



**Business Plan for 'Visit Ipswich' the  
Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) for  
Greater Ipswich  
2019 - 2022**

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## SUMMARY

Visit Britain advises; *“Great destinations are great places to live and work as well as to visit. If they are well managed, they are more likely to generate `wise growth' in their visitor economy, maximising the benefits of that growth in the long term, additional income and jobs. The best-managed destinations can also attract new investment, keep value-added jobs, bring in new talent and stimulate innovation.”*

With this in mind, the Visit Ipswich Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) has the following key objective;

*“to increase visits to greater Ipswich, and enhance the overall experience to encourage repeat visits and word of mouth recommendation”*

Other objectives are;

- To act as a collaborator, curator and influencer for Ipswich on tourism issues
- To help benefit Ipswich from promoting town as County town and central hub for visitors across the county including rural and city days/nights out
- To encourage investment in the area
- To encourage more overnight stays.

A visitor, for the purposes of this document, is defined as anyone who visits Greater Ipswich as;

- A resident
- A day leisure visitor
- An overnight leisure visitor
- A day business visitor
- An overnight business visitor.

The vision is to continue to position Ipswich as;

*“East Anglia’s Waterfront Town”*

The Visit Ipswich Plan is an action plan for the Visitor Economy for Ipswich and has been informed by these and other relevant strategies:

- Ipswich Central's Business Plan
- The Vision for Ipswich
- All About Ipswich DMO Business Plan 2016-2019
- Cultural Manifesto for Ipswich
- AECOM Reports
- Volume and Values
- Ideas for Ipswich
- Ipswich Borough Council Local Plan
- Ipswich Borough Council Public Realm Strategy

The DMO plan is a partnership document written by Ipswich Central, the Business Improvement Company (BID), who is the core founder and deliverer of the organisation but it is intended to be a partnership document. Partnership and collaboration are more important than ever as the public purse is stretched and the changing needs of the consumer affect how a visitor interacts with a place.

**Key themes for the DMO are:**

- Maritime & Heritage
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment
- Hospitality (food/hotels and accommodation)
- Sport/The Great Outdoors
- Business

The DMO targets overnight stays, tourists and holiday visitors from beyond Ipswich – Colchester, Essex, London etc. Ipswich Central uses All About Ipswich to reach residents and those within a 10-mile drive time. Generation of more overnight stays is to be a primary focus as this type of stay in Ipswich has been decreasing which goes against the regional and national trend.

It targets the following groups:

- *Time Together*
- *Young & Lively*
- *Mature Cosmopolitan*
- *Family Fun*
- *Social Energisers*
- *Culturally Curious*
- *Great Escapers*

## BACKGROUND

### **A DMO was set up in 2015 with seed funding provided by Ipswich Central, the BID Company for Ipswich town centre.**

This was following two reports from AECOM (a research company engaging with public and private sectors to help cities/locations overcome their challenges and build brilliant futures) – a baseline summary and an action plan. The reports provide a shared vision and framework for the future development of the visitor economy across Ipswich up to 2025 (detailed reports available on the website).

The initial recommendation in 2015 was to set up a DMO. The Ipswich Central board created a DMO company in July 2015 and a management group was appointed.

The DMO is now well established, however has predominantly functioned as a Destination Marketing Organisation, rather than a management organisation because the Ipswich Vision which unites all key stakeholders behind a single Vision for the town leads on the infrastructure changes. The priorities for the Vision have recently (March 2019) been agreed as:

- To develop a strategy for the improvement of all the main arterial routes/gateways into the town centre and the link, via Fore Street, between the Town Centre and the Waterfront.
- To propose improvements to the Star Lane gyratory system (e.g. improving the setting of Wolsey Gate).
- Determine the approach to the future use of Carr Street and the western end of Westgate Street.
- To be ready to apply for City Status as and when opportunities arise.
- To complete the Princes Street office corridor redevelopment (incorporating a new multi-storey car park and new buildings on Princes Street).
- To complete the Ipswich Museum Project.
- To develop an annual programme of events/promotions on the Cornhill.
- To complete the full St Peter's Dock redevelopment (public realm and buildings).
- To deliver at least £3m of further improvements to the public realm (after the Cornhill and St Peter's Dock schemes).
- To secure Government commitment to an Ipswich 'northern bypass'.
- To improve the town's park and ride network.
- To deliver an illumination scheme for further key buildings and bring forward innovative lighting and sound projects.

