and images.

d) Brand positioning

This can be summed up in the following positioning statement and is the 'heart' of the Faversham area's brand:

Faversham - Kent's charming creek side medieval market town, set amidst diverse Kentish countryside with strong heritage, quality food and drink and green tourism activities offering relaxation, rejuvenation and enrichment.

This brand positioning will never actually appear in print but should be used to brief all future communication of the area's tourism product. Messages arising from it should be adapted to appeal to the target market's particular needs and motivations, as research shows that these vary between the different target

markets (e.g. between Empty Nesters/Wealthy Retired Couples and the younger DINKS market).

e) Strapline

Faversham - Kent's Market Town of Kings

Faversham has already developed and adopted the strapline 'Faversham – Market Town of Kings'. This strapline works well for the town and projects the market town status of the area, its heritage and to a large degree its food and drink offering. It does not, however, reflect the wider rural area and its countryside offer, nor its position within Kent (a strong brand and geographical identifier). Indeed to many in the short breaks market, Faversham's geographic location is unknown and this serves to limit visitation.

It is recommended, therefore, that the strapline be amended to include the word 'Kent'. This will then serve to place the destination within the strong and motivating 'Garden of England' brand with its overt countryside and rural offering, which should help to portray the destination's own countryside and green tourism offer. The amended strapline not only sums up the area's brand positioning, but is also positive and credible and offers differentiation from the competition. Most importantly, it provides a strong motivating influence to visit the destination.

If changing the strapline is deemed not feasible due to the number of marketing devices carrying the current logo and strapline, an alternative strategy could be to ensure that wherever the logo and strapline appears, that its' location within Kent is very prominent. This could be achieved by the map device employed by the Kent Tourism Alliance and other marketing consortia in Kent (see ATAK's 'best place to visit in Kent' leaflet).



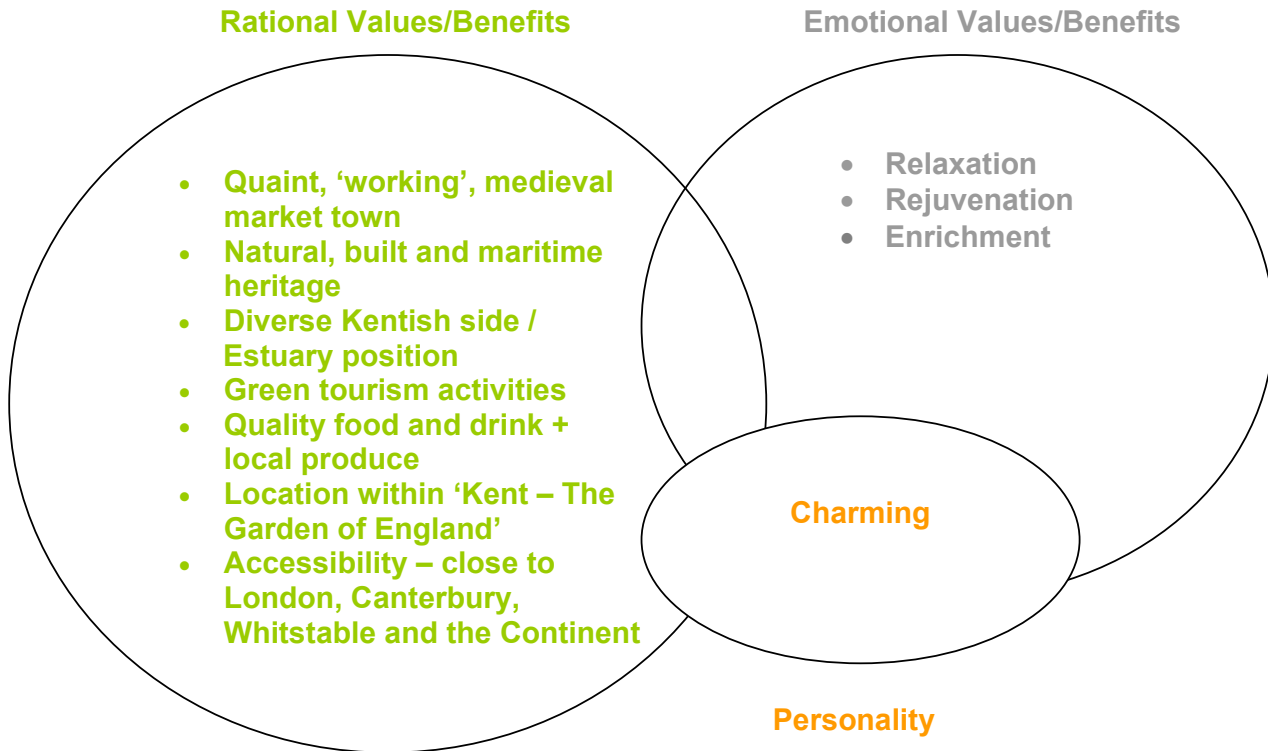
f) Logo

Whilst normally a logo would be designed after a brand strategy and positioning has been developed for a destination, as this serves to visually represent the brand, Faversham has already adopted a logo for the town. This logo has been extremely well received by the tourism industry in the area and is now being used widely in promotional terms. In terms of how well it signifies the new brand positioning for the area is debateable, however, as whilst it depicts the heritage and

market town offer of the destination, it does not depict the countryside nor natural aspect of the brand. In reality, the logo is very well suited to representing Faversham town's product offer, but not the wider Faversham area.

This being said, if the logo's strapline is amended as suggested to include the word 'Kent' this will by association suggest a countryside and natural offer and widen its appeal. This offer can be further cemented by the images and copy used in communications about the destination, as the logo will not often be seen in isolation. Bearing in mind the amount of effort gone into the development of the current logo and the adoption of a communications style that embraces the full brand positioning of the area, it is advised that the current logo, with the amended strapline, be retained for the immediate future.

Fig. 2 Faversham Area Brand Strategy



The Positioning – The Heart of the Brand

Faversham - Kent's charming creek side medieval market town, set amidst diverse Kentish countryside with strong heritage, quality food and drink and green tourism activities offering relaxation, rejuvenation and enrichment.

The Strapline

Faversham – Kent's Market Town of Kings

(surrounding Kentish countryside – SSSIs, bird reserves, ancient woodland, hop fields and orchards, AONB, marshlands.

- **Diverse Kentish countryside**

e.g. Within a short walk in any direction out of Faversham visitors can be on the Kent Downs, amongst hop fields and orchards, marshland habitat and in quaint Kentish villages and hamlets.

- **Creek side / estuary position**

e.g. Sailing and walking experiences (Saxon Shore Way, Conyer Creek, Faversham creek); Maritime heritage (Thames sailing barges, historic craft, the Graveney Boat, etc.).

- **Green tourism activities**

e.g. bird watching, walking, cycling, sailing, golf, etc. in surrounding countryside/estuary. Kent Wildlife Trust's Nature Reserve at Oare Marshes (SSSI and site of international importance for migratory, over wintering and breeding wetland birds), Perry Woods, Blean Woods (SSSI and RSPB Reserve), Kent Downs (AONB), Pilgrim's Way (along ridge of North Kent Downs), Saxon Shore Way from Conyer Creek in the west to Graveney in the east.

- **Quality food and drink + Kentish local produce**

e.g. Shepherd Neame (Britain's oldest independent brewery), quality restaurants (Read's, Ardennes), quality pub food (The Dove at Dargate, The White Lion at Selling, the Sportsman, the George at Newnham, etc.), Kentish ales (including Faversham's own '1698' brew), 'Taste of Kent', locally sourced food in restaurants (Read's, Ardennes, Shepherd Neame pubs), farmers markets, continental street markets, Macknade food shop, Flavours of Faversham Festival, the Hop Festival.

- **Location within 'Kent – the Garden of England'**

e.g. Destination shares Kent's brand values of 'countryside', 'coastal' and 'revitalisation'.