- To agree and implement an Inward Investment (targeting and marketing) strategy for businesses and consumers.
- Resolve the future use and re-open the Old Post Office (i.e. the most important vacant building in the core of the town centre)
- To support the comprehensive regeneration of the Waterfront Island site incorporating provision of a circular route, and walking routes between the train station and the waterfront.
- To start development of new houses (and/or large apartments) on 3 new major town centre sites.
- Support the introduction of more evening/cultural uses of buildings/space on or adjacent to the Cornhill / Westgate Street / Tavern Street / Carr Street / Buttermarket

The AECOM reports were within the context of the Suffolk Tourism Strategy that identified that the development and growth of the DMOs should be a primary objective to achieve the growth of visitor economy across the County. DMOs now exist in Ipswich, Bury, the Suffolk Coast and Newmarket with a smaller collection of Tourism Advisory Groups (TAGs) also in place for smaller locations such as the Shotley Peninsula.

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), New Anglia, also has Tourism as a strategic theme and is supportive of the development of destination marketing organisations. Visit East Anglia is being renamed Visit East of England and will be licensing the Visit Suffolk brand from Suffolk County Council from April 2019 (TBC). District Councils are continuing to allocate marketing budget to Visit Suffolk to promote the county. Suffolk County Council is not continuing the funding of tourism via Visit Suffolk from 2019 onwards.

Ipswich Borough Council does not fund the Ipswich DMO. However, funding via the Business Rates Pool Funding (BPRF) of £50,000 was awarded to the DMO over 2017-18/2018-19 for campaign delivery. Ipswich Borough Council has a variety of its own sub-sites that it uses to promote its venues which have been developed since the start of the DMO such as [ipswichentertains.co.uk](http://ipswichentertains.co.uk) and [kissandtell.co.uk](http://kissandtell.co.uk).

All About Ipswich is the consumer brand for the BID. It predominantly markets themes and campaigns to Ipswich postcodes. Over the last few years the DMO, whose core themes aligned with the BID, used available budget to extend core Ipswich Central campaigns to a wider audience where relevant.

A substantial allocation of the BPRF allocation was used for a Culture Campaign focussing on Colchester as a target audience only. It also delivered marketing campaigns in conjunction with other DMOs (Raw Suffolk) with all DMOs funding a campaign to a younger demographic (under 35s).

This second iteration of the DMO business plan is needed to now drive delivery of tourism-focused activity for Ipswich which, whilst similar to 2015, has evolved in line with the changing economic environment.

The DMO is just one of the stakeholders involved in ensuring the place is well managed and attractive to all. The DMO works alongside Visit Suffolk, Visit East of England, Ipswich Central\*, We Are Ipswich, Ipswich Vision, Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk and Greater Ipswich Chambers, University of Suffolk and other Destination Management Organisations in the area to achieve success. At present it relies on Ipswich Central for core-funding and will be calling on other partners or external funding sources to enable it to expand and deliver tourism requirements

\*Ipswich Central is the Business Improvement District (BID) Company for Ipswich town centre and is funded by businesses within a defined geographical area.

## **DMO highlights 2016-2018**

**Over the past two years the DMO has achieved the following**

- £69,140 in external funding (plus management of Raw Suffolk Campaign budget £30,000)
- 97 members
- Shotley TAG as a partner
- Raw Suffolk campaign in conjunction with other DMOs
- Web sessions approx. 20,000 per month
- Over 29,000 social media followers
- 80,000 referrals to featured businesses
- Strong collaboration with Suffolk DMOs and Visit Suffolk

# CONSIDERATIONS

## Organisational considerations

**In preparing for an action plan for delivery, it is important to note the following:**

- The Visit Ipswich DMO is nearly fully funded by Ipswich Central, the BID (not for profit) for the town centre. This model varies from other DMOs in the County (Discover Newmarket, The Suffolk Coast and Bury & Beyond) who are primarily funded by member fees and partner contributions.
- Other tourism organisations such as Visit Colchester are operating within tourism reach for visitors.
- The DMO is a private limited company and has four Directors.
- Ipswich Central provides all the staff and resource currently used to deliver the DMO.
- The DMO is a subsidiary of Ipswich Central to assist and help deliver the core BID business plan.
- Businesses are invited to join the DMO through membership; a benefits package to be agreed and promoted widely.
- The DMO will need additional resources to deliver against the key themes.
- Other DMO's have raised their membership fees recently.

## Local tourism considerations

**Ipswich is the County town of Suffolk with a population of circa 140,000 and an immediate catchment of 350,000 (15 mile radius). Its history is as a port and, in recent years, its water frontage has been transformed to include hotels, the University of Suffolk, the Jerwood dance house, a range of bars and cafés and high-quality residential units.**

Elsewhere, Christchurch Park provides one of the largest green spaces in any UK urban centre. Christchurch Mansion holds the biggest collection of Thomas Gainsborough and John Constable paintings outside London and also plays host to national exhibitions such as Auguste Rodin's iconic life-size marble sculpture, The Kiss, on loan from the Tate Collection. The Hold is also under construction on Ipswich waterfront and is set to house the bulk of Suffolk's nationally and internationally significant archives. It will be the engine for a transformed audience-focused service reaching out to diverse communities in Ipswich, the county and the nation, through its activity and digital programmes, engaging people in new and exciting ways. It is scheduled to open in Spring 2020.

Other attractions include historic buildings and theatres, with Ipswich enjoying more National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) than any other location outside of London including DanceEast, Eastern Angles, Gecko, Suffolk Libraries, New Wolsey Theatre, Pacitti Company, Suffolk Libraries, Russell Maliphant Company and Colchester and Ipswich Museum. These are all nationally significant and locally cherished organisations.



University Campus Suffolk was awarded University status in 2016 and is now the University of Suffolk. The University operates two academic facilities and in 2016/2017 had 5,080 students.

Beyond, the wider County boasts a splendid rural backdrop including a coastal region, Dedham Vale and the mid-Suffolk area, with links to Gainsborough and Constable.

Ipswich is accessible and has a large local catchment profile with road and rail access to London, elsewhere in East Anglia and parts of the East Midlands.

The town is within close proximity to international gateways, namely Harwich and Felixstowe Ports and Stansted Airport. However, research suggests that visitors are not aware of Ipswich (or Suffolk) as a place. It is also believed that Ipswich is 'bypassed' by international visitors arriving via Harwich.

The Economic Impact of Tourism Report (2017) carried out by Destination Research for the Ipswich Borough area provides the following review of tourism impact. Whilst visitors do not view destinations with hard boundaries, this does give an indication as to how the local tourism economy is faring.

**In 2017 the area saw: [please note new table to inserted on receipt from IBC showing trends since 2011]**

3.8	million trips undertaken
3.4	million day trips
0.4	million overnight visits
1.1	million nights in the area as a result of overnight trips
£191	million spend by tourists during their visit to the area
£16	million spend on average in the local economy each month
£77	million generated by overnight visits
£114	million generated from irregular day trips
£265	million spent in the local area as a result of tourism, taking into account multiplier effects
5,109	jobs supported, both for local residents and from those living nearby
3,636	tourism jobs directly supported
1,473	non-tourism related jobs supported linked to multiplier spend from tourism.

**Since 2016, this shows an:**

- 11% increase in the number of day trips to the area.
- 10% increase in value of day trips to the area.
- 3% increase in number of trips to the area
- 1% decrease in the number of nights spent on overnight trips to the area
- 3% increase in value of the overnight trips to the area

It is estimated that in 2017 approximately £265 million of visitor income arrived in the Greater Ipswich economy annually as a result of tourism. Nationally and regionally there was an increase in the number of overnight stays. Ipswich did not mirror this trend. It would appear Ipswich is

struggling to reach its potential as a visitor and tourist destination and stay on par with the rest of the region and other UK destinations. This is a cause of concern and should be addressed by the DMO.