- **Accessible location close to Canterbury and Whitstable and situated between London and the continent**

e.g. Easily accessible from London and near Europe or whilst on a short break in Canterbury or Whitstable.

B. The Emotional Values

The opportunities to experience relaxation (peace, quiet, slower pace of life), rejuvenation (an uplifting of the spirits) and enrichment will be gained through experiencing the rational benefits of the destination, e.g.

- being spoilt whilst staying in the exclusive rooms at Read's;
- relaxing in a rural Kentish pub that you wouldn't find at home;
- rediscovering nature whilst bird watching in the area;
- going on a guided town walk and learning about the relationship between Faversham and ancient Kings;
- blowing the cobwebs away walking along the Saxon Shore Way;
- relaxing whilst having a scrumptious meal and glass of wine overlooking the creek;
- being uplifted by the sheer beauty of a sunset over the marshes;
- joining in with the song and dance at the Faversham Hop Festival;
- being inspired by one of the gardens in Faversham's Secret Gardens tour.

C. The Personality

The combination of the rational and emotional values describes the personality of the area. Its personality is 'charming'.

As different words mean different things to different people, it is important that the words used to describe the brand's personality are clearly understood. The precise meaning of each follows to ensure that the brand's personality is not misinterpreted.

The following words can be used to convey the destination's charming personality:

Enchant

Captivate

Enthral

Bewitch

Seduce

Delight

Fascinate

Lure

Mesmerise

Dazzle

4. The Brand Positioning

Faversham - Kent's charming creek side medieval market town, set amidst diverse Kentish countryside with strong heritage, quality food and drink and green tourism activities offering relaxation, rejuvenation and enrichment.

This will NEVER actually appear in copy but instead informs all promotional activity. For example, when writing introductory copy for the destination the combination of medieval market town, Kentish countryside, heritage, quality food and drink offer, green tourism, Kent, the sustainability of the destination, the responsible management of the area's natural resources, and the destination's creek side / estuary location should always be featured and where possible images conveying all of these aspects should appear together.

This positioning statement should be given to copywriters, advertising agencies, photographers and anyone else who is working to promote the destination. All promotional copy, photographs, visuals, etc. produced for the destination should reflect this brand positioning.

5.3 Marketing Activities

5.3.1 Internal Markets

Tourism Suppliers

An important first step in cementing the new Faversham area tourism brand will be to raise awareness and understanding of it amongst the tourism industry in the area and to secure their commitment to promoting it consistently and accurately. It is proposed that a workshop be held with the industry to present the new tourism and brand strategies.

Local Community

As the local community are a key and integral part of the tourism product itself, it is equally key that the local community 'buy into' the new tourism strategy and that their views and opinions are embraced. It is proposed, therefore, that the key elements of the strategy are put out to wider community consultation through a series of articles in the Faversham Times. The editor, Christine Rayner, who was consulted during the research phase of this study, is keen to support this wider community involvement and should be approached to run a series of articles which serve to inform local people on

the key elements of the strategy and at the same time includes a mechanism to solicit the community's views and comments on the strategy. It is recommended that FEP action this with the Faversham Times and subsequently analyse the feedback from the community with the purpose of incorporating this into the final adopted tourism strategy for the area.

5.3.2 External Markets

Awareness and understanding of the area's tourism offer for short breaks needs to be raised in its target markets. It is recommended that this be delivered through a combination of the marketing activities of a) the individual tourism providers in the area, b) the destination's own marketing activities and c) through partnership marketing with the Kent Tourism Alliance, Canterbury and Whitstable.

Taking each in turn:

a) Individual Tourism Providers

Individual tourism providers in the area should be encouraged to adopt the area's new brand strategy and logo and use in their own marketing materials and communications. In this way, over time, visitors receiving the area's marketing messages will see a destination that has a common offering and message and that taps into their motivations for choosing a short break destination. The whole becomes much more than the individual parts. An explanation of the brand strategy and logo guidelines and artwork should be made available by the Faversham website to businesses in the area to facilitate this, along with 'on brand' images and examples of promotional copy that interpret the brand to the different target markets.

b) Destination's Own Marketing Activities

All destination marketing communications should reflect the new tourism brand strategy e.g. website, accommodation and attractions guide, events leaflet, advertisements, PR. Those involved in producing marketing communications for the destination should understand the brand intimately and serve as the brand's custodians, ensuring that it is accurately and consistently promoted in not only the destination's own marketing, but that of individual tourism businesses that adopt the brand. All marketing collateral produced for the destination needs to tap into people's core motivations for visiting the area, both rational and emotional. The experiential nature of the tourism offer and how a short break in the area will make people feel (relaxed, rejuvenated, enriched) should be a key thrust of tourism marketing messages. It is after all the 'escape' from peoples' daily lives into a

relaxing, peaceful environment that is the main motivator for the majority of short break experiences.

c) Partnership Marketing

Awareness of the area's new brand positioning can be accelerated by forming marketing partnerships with organisations that have significant marketing budgets, target the same markets, and where there is a natural synergy between each partner's tourism product. Hence buying into relevant marketing campaigns and activities of the Kent Tourism Alliance and of Canterbury and Whitstable (Canterbury City Council) should be an important, and integrated part, of the destination's marketing plan. It is strongly recommended that the destination becomes a member of the Kent Tourism Alliance to qualify for receiving preferential marketing coverage from the KTA in its marketing campaigns. Similarly, it is recommended that the destinations builds a working relationship with the Tourism Unit at Canterbury City Council to determine how it can lever off Canterbury and Whitstable's marketing efforts and at the same time add value to Canterbury City Council's own tourism offer (by inclusion of a market town into it's product mix).

5.3.3 Faversham Area Marketing Plan

The destination needs to invest in developing a 5-year marketing plan to deliver the marketing strategy laid out in this document. This will detail how to penetrate each of the target market segments both domestically and in near Europe within the constraints of the area's marketing budget. This plan will also map out which marketing materials will need to be produced to deliver the strategy i.e. a review of existing marketing materials (website, leaflets etc.) and their suitability for purpose, along with detailing future marketing materials required in light of the new strategy.

It is recommended that in the short-term the focus of the marketing plan be on attracting the domestic short breaks market to the destination, followed by the continental market once budgets allow.

Whilst it is not within the scope of this study to draw up a detailed marketing plan, some key aspects of the marketing mix are singled out below with some preliminary thoughts.

5.3.3.1 Communications Style

- The brand positioning statement, the 'heart' of the brand, should form the basis of all communications about the destination. As discussed it should be reflected in all promotional copy, brochures, websites, advertising, press releases and in images used for the destination.

In terms of visuals, images that communicate the different aspects of the brand should be used together in the same communication about the destination. Photos of Kentish countryside and green tourism activities should, therefore, appear alongside images of heritage, the market town offer, food and drink, etc. Images of one single facet of the destination should not appear in isolation, as this would give a distorted portrayal of the brand. Similarly, if promoting one particular 'product' within the destination, for example bird watching, images used should include landscape, bird life, bird watching, walking, rural accommodation, food and drink, etc. - in combination.

5.3.3.2 Destination Literature

- With the advent of FATA, new literature has been produced for 2005 that has really moved the destination forward in terms of its marketing professionalism. This includes a new Faversham area accommodation and attractions leaflet and a new format events leaflet. Both of these developments are welcomed and to be applauded. One identified weakness in the marketing approach has been, however, that the leaflets have been produced ahead of a targeted distribution plan (and overall objectives for the distribution of the leaflets) being set. Function should always follow form, and the production of any such marketing literature should follow on from the development of a marketing plan which clearly sets out how each of the targeted markets can be reached, with what messages, and through which marketing channels. This being the case, the currently produced literature MAY not be the right approach. It would seem reasonable, however, that some form of Short Breaks Guide to the area, which encompasses the area's brand strategy and that includes accommodation, attractions (formal and informal), pubs, restaurants and events will be needed into the future (both offline and online) to inform and attract people to the destination.
- The appeal of future marketing literature needs to be increased in terms of tapping into the target market's needs and motivations, along with promoting the new brand strategy and logo consistently and accurately. All aspects of the brand's values need to be incorporated. Traditionally, Faversham's promotion has focused primarily on its heritage assets, but this now needs to be radically overhauled if people are to begin to view the destination as a short break rather than a day trip destination. Promoting the brand consistently in all future marketing communications will achieve this. Importantly, the copy style and images used need to reflect the brand values and the destination's personality.