**The town has many strengths and weaknesses:**

- Ipswich is a historical county town and has a wealth of historical assets.
- It is a compact town, with most assets and attractions within a 10-minute walk of the town centre, although links/routes between assets/attractions are not always clear.
- The Waterfront, shopping centre and Christchurch Park are the main visitor hubs, although Portman Road/Ipswich Village has a sporting and business focus that is known to attract visitors.
- Cultural activities and events are a key strength of the town, with both niche interest and mainstream performances continually presented at its various cultural venues.
- Ipswich has strong historical associations to Thomas Wolsey, Constable, Gainsborough, Chaucer and Dickens. The name of Wolsey is used throughout the town (e.g. the New Wolsey Theatre, Ipswich Thomas Wolsey pub), whilst a collection of the works of Constable and Gainsborough can be found in Christchurch Mansion.
- The town includes some notable attractions in terms of Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich Museum, Ipswich Transport Museum and the Town Hall.
- Ipswich also has a sizeable provision of accommodation, especially serviced accommodation which is lacking elsewhere in Suffolk.
- It also has a provision to support conferencing, including capacity for conferences of up to 1,000 delegates, but provision is limited compared with other destinations
- The historical characteristics of Ipswich are somewhat lost in the urban landscape.
- The key hubs lack connectivity, especially on foot with the busy road network believed to be a barrier to movement between them.
- Although significant in the context of Suffolk and urban centres of its size, the provision of accommodation within Ipswich is limited when reviewed against its potential.
- Ipswich lacks one defined signature attraction to act as a magnet to draw visitors in.
- The evening economy, particularly the catering provision, divides opinion in terms of its quality.
- Some 30% of the student body are classed as mature students and 68% of University students are female.
- Ipswich has a mix of leisure and business visitors.
- The market for Ipswich is predominantly domestic.

## **NATIONAL TOURISM CONSIDERATIONS**

**Also there are national trends which should be taken into consideration when planning for delivery of the DMO;**

- In light of poor exchange rate and fear over Brexit, domestic tourism (staycationing) has strengthened in recent times, with the economic recession encouraging more of the UK population to holiday within the UK.

- There is an ever-increasing volume of information accessible to visitors and different routes to the market.
- Changing demography and social dimensions are leading to new opportunities, particularly in terms of different age groups and life-stages.
- There is an increasing share and value of disposable income being spent on recreation and culture despite financial pressures.
- There is a continuing demand for value, with financial impacts reinforcing price as a driver although visitors still require a quality offer.
- The move towards healthier and more active lifestyles is increasingly being utilised by destinations as a means of establishing activity-oriented tourism products and packages.
- Micro-trips becoming the thing – short and curated trips.
- High street is in crisis and visitors are wanting a more rounded experience.
- Conscious travel is becoming more popular.
- Travellers want to try new and curated experiences.
- Sustainability matters to some travellers.

## DMO ACTIONS

In light of the above information the DMO needs to be focusing, in conjunction with others, on the following recommendations:

General	Measure	Action	Year	Cost
Raise awareness of the Visit Ipswich Destination Marketing organisation	Provide appropriate press response in line with brand matrix: Chair/Operational	EL/JC	Ongoing	No additional cost
Increase fees from £95 to £110 to match that of Suffolk Coast	Increased revenue in comparison to 2018-2019	EL	April 2019	£500 (IC)
Increase Visit Ipswich Group to include representatives from key sectors	Sector representation from all tourism sectors Y1	Chair	Q1 2019	None
Work with Ipswich Central's core team to maximise reach of All About Ipswich to residents and wider audience	x 2 expanded campaigns	IC team/Board	per annum	3-6k per campaign
Organise a seat/voice on the Vision Board	Y1	Chair	2019	None
Carry out x3 presentations to Ipswich business forums	Chamber/ Vision/Waterfront Group	IC team	2019	£500 (IC)
Deliver a Visit Ipswich conference ie training for customer service	1 event	IC team/ marketing panel	2020	£5000
Provide content to Visit Suffolk and Visit East of England to ensure fair and equal representation of Suffolk's county town	YOY increase in referrals from both websites to AAI	IC team	Continuous	No additional cost
Continue to work with other DMOs	x 1 joint campaign per annum	IC team	Continuous	£7500 - £10 000
Create annual calendar of Greater Ipswich activity of key themes and ensure consistently promoted to residents	x 1 per annum	IC team/VI marketing panel	April every year	£2000