To achieve this a professional copywriter should be employed when developing future marketing communications about the destination, and a photoshoot needs to be commissioned, working to a photographic brief, to produce a selection of images that depict the different faces of the brand to be used in future communications. The current images used in the destination's marketing are very tired and do not represent this multi-faceted destination nor its personality. A selection of these photos should be also made available on the website for individual tourism providers to use in their own marketing so they are using 'on brand' images.

Finally, it is imperative that all literature produced by the destination is a quality piece and looks visually like it comes from the same stable of products. This can be achieved by ensuring that the style guidelines for the use of the logo (size, siting of logo on front cover, colour palette used throughout, etc.) on different formats of literature (A4, A5, DL etc.) and in 4 colour, 2 colour or mono colour print runs is adhered to. The different promotional pieces produced for 2005 look very disjointed. The events leaflet in particular is very out of kilt and whilst the logo appears on its front cover the overall style and feel is very old-fashioned, the photographs blurred and uninspiring, and the overall effect gives the destination an unexciting image.

It is recommended that one organisation should have overall responsibility for the production of future destination marketing materials to ensure a consistent approach, style and on target branding.

- The specialist leaflets produced by the town (heritage ones – plaques, gunpowder etc.) serve a very specialist market and it is debateable whether these should be produced in the future by the destination's marketing team when working within a constrained budget. These types of leaflets, if produced in the future by specialist organisations (e.g. Faversham Society) to satisfy specific information objectives, are more suited to being made available to visitors once they are actually in the destination i.e. they are information giving and useful to people when they are in the area – they do not, nor it is recommended that they be used, to attract people into the area in the first place as they are of too narrow an appeal to deliver this for the general short breaks market.
- A DL leaflet for distribution through Take One Media (or similar) at attractions, visitor facilities and Tourist Information Centres in Kent could be considered as

a way of increasing day trip business from the local Kent market and visitors staying in other parts of Kent.

5.3.3.3 Online Marketing

- Online marketing is the fastest growing sector of the promotional market and all of Faversham's target markets (Empty Nesters, Wealthy Retired Couples and DINKS) are avid Internet users. A significant proportion of short breaks are now either booked on line or the information gathered in the short break selection process is made online. Travel and tourism is the 3rd highest revenue earner online after pornography and gambling. It is recommended that Faversham's future marketing plan embraces the online arena as a key promotional medium. Not only is it targeted, flexible and cost effective, but it has the added advantage of being measurable in terms of its effectiveness in generating short break visits coupled with an agility and pro-activeness that can not be achieved through more traditional forms of marketing.
- Online marketing success relies to a great extent on the destination having an effective and motivating website. Faversham is ahead of the game in this respect in relation to many destinations of its size. Faversham invested in developing a website circa. 10 years ago and this have been updated and developed further over time and carries a wealth of information about the destination that is second to none. This is very positive for the destination. To take the destination's marketing to another level, and to compete with the best of the tourism industry, the website now needs to enter a new phase of its development. To take advantage of the trend towards greater internet short break selection and bookings it needs to become more interactive and 'sales and marketing' orientated rather than, as is now, primarily information giving. This reflects the trend in website development over the last decade –companies and organisations now use websites as a sales and marketing medium rather than, as traditionally, solely information giving. Initial recommendations, to be worked up further during the marketing planning process, include:
 - Dedicated tourism site, rather than shared as at present along with other civic functions (business, community, etc.). This can be achieved by creating a tourism portal for the site, with its own attractor splash pages (depicting visually the brand – several different splash pages could be developed that appear randomly i.e. each time a consumer logs onto the site it would appear that the site is fresh and current as there exists the possibility that they will see a different attractor page each time they

log on) and home page so it is consumer facing and focused n.b. a portal such as this does exist (www.visitfaversham.com), but the home page is currently not user friendly (too big a menu down LHS), no attractor splash pages exist and the URL is not promoted. The www.faversham.org URL currently performs fairly well in the search engines and is well promoted (.org URLs receive higher rankings from the search engines than .com URLs) and it is recommended, therefore, that rather than adopting www.visitfaversham.com for the new visitor portal, that www.faversham.org be retained, but functionality is incorporated into the new splash pages that allows users of the site to enter as either 'Visitors', 'Residents' or 'Businesses'. In this way visitors can be taken straight through to the visitor portal of the site, without seeing the civic sections.

- Improved search function on site. Currently this is very lacking and it is difficult as a consequence to access selected information quickly. It is important to abide by the '3 click' golden rule of Internet surfing i.e. maximum of 3 clicks of the mouse for a consumer to access the information they seek. Reliable, searchable databases of accommodation, attractions, pubs, restaurants and events (all searchable by type) are required.
 - Online booking of accommodation. This is a key aspect of any modern destination site. This can be achieved cost effectively by negotiating usage of Canterbury City Council's online booking scheme and extending it onto the Faversham website.
 - Simplification of 'Brochure Request' section to include dedicated page for postal requests (offering key print that will attract people to the area only). Separate page for downloadable 'information giving leaflets'. A prominent link to the brochure request page to have high profile from ALL pages of website.
- The primary aim of Faversham's online marketing needs to be to increase traffic to its visitor site. Visitation levels to the site should continue to be monitored on a regular basis to assess the impact of any marketing activity undertaken (n.b. number of unique visits is the accepted measure of effectiveness of a site's success, as opposed to number of hits, as the same visitor may 'hit' several pages during their visit to the site). Once on the site, the aim should be to encourage people to visit the area – key measures of success to be monitored

on a monthly basis should be number of brochures requested and number of on-line accommodation bookings. An online marketing plan needs to be developed for the site that will increase traffic to the site. This will include a search engine strategy i.e. investment in getting the website up the search engine rankings for key search words that potential short break takers search on when planning a short break (e.g. UK short breaks, Kent short breaks, heritage breaks, etc.). These key search words need to be researched and confirmed. The aim should be to get the website listed in the top 20 (i.e. amongst the first 2 search page results) for each key search word for the key search engines. This can be achieved in many ways, the two most cost effective being a) to pay a specialist company to 'work' the major search engines against Faversham's researched key search words on a monthly basis – this may necessitate some amendments being made 'behind the scenes' to the site to optimise its performance with the search engines – and b) continue to pursue a pro-active reciprocal links policy i.e. the more websites that link to the Faversham visitor website the better it will perform with the key search engines.

5.3.3.4 Advertising

- Once Faversham's marketing budget is confirmed for 2006 and onwards, the marketing plan should consider options for additional advertising both online and offline with the aim of promoting visits to the website and/or requests for brochures as deemed appropriate. Options here include advertising in KTA's Annual Kent Visitor Guide and within selected KTA campaigns (online and offline), the Canterbury and Coastal Kent Visitor Guide and on selected websites surfed by the area's target markets.

5.3.3.5 PR

- The profile of the area and its short break offer needs to be raised via a concerted PR campaign. This can be very cost effective and targeted. Opportunities already exist to piggyback on activities surrounding the launch of Shepherd Neame's new '1698' bottled beer and the associated '1698 short breaks' promotion. Additionally, once a member of the KTA, Faversham should work closely with KTA's PR agency (BGB – the UK's largest independent specialist travel and tourism PR agency) to feed through stories of interest for KTA's own press activity and in securing visits to the Faversham area via KTA's familiarisation visits programme e.g. food and drink writers, green tourism journalists, etc.

5.3.3.6 Events

- Planned marketing activity during major events to raise awareness of wider destination offering and to encourage event goers to return to destination for a short break. Could include features on destination short break offering in events programme, suggested short break itineraries and special offers (reduction on attraction entry prices, special accommodation rates, etc.).

5.3.3.7 Collaborative Marketing

- It is recommended that the Faversham area buys membership of the KTA and develops a working relationship with Canterbury City Council's tourism unit.
- It is recommended that relationships are developed and products packaged for specialist walking tour operators e.g. Walk Awhile etc.

5.3.3.8 Groups Market

- If it is decided to target the groups market, business relationships will need to be built with key coach operators e.g. Sheerings, Wallace Arnold, Great Days, JAC Travel and wholesalers. The best way to target these is via trade shows, PR via trade titles and inviting them on familiarisation tours.
- Joint marketing with Canterbury of a ½ day Canterbury / ½ day Kentish Market Town Experience.
- Continue attendance at group travel exhibitions and fairs e.g. TSE Days Out Fairs (aimed at group organisers), Essex Tourism Association's 'Essex Tourism and Leisure Day Fair' (aimed at group organisers). To be effective in targeting this market it is recommended that one piece of print is produced to service this market, rather than as at present distributing a pack containing the individual attractions' leaflets plus the 'A Great Day Out' leaflet. Research has shown that group organisers prefer to refer to one piece of print that contains all the information they seek on the destination.
- Direct marketing (postal mailshot or e-mailshot) to group organisers in London market (purchase list from TSE).

5.4 Market Research

Little research has been conducted to date by the destination to evaluate the current economic impact of tourism to the area (volume and value) and to understand its current consumer markets. This information is vital not only for establishing a benchmark against which future tourism development and marketing actions can be assessed for their effectiveness in delivering economic benefits to the area through

tourism, but in understanding visitors' profiles, motivations for visiting the area, satisfaction with their visit and future development needs. The tourism industry is a dynamic industry and one where the needs and aspirations of consumers change over time. Hence the regular collecting information on its consumer markets and their satisfaction with their visit etc. is key to the future successful marketing and development of the area for tourism. A programme of on-going market research is hence strongly advised, to include:

- A Visitor Survey – 200 visitors to be randomly sampled during the peak season (face to face questionnaire). Research objectives to include visitor profiles, motivations for visit, satisfaction with visit, activities engaged in, spend, ranking of various aspects of destination (e.g. cleanliness, range and quality of shops, range and value of attractions, range and value of pubs and restaurants, etc.). Visitor Survey should be repeated on a 3 yearly cycle.
- Accommodation Survey – to assess occupancy levels, split of domestic/overseas business etc. This can be achieved through encouraging all accommodation providers in the area to participate in Tourism South East's monthly accommodation survey exercise.
- Economic Impact Assessment - to evaluate the volume and value of tourism to the Faversham area. Commission Tourism South East to conduct a Cambridge Economic Model for the area. This will necessitate drawing on the recent Cambridge Model conducted for Swale Borough Council (based on 2003 tourism data), TSE's accommodation survey and Faversham's own visitor survey. Assessment should ideally be repeated on a 3 yearly cycle.
- Faversham Area Business Barometer – to assess the health of Faversham's tourism industry on a monthly basis during the peak tourism months (April-September). Barometer to provide a regular 'finger on the pulse' assessment of the health of the tourism industry in the area. A selection of tourism businesses to be surveyed (by phone, email or fax) on a monthly basis.
- If the coach market is elected to be targeted, desk research will need to be conducted to understand the needs and motivations of this market further so that motivating day trip packages can be developed and effectively marketed.

6. DEVELOPMENT

Drawing on the research undertaken during the consultation process with key stakeholders, a programme of tourism development has been formulated to establish the Faversham area as a short break destination, and hence increase the value of tourism to the area.

6.1 Development Strategy

The development strategy recommended in this report is one of a consistent and focused effort to centre future tourism development in the area on meeting the needs of the Empty Nester, Wealthy Retired Couple and DINKS short break markets and in sustaining and further enhancing the area's brand values.

Product development centres, therefore, on enhancing and expanding the green tourism product offering in the area, the food and drink offer, the heritage offering and in realising the destination's creek side and market town tourism potential.

Table 5. Potential Futures for the Faversham Area

<i>May 13th 2015</i>	<i>May 13th 2015</i>
<p><i>Dear Anna,</i></p> <p><i>Visiting Faversham for the day with Ben. Nice quaint market town with some beautiful buildings and an interesting Museum. Wanted to take a tour round the Shepherd Neame Brewery, but they only take pre-booked tours, which was a real disappointment. Spent an hour walking round the shops, which was really nice. The market around the beautiful Guildhall was dire though - full of tat! Not much else to do here now so going to make tracks pretty soon to Whitstable, which by all accounts is a vibrant, happening seaside type of place with nice seafood restaurants and an artisan community. Will eat there also as the cafes seem to close early here.</i></p> <p><i>See you soon</i></p> <p><i>J</i></p> <p><i>xx</i></p>	<p><i>Dear Anna,</i></p> <p><i>Arrived in Faversham a couple of days ago with Ben for our much earned short break away from the hustle and bustle of London. It's a lovely place...a much slower pace of life and so relaxing. We're staying in a farm house about 5 minutes out of Faversham - the views from our window over the Oare Marshes is wonderful – lots of wildfowl and wader birds so Ben is very happy making use of his new binoculars! Yesterday we went for a walk along the estuary to a lovely country pub for lunch and today we wandered around the historic market town of Faversham itself. What a magical place! There was a lovely farmer's market around the beautiful Guildhall and such a variety of places to eat and drink the locally brewed 1698 beer.....and many of the restaurants source their ingredients locally too. Went for a guided town walk with King Stephen which was fascinating. Tomorrow there is a flea market in the centre so we'll visit that before heading off back to the smoke!</i></p> <p><i>We must come back as a foursome soon.</i></p> <p><i>J</i></p> <p><i>xx</i></p>

As a visual representation of this, the scenarios above (Table 5), in the form of a post card home to friends from a visitor to the area in 2015, illustrate two potential futures for the area. The first (on the left hand side) depicts the destination through the eyes of a visitor if little or no commitment on the part of key stakeholders was made to develop tourism as an important part of the area's economy. The second (on the right hand side) represents the scenario where there has been a concerted and pro-active effort by key stakeholders and tourism businesses in the area to work together towards the common goal of lifting the destination into a competitive position in the short breaks market.

6.2 Development Action Plan

6.2.1 Product

It is recommended that existing product be improved to enhance the visitor experience and to begin to convert day visits into short breaks. Proposals for new product development are also highlighted.

6.2.1.1 Market Town & Retail Product:

- Guided walks programme expanded to include tours lead by 'Kings' – local actors (sourced from Arden Theatre?) to be trained to lead tours.
- Review operational aspects of food and drink service delivery e.g. to stay open later than 4pm and to open on Sundays. Need to work with these businesses to give them the faith to stay open longer.
- Develop café culture further – more tables in the open (open up area adjacent to Market Place in Court Street – remove bollards and 2 way system to achieve this plus pedestrianisation of town centre), lobby for relaxation in planning in terms of granting permission for some empty shops to be used as cafes, bistros, wine bars, etc.
- Expand town centre specialist retail offer aimed simultaneously at local people and visitors e.g. delicatessen, fishmongers, traditional sweet shop, outdoors gear shop (the retail area will be covered in detail in the retail study commissioned by FEP). Opportunity to stimulate the development of a 'specialist shopping arcade' to the side of the old Whitbread Brew Master's House on the corner of Court Street and Crescent Road exists, particularly if the house is used as a town centre hotel development.