Create 'curated packages/things to do' for predominantly overnight stay visitors – include on All About Ipswich and work with tourist information centre to provide to visitors	x 5 per annum	IC team/VI marketing panel	2019/2020	£3000-£5000
Work with IBC to review and commission Greater Ipswich volume and value figures	Revised volume and values data requirement supplied to Destination Research in time for next V and V report	IC/IBC	May 2019	No additional cost
Produce a combined marketing and communications strategy for All About Ipswich in conjunction with Ipswich Central and Ipswich Borough Council	Annual plan	IC team/IBC	By March each year	No additional cost
Create Visitor Top 10 Things to Do lists according to our audiences plus generic version of Top 10 Trip Advisor Things to do	1 per audience sector	IC/IBC/VI panel	May 2019	£3000
Work more closely with the University to promote Ipswich to visitors	Provide info for new student packs	IBC/US		Uni to fund literature? £1000
<b>Maritime &amp; Heritage</b>				
Work with partners to provide a stronger waterfront festival i.e. involve cultural organisations in planning, pre-book key maritime activity	Improved festival	IBC We Are Ipswich, IC team	For 2020 festival	No additional cost
Work with Ipswich Society to promote the Heritage Weekend and our major historic buildings	Increased promotion figures and numbers	Ipswich Society, IC, Tourism Info, IBC	September 2019	No additional cost

Curate a waterfront trail for families including key historic heritage/maritime info	x1 over weekend	Waterfront Life team, Waterfront Group. The Hold team, Uni and IC team	August 2020	Additional costs - The Hold SCC virtual reality tool
Maximise the potential of The Hold via partnership working	Representative onto DMO Board	The Hold, Uni, IC	Ongoing	No additional cost
Prioritise our key heritage buildings	Definitive list Create campaign page for it	Ipswich Society/IBC/IC	Exists from IS	£900 to host in one place on AAI
<b>Arts, Culture &amp; Entertainment</b>				
Work closely with We Are Ipswich on supporting the delivery of the Cultural Manifesto – particularly the festivals and special events	Continuous	IC We Are Ipswich IBC	Ongoing	No additional cost
Contribute to Cultural Marketing Consortium run by the New Anglia LEP and assist in ensuring Visit Ipswich is fairly represented in the marketing and communication of group	Attend meetings	IC team	Ongoing	IC covers travel costs etc
Support culture organisations on funding applications	Continuous	All	As and when	No additional cost
Apply for collaborative funding in conjunction with BID and Cultural organisations where possible to deliver cultural activity/funding	N/A	We are Ipswich/IC team	As and when	Cost per application
<b>Hospitality/Food/Drink/Accommodation</b>				
Seek sector(s) representative for the Visit Ipswich Group	x 1 representative on strategic group	Chair	2019	No additional cost
Gain access to hotel room data to inform overnight	Data for reports regularly provided	IC team	Q1/Q2	No additional

stay strategy				cost
Provide hospitality/food/accommodation sectors with relevant literature to enhance their visitors experiences	x 1 set of docs per annum	IC team	Before summer holidays	£1000
Customer service training	x 1 per annum		As per conference	Cost per opportunity
<b>Sport/The Great Outdoors</b>				
Create overnight stay packages and 'things to do' guides for key sporting events – Great East Run/Great East Swim	x 3 per annum	Marketing panel	2020	£4000
Provide promotional literature/banners etc for sporting events	x 1 set – used 4 times	Marketing panel	2020	£2,000 (inc. cost to man stands)
<b>Business</b>				
Invite large business representative onto the Visit Greater Ipswich Group	x 1 representative on the group	Chair	2019	No additional cost
Promote conference venues more cohesively	Conference pack	Marketing panel/MG	2019 Q3	£2500 (IBC to fund?)
Raise awareness of DMO with key business organisations such as Chamber to encourage involvement of business messaging	As featured above	As above	As above	As above
Provide member employers with info packs for their visiting staff	Employer info	Marketing panel	2020	£1500

**TOTAL: £44,900**

## BUDGET & RISK ANALYSIS

**Ipswich Central will be responsible for premises, equipment, secretarial and administrative/overhead costs. In addition, the BID team will conduct their work on behalf of the DMO at no charge additional charge.**

The DMO will need to be mindful that Ipswich Central, like any other BID organisation, operates on fixed terms of a maximum of five years with the BID term ending March 2022.

A membership scheme for businesses is likely to yield circa £11,000 within year two (100 businesses @ £110 each plus VAT). There may also be the opportunity to generate additional funds around campaigns and additional activity listed in actions.

Also, Ipswich Central will cover the cost of delivering the website – hosting and SEO per annum cost £11,300 per annum without any maintenance or additional work. The upkeep required for basic DMO coverage is covered in the costing below.

Ipswich Central provide core campaigns to their main audience which include print, distribution, mailing, design