- Maritime themed retail offer based on local crafts studios/workshops to be developed at Standard Quay, where visitors have the opportunity to see local craftspeople at work prior to making purchases.
- Dramatically improve town market offer. Faversham needs to 'regain' its market town status in this respect, as this has been considerably eroded over time. It is recommended that the management of the market operating license be taken on by Faversham Town Council (currently with Swale BC). Local ownership, and local policing of the market, should lead to an improvement in quality and scale. Demand for conventional market produce (clothes, DIY equipment, etc.) is, however, in decline. The real growth area is in local produce. When current market contract expires, the opportunity exists, therefore, to move the market in a new direction. Work on this needs to commence now in terms of formulating a new market strategy and action plan - to include regular (weekly or twice weekly) farmer's markets, continental markets (once a month), and a weekly, quality flea market. A complex of semi-permanent, consistently branded, market stalls could be erected in the market place as part of this strategy. Develop a more convenient and 'welcoming' parking regime in the town i.e. introduction of on-street parking (1 hour stay) in certain areas; Free parking in car parks on Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Enhance attractiveness of town (streetscape) and 'sense of arrival' at railway station, town centre car park, and along Preston Street on approach to town centre. Remove unnecessary accumulated street furniture and signage and simplify. Open up space from market place along Court Street (remove brick planters, bollards, road dividers, etc.) to recreate a focal space where people can sit, meet and watch the world go by. This area will be covered in detail in the streetscape consultancy report commissioned by FEP.
- Produce flexible, portable interpretation panels promoting the tourism product in the Faversham area and display in empty shop windows. This will not only serve as a promotional tool for the town, creating linkages between the town and the surrounding rural area, but will serve to detract from the desolateness of empty shop fronts.
- Formulate and adopt an action plan for reclaiming the streets at night from the youth. CCTV to be improved along Preston Street. Stimulate the night economy through increased tourism in the town (town centre hotel important in this respect). Work with community police, Abbey School, Queen Elizabeth's School

to encourage 'positive youth' into the town centre by holding music concerts (local bands, etc.) in the market place during the summer.

- Development of Abbey Farm heritage barns as an attraction. Potential alternative site for local crafts studio/workshop retail outlets. Would need to overcome access issues.

6.2.1.2 Accommodation:

- Encourage steady growth in bed stock in the area.
- Stimulate the rapid quality upgrading to minimum of 4 diamond status of Bed and Breakfast establishments in the area and the quality grading of self-catering accommodation.
- Encourage the development of a town centre hotel. Prime site for this is the Georgian building (old Whitbread Brew Master's House?) located on the corner of Crescent Road and Court Street, currently in the ownership of Tesco's. This development is key to Faversham realising its tourism potential.

6.2.1.3 Green tourism development:

- Develop circular, signed walking trails that lead from the town out into the rural area (using existing unmarked trails and developing new ones). In this way the town product becomes linked to the countryside product. It is proposed that these routes be named after birds that are found in the area (e.g. Lapwing Trail) and signed accordingly with way marks depicting symbols of birds along the routes. These trails would need to be documented in attractive literature with sights of special interest, facts about the natural heritage and any visitor facilities located close to the routes (attractions, pubs, etc.) highlighted accordingly. The physical medium used to communicate these routes needs to be designed flexibly so that new routes can be simply added as they come on stream.
- Package all the area's green tourism activities (walking, cycling, birding, horse-riding, sailing, etc.) together so that the visitor appreciates the extent of this offering in the area.
- Promote availability of cycle hire facilities in town (cycle shop).
- Stimulate accommodation providers who operate in rural areas to participate in the regional tourist board's (Tourism South East) 'Walkers and Cyclists Welcome' scheme so that such establishments understand and meet the needs of walkers and cyclists staying in the area (e.g. boot and clothes drying

facilities, boot scrapes, secure cycle storage, knowledgeable about and carry literature on nature tourist products in the area e.g. walking routes, cycling routes, tide tables, nature reserves, etc.). TSE run a one day course that offers an insight into how accommodation providers can meet the needs of walkers and cyclists and, importantly, how to tailor their operation to profit from this rapidly growing sector. Cost is circa. £80 per delegate. Accreditation (and hence authority to use the 'Walkers and Cyclists Welcome' emblem) is free once accommodation providers show they meet the requirements of the scheme.

- Stimulate accommodation providers to participate in the Green Tourism Business Scheme, which is currently being piloted in Kent. This scheme provides advice to businesses on how to minimise their impact on the environment and how to maximise local linkages (use of local suppliers, etc.) along with assessing businesses against specific environmental criteria resulting in accreditation to the scheme (Gold, Silver and Bronze awards) which can be used in a business's marketing.
- Develop interpretation panels that promote the linkages between the town and the rural product (map based?). Position at railway station, central car park, Market Square and at selected future rural 'honeypot' sites e.g. car park at Oare Marshes Reserve, Perry Woods, Blean Woods, etc.
- Develop public transport links between town, rural area and visitor attractions.
- Scope Abbey Park as a potential green tourism development site e.g. feasibility of recreating a wetland habitat for birds and people with walking trails, bird-watching opportunities and interpretation.
- Scope the old brickworks site adjacent to Conyer on the Saxon Shore Way as a potential green tourism development site (marshland area to the east of Conyer Creek) e.g. nature reserve.

6.2.1.4 Food and Drink:

- Develop and build on the 'Favours of Faversham' festival programme.
- Encourage the development of more quality eating and drinking establishments in the town by relaxing planning to allow some empty shops to be used for this purpose e.g. wine bars, bistros, cafes.
- Stimulate the development of a quality sea food restaurant in the town (new creek side restaurant?).

- Encourage eateries to source ingredients locally and actively promote this to visitors once a critical mass is reached. Work within the 'Flavours of Faversham' infrastructure and with KCC's 'Produced in Kent' unit to achieve this.
- Develop food trails in the area and promote these, including within KCC's Leader+ funded food trails programme.
- Develop beer trails out of Faversham to 'off the beaten track' quality pubs in the surrounding countryside.
- Encourage Brogdale to open a town centre retail shop to promote its presence in the area (as Macknade Farm Shop has done). To also retail other local produce.
- Encourage Shepherd Neame to incorporate local produce in its proposed High Street Retail outlet, to build further on the town's local food and drink theme by giving it a 'shop front'.
- Instigate regular, weekly/twice weekly Farmer's Markets in the town.
- Support Brogdale's ambition for a new visitor attraction in the Faversham area celebrating the apple in a dynamic and interactive way. Proposed development to include a restaurant, juice bar, cider bar and retail outlet for local produce. Encourage Brogdale to adopt a 'Goods Shed' type vision to their restaurant and local produce retail outlet concept.
- Support and stimulate Shepherd Neame's new visitor centre proposals (state of the art bar, interpretation, retail outlet, expanded brewery tours programme).
- Develop gourmet dining short breaks product on back of Shepherd Neame's 1698 short breaks promotion as a tactical tool for attracting visitors into the area e.g. Read's Restaurant with Rooms, Ardennes/Uplees Lodge plus farmer's markets, Flavours of Faversham Festival, etc.

6.2.1.5 Events:

- Seek to enhance quality of existing events programme. Smaller events to put in place a committee structure and solicit professional marketing help and input to improve quality.
- Seek to steadily increase events programme as a way of stimulating visits to the area in the low season and of securing first time visits. Events programme to be expanded via Folk Festival, Film Festival, Kent Countryside Productions'

open-air Shakespeare, Arts Festival, Walking Festival, etc. Faversham to become known as a quality events destination.

- Develop strategy to capitalise on events visitation to promote future visits to Faversham and the surrounding area.

6.2.1.6 Creek side:

The current SBC co-ordinated engineering study into the feasibility/cost of opening up the creek basin and in making the creek navigable open up a range of opportunities for exploiting the creek's potential for tourism. In light of this, but not entirely dependant on the results of this study, it is recommended that:

- Faversham's creek side position to be explored and developed for tourism, retail, leisure and employment. This recommendation is key to unlocking Faversham's tourism potential and is central to the success of the area as a short break destination.
- Standard Quay to be developed for tourism, whilst maintaining its 'working' barge remit, as this is a key element of its attraction. Renovate ancient warehouses for use as a Maritime Heritage Centre which interprets the maritime heritage of the creek along with an exhibition of historic craft (potentially housing the Graveney Boat), berthed sailing barges (relocation site for Sittingbourne Barge Museum?), barge repair workshops with opportunity to see repairs to barges taking place, sailing barge trips to Whitstable/Herne Bay/Swale Estuary, waterside-café with outdoor seating area, local crafts studio/workshop retail outlets with a maritime theme. An holistic, integrated development celebrating the creek's maritime past and future and reviving old skills. Small-scale quality housing development at the site (loft apartments above studios/workshops) would add to the 'enlivening' of this area as a bustling place to live, work and play – a 'real place'.
- River Oaks Homes Belvedere Creek housing development - secure a quality seafood restaurateur at Provender Mill.
- Open up more creek side walks from the town onto the marshes.
- Creek basin – develop as a home for floating historic craft, but main focus of tourism development to be on Standard Quay.

6.2.1.7 Groups Market:

- Research and develop further group day out packages including continuing to link Faversham attractions but also developing linkages with Canterbury to

jointly formulate and promote day trip group packages including ½ day Canterbury / ½ day Kentish Market Town Experience.

- Once food and drink offering in the town has expanded, town could begin to market itself as a 'Mealstop'/Kentish market town experience to the coach market travelling to/from the Continent. This will necessitate the expansion of coach parking bays and the development of a coach drivers' incentive scheme e.g. meal vouchers, rest facility, etc.
- Consult with the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT). Only coach operators can be a member of this organisation but they offer local authorities advice on parking issues, etc.

6.2.1.8 Other:

- Lobby for promotion of the destination via tourist signage off the M2.
- Develop product linkages and joint working with Canterbury City Council so as to draw on the area's flagship attractions (Canterbury, Canterbury Cathedral and Whitstable) and to strengthen Canterbury's own short break product offering by the inclusion of an historic market town.

6.2.2 Tourism Delivery Vehicle

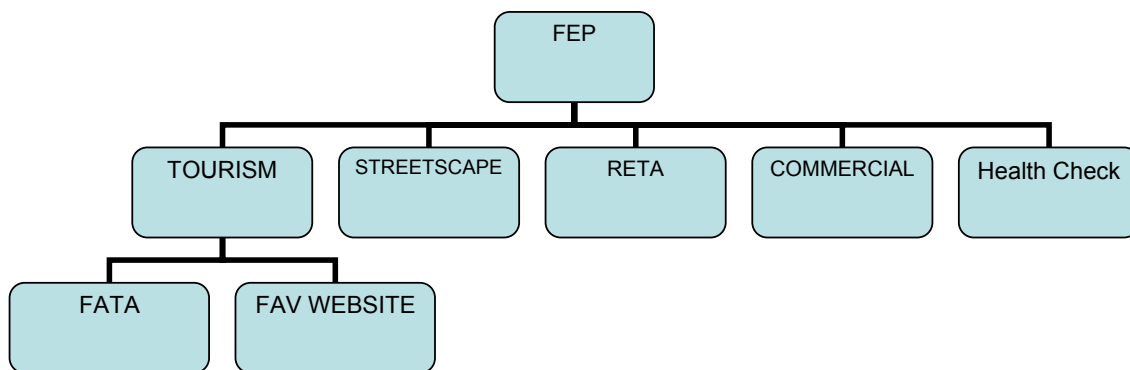
With the advent of the recently formed organisations FEP and FATA, and the plethora of organisations currently involved in the delivery of tourism services in the destination, an urgent review is needed of the respective roles and responsibilities of each. The aim of this review should be to determine the most appropriate delivery vehicle for the future delivery of focused, efficient and professional tourism development, marketing and visitor information services for the destination. Issues to be addressed in this review include:

- What would be the most efficient and focused way of delivering tourism development and marketing services for the destination?
- What additional/ new tourism professional resources will need to be employed/ commissioned to deliver the tourism strategy for the area?
- How can the control and direction of the Faversham website be integrated into the overall marketing mix?
- How can the professionalism and service delivery of the TIC be improved?

It is proposed that an in-depth review of all these delivery areas be urgently undertaken and a new tourism delivery mechanism agreed by the various organisations that will

allow Faversham to enter the next phase of its tourism development. Outline recommendations offered for consideration by the consultant in this area include:

- Town Marketing Group's remit - to be the body responsible for the allocation and monitoring of council funds for marketing of the town. Not to be involved in actual tourism delivery.
- As the body with an overarching economic development remit, FEP could adopt a co-ordinating role between the various development streams i.e. tourism, streetscape, retail, commercial etc., with other bodies collaborating with FEP to deliver each of the area's recommended outputs according to their expertise and skills base. This is illustrated visually in the structure diagram below.



- In terms of tourism delivery, it is recommended that FEP adopts overall responsibility for managing tourism research and intelligence activities for the destination, along with the development and delivery of the tourism marketing and development strategies. To lead on the development of a tourism marketing plan for the area and its implementation and delivery. To be custodian and guardian of the Faversham area tourism brand i.e. a strategic and planning role, along with a tourism marketing delivery role. FEP will need additional resource to take on the lead tourism delivery vehicle role in this way, and it is hence recommended that it employ/contract the services of a part-time tourism professional (1.5 – 2 days a week) to project manage the on-going development and delivery of the tourism strategy for the area. This person would need to be multi-skilled so as to co-ordinate the various tourism activities (marketing/ PR/ publications production/ tourism development) required to deliver tourism growth in the area. Similarly, it is advised that ½ day a week of the FEP Manager's time be allocated to delivering the strategies with an overall economic development input.

- FATA to serve as the voice of tourism suppliers in the area and to input into the implementation and delivery of the area's marketing plan.

With reference to the TIC, it is advised that into the 'melting pot' are included issues of staff training in relation to customer service delivery and selling techniques of the volunteer staff who currently work in the centre (Tourism South East run courses in this area), the potential of employing a part-time professional TIC Manager (2 days a week) to professionalise and modernise the service delivery, and the commercialisation of the TIC so that it becomes more financially sustainable. Aspects of commercialisation suggested are a professionally operated retail outlet (e.g. local crafts, local produce, green tourism related items i.e. walking equipment/maps, bird-watching equipment/guides/books, etc.) and the modernisation of TIC services to include 'Book a Bed Ahead' and an Internet accommodation booking service. These latter two services can be developed cost effectively through buying into Canterbury City Council's systems and product in this area. The ability of current TIC staff to adapt to new systems in this area will need to be considered, and a training plan implemented or more experienced staff secured as appropriate.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has clearly shown that the potential exists to develop tourism sustainably in the Faversham area for the long-term economic benefit of the area. The natural ingredients are there in abundance to attract and satisfy the most discerning short break taker – a quaint, medieval, working market town; diverse Kentish countryside; a creek side / estuary position; natural, built and maritime heritage; green tourism activities; a quality food and drink and local produce offer; location within Kent – the Garden of England; easy access for markets (between London and the Continent). These assets, combined with the destination's enviable location close to the county's honeypot destinations of Canterbury, Whitstable, Leeds and Dover Castles etc., make it a strong short breaks contender. The destination now needs to draw on its new brand strategy to market the destination in a more focused way, along with embarking on an on-going development programme, to maintain and build on its competitive position.

Of all the recommendations made in the report the key drivers for future short breaks development in the Faversham area are:

- Creek side/ maritime tourism development
- Town centre dedicated hotel development
- Creating linkages between town and rural offer – promotion and development of green tourism product
- Targeted and focused marketing strategy raising awareness of the Faversham area brand

Funding should initially be sought to deliver key elements of the tourism strategy over the next 6 years. Priority projects to be undertaken in this timeframe, along with funding opportunities, follow in Sections 8 and 9.

8. PRIORITY PROJECTS FOR NEXT 6 YEARS AND ESTIMATED COSTINGS

The development and marketing strategies outlined in this report should be implemented over time as resources (people and financial) allow. Detailed in Table 6 are those outputs that will result in short-term wins for the area over the next 6 years. If implemented these will cement the foundation for future sustainable tourism growth. It is advised that funding be sought initially to deliver these short-term wins. If funding is secured, this will signal a step change in both the importance placed on harnessing the power of tourism to deliver sustainable development in the area and in the scale and scope of tourism projects delivered for the local community over the next 6 years.

Table 6. Priority Projects with Estimated Costings (2005 – 2010)

PROGRAMME	TIMING	ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS (£)
A. RESEARCH		
MARKET RESEARCH PROGRAMME		
1. Faversham Area Business Barometer	Annually from 2006	£1k initial set-up
2. Visitor Survey	Summer 2006, Summer 2009 (every 3 years)	£4k per survey
3. Cambridge Economic Model	Autumn 2006, Autumn 2009 (every 3 years)	£1.5k per model
4. Coach Market Desk Research	Dec 2006	£1k
TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS		£13,000
B. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT		
GREEN TOURISM PROGRAMME		
Walks product:		
1a. Public Rights of Way Audit to formulate routes of circular trails	2005	£10k
1ba. Research and develop 4 circular, signed walking trails of variable distances linking the rural area and the town (named after birds found in the area) and signed accordingly with way marks depicting symbols of birds along the routes.	2006-2009 (one a year)	£10k p.a.

<p>1c. Document trails in attractive literature with sights of special interest, facts about the natural heritage and any visitor facilities located close to the routes (attractions, pubs, etc.) highlighted accordingly.</p> <p>Expansion of Green Tourism Sites: 1. Scoping study – to evaluate the potential of the South Swale rural and coastal environments for conservation gain (i.e. habitat recreation) and regeneration through green tourism development and marketing e.g. development of bird-watching opportunities, cycling routes, horse-riding product, etc.... a 'South Swale Natural Park'.</p> <p>TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS</p>	<p>2006-2009 (one a year)</p> <p>2006</p>	<p>£4k p.a.</p> <p>£20k</p> <p>£86,000</p>
<p>FOOD AND DRINK PROGRAMME</p> <p>1a. Develop and build on the 'Flavours of Faversham' programme. Pump-priming, promotional support and professional marketing input to expand and develop.</p> <p>2a. Research and develop food and drink trails in the area.</p> <p>2b. Produce appropriate marketing materials to promote these, including within KCC's Leader+ funded food trails programme.</p> <p>3. Develop gourmet dining short breaks product on back of Shepherd Neame's 1698 short breaks promotion as a tactical tool for attracting visitors into the area and market via website e.g. Read's Restaurant with Rooms, Ardennes/Uplees Lodge plus farmer's markets, Flavours of Faversham Festival, etc.</p> <p>TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS</p>	<p>2006, 2007, 2008</p> <p>2006</p> <p>2007</p> <p>Autumn 2005 and on-going to 2010</p>	<p>£3 p.a.</p> <p>£10k</p> <p>£10k</p> <p>£1k p.a.</p> <p>£35,000</p>

CREEK SIDE/ MARITIME PROGRAMME		
1. Scoping study to identify most appropriate creek side/ maritime tourism development i.e. including Standard Quay.	2006/2007	£20k
TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS		£20,000
ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME		
1. Scoping study for dedicated town centre hotel development	2006	£5k
2a. Stimulation of accommodation quality upgrading via SBC	2006 - 2010	£2k p.a.
2b. Stimulation of involvement in Green Tourism/ Walker & Cyclist Friendly Schemes accreditation schemes + training	2006 - 2010	£2k p.a.
TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS		£25,000
C. TOURISM MARKETING		
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS		
1. Bi-annual workshops with the tourism industry in the area.	2005 – 2010 (biannually)	£1k p.a.
2. Programme of PR activity with Faversham Times re soliciting local community's feedback/input on tourism/brand strategies (5 articles to copywrite).	2005	Nil
3. On-going press and PR programme.	2005-2010	Nil
TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS		£6,000
PARTNERSHIP MARKETING		
1. Faversham area to become a member of the Kent Tourism Alliance to qualify to receive preferential marketing coverage from the KTA in its marketing campaigns.	2006 - 2010	£3k p.a.
2. Buy into Canterbury City Council's online accommodation booking scheme and apply to Faversham website/ TIC (set-up costs).	2006	£5k (initial set-up)
TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS		£20,000
DESTINATION MARKETING		
Marketing Plan Development:		
1. Commission a detailed 3-year marketing plan to be developed to achieve strategy.	2006	£2k

<p>On Brand Images: 1. Commission an on brand photoshoot for the Faversham area to be used in future marketing communications about the destination.</p> <p>Brand Awareness Raising: 1. Raising awareness of the new Faversham brand in the UK short breaks market.</p> <p>Website: 1. Develop website to include dedicated tourism portal, new splash pages, and improved search facility. 2. Develop on-line accommodation booking facility (resource needed to manage online booking system – TIC?). 3. Contract with web company for updates/maintenance of website. 4. Invest in search engine strategy. 5. Invest in reciprocal links strategy.</p> <p>Events: 1. Upskilling of event organisers to improve quality of festival programme and promotional support for programme.</p> <p>TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS</p>	<p>Summer 2006</p> <p>2006 - 2010</p> <p>2006</p> <p>2006</p> <p>2006 - 2010</p> <p>2005 - 2010</p> <p>2005 - 2010</p> <p>2006 - 2010</p>	<p>£6k</p> <p>£20k p.a.</p> <p>£5k</p> <p>£5k</p> <p>£5k p.a.</p> <p>£500 p.a.</p> <p>Nil</p> <p>£3k p.a.</p> <p>£161,000</p>
D. TIC		
<p>1. Investment in training of TIC staff (customer service, selling techniques, IT).</p> <p>2. Employment of part-time professional TIC Manager (2 days a week).</p> <p>3. Investment in PC for Book a Bed Ahead scheme.</p> <p>TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS</p>	<p>2006</p> <p>2006 - 2010</p> <p>2006</p>	<p>£1k</p> <p>£7k p.a.</p> <p>£1k</p> <p>£37,000</p>

E. MANAGEMENT/DELIVERY		
TOURISM DELIVERY VEHICLE		
1. Review tourism delivery vehicle.	Summer 2005	£1k (external support contracted in for review)
2. Review operation and management of TIC.	2005	£1k (external support contracted in for review)
3. Contract/ employ part-time tourism marketing professional to work for elected tourism delivery vehicle to deliver tourism marketing and development strategies and implement marketing plan (1.5 – 2 days a week) ⁸ .	Summer 2005 onwards to 2010	£12k p.a.
4. Management overhead cost of time allocated to managing marketing professional and overall economic development input by elected tourism delivery vehicle.	Summer 2005 onwards to 2010	£5k p.a.
TOTAL PROGRAMME COSTS		£95,500
TOTAL OVER NEXT 6 YEARS (2005-2010)		£498,500 i.e. circa. £83k p.a.

⁸ Tourism professional to drive delivery of tourism marketing and development strategies. To implement the marketing plan and to provide the day-to-day marketing, PR, creative, copywriting and research resources needed to deliver the projects outlined in Table 6.

9. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

There is a range of potential external funding sources that the destination can tap into to deliver its tourism strategy. These are identified below. The status of the applicant in each case, however, will have bearing on the grants that can be submitted for (e.g. some funders will only support registered charities).

Sustainable Communities Fund (ODPM)

Swale Forward, a recently formed local regeneration Partnership has developed a Swale Priority Investment Programme (SPIP) which has secured £23.3 million of Government funding through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPMs) Sustainable Communities Fund up until March 2006. Submissions for future funding beyond this will take the form of a strategy document outlining development opportunities in the Swale area. This is in draft form at present and hence Faversham should ensure that it is invited to comment on this draft and work to include its own development options within this document. Whilst Faversham town does not fall within the Thames Gateway, developments that have a positive impact on the economy in wider Swale area will be considered for inclusion. This tourism strategy impacts on the wider Faversham area and hence should qualify for inclusion.

Some scope also exists to bid to Pan North Kent Environment Fund (£4 million), which is additional to Swale's allocation but still part of the ODPM Communities Plan.

SEEDA

Under the Area Investment Framework (AIF) for the regeneration of North Kent, money could also be secured in the future from SEEDA. The focus of SEEDA's funding proposals for 2004/05 is on the themes of 'Education and Skills', 'Business Development' and 'Community Infrastructure'.

Enterprise Grants of up to 15% of capital costs of a project (capped at £75,000) can be awarded to SMEs who are investing in Enterprise Grant Areas (some parts of the Faversham area may be eligible). Jobs would normally need to be created. For details visit www.seeda.co.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) / Young Roots

HLF are supportive of projects that effectively conserve and manage a 'heritage asset' and makes it more accessible for the 'public benefit'. For details visit www.hlf.org.uk

Young Roots is a HLF fund for projects that are driven by youth, so there may also be scope to access this funding stream with relation to outputs involving Abbey School, etc.

Community Fund

The Community Fund distributes money raised by the Lottery to support charities and voluntary groups working in disadvantaged communities to improve people's quality of life. For further details view www.community-fund.org.uk

HERS + Scheme

For built heritage.

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF)

This has just re-opened for 1 year and is cash distributed by English Nature, English Heritage and the Countryside Agency. It has strict distance criteria, and a very short application window. For further details view www.hmce.gov.uk

DEFRA

There may be scope for access to funds for development in the rural areas of the destination from DEFRA via its sustainable development and farm diversification programmes. View www.defra.gov.uk

Environment Agency

May well be interested in becoming involved in any interpretative facilities developed in estuary / creek side areas bearing in mind the major works contemplated for flood defence over the coming years.

Groundwork

Funding for the educational/interpretative outputs of study could be available from Groundwork Kent Thameside. View www.groundwork.org.uk or contact David Anstey at Groundwork Kent Thameside on 01322 287727.

UK Leader+

This scheme is predominantly financed by the EU and is managed by DEFRA in the UK. One of its funding streams makes available up to £75,000 for projects that use innovative technology, are based in rural areas and benefits under 25s and over 65s. Visit www.ukleader.org.uk for more information.

INTERREG IIIa

Interreg III is a community initiative aimed to stimulate interregional co-operation in the EU between 2000 and 2006. Kent is an eligible area to receive funding for this scheme. It is financed under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Up to 60% of funding is available for those projects that can demonstrate real cross-border co-operation between eligible areas. The remaining 40% needs to be financed locally, but 'in-kind' contributions are accepted. Priority areas for funding include 'promotion of urban, rural and coastal development', 'developing small and medium-sized enterprises, including those in the tourism sector', 'initiatives for encouraging shared use of human resources, and facilities for research and development, education, culture, communication, health and civil protection', and 'measures for environmental protection, improving energy efficiency and renewable energy sources'. It is highly likely, therefore, that several of the projects emerging from the development and marketing strategies could be funded by Interreg if a suitable partner is identified to work with on the continent (a requirement of the scheme). Further details can be viewed at http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3/index_en.htm or by contacting Tom Malloy, KCC's Interreg officer.

Countryside Agency

Potential to support some of the project's outputs exist.

SUSTRANS

Money may be available to develop cycle and walking routes in the area from this source. Visit www.sustrans.org.uk

Kent Wildlife Trust

KWT may be interested in investing in the marketing of the area if the Oare Marshes Reserve's profile is elevated.

Kent County Council

Various funding opportunities need to be explored within KCC, including the Rural Revival Fund.

Swale Borough Council

As the study outputs potentially meet many Council policies and objectives an application for financial support should be made following high-level contact with the Chief Executive and Leader of the council.

Charitable Trusts & Foundations

Depending on the mechanism for delivery it may well be possible to access funding for a variety of aspects of the outputs through charitable trusts and foundations. Suitable candidates will need to be identified. For example, The Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Allen Willetts, has pledged £2 million a year of his own person wealth to fund projects in Kent, particularly those related to the environment (Allen Willetts Foundation). The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation has funded Brogdale for at least the last two years at level of £57k pa. They have a keen interest in the South with some interest in Kent.

Business Support

Businesses can be approached to support some of the initiatives amongst the outputs of this study.

Property developers in the area could also be approached as part of their commitment under Section 106.

Private Investors

Private investors should be targeted to invest in the area e.g. Shepherd Neame (re town centre dedicated hotel), hotel developers.

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF CONSULTEES

Maggie Berry (Accommodation Operator – Brenley Farm House)

Bob Bounds (KM's Faversham News Editor)

John Coulter (Faversham Town Councillor, FTC's Town Marketing Group)

Simon Curtis (Medway Council, Tourism and Heritage Manager)

Cindy Davis (Faversham Town Councillor, Swale Borough Councillor, Faversham Town Mayor)

Robin Duncan (Chairman of Faversham Town Council's Town Marketing Group, FEP Director, Shepherd Neame HR Manager)

Peter Faulkner (Chairman Faversham Website Trust, FEP Director, FATA Steering Group Member)

Jane Garrett (Brogdale Horticultural Trust CEO)

Harold Goodwin (Flavours of Faversham Festival, Responsible Tourism Consultant)

Graham Hukins (FATA Chairman, Shepherd Neame Brewery Tours Manager)

Jane Lovell (Canterbury City Council, Tourism Development Officer)

Neil McCollum (Canterbury City Council, Tourism Manager)

Roger Moate (FEP Chairman)

Jonathan Neame (CEO Shepherd Neame)

Lyn Newton (Swale BC, Tourism Development Officer)

Arthur Percival (Faversham Society)

Christine Rayner (Faversham Times Editor)

Mary Sewell (Medway Council, Senior Tourism Officer)

Martin Stevens (Medway Maritime Museum)

Colin Strickland (Property Developer)

Laurence Young (FEP Manager, FATA Steering Group Member, FTC's Town Marketing Group)

APPENDIX 2 – WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS LIST

A. Product / Markets Workshop Participants

Brian Booth (Ardennes Restaurant, Director)

Paul Cumberland (Retail operator - Birds, Birds, Birds)

Kate Dickinson (Accommodation provider - Sandhurst Farm Forge, FATA Treasurer)

Sarah Draper (Medway & Swale Estuary Partnership, Manager)

Cllr Mick Gates (Deputy Mayor of Faversham, FEP Director, FTC's Town Marketing Group)

Lyn Newton (Swale BC, Tourism Development Officer)

Margaret Slythe (Faversham Society)

Laurence Young (FEP Manager, FATA Steering Group Member, FTC's Town Marketing Group)

B. Branding Workshop

Chris Barkaway (Retail operator - A.J. Barkaway Butchers)

Maggie Berry (Accommodation Operator – Brenley Farm House)

Brian Booth (Ardennes Restaurant, Director)

Cindy Davis (Faversham Town Councillor, Faversham Town Mayor)

Kate Dickinson (Accommodation provider - Sandhurst Farm Forge, FATA Treasurer)

Robin Duncan (Chairman of Faversham Town Council's Town Marketing Group, FEP Director, Shepherd Neame HR Manager)

Peter Faulkner (Chairman Faversham Website Trust, FEP Director, FATA Steering Group Member)

Cllr Mick Gates (Deputy Mayor of Faversham, FEP Director, FTC's Town Marketing Group)

Lesley-Ann Rogers (Brogdale Horticultural Trust, PR Consultant)

Laurence Young (FEP Manager, FATA Steering Group Member, FTC's Town Marketing Group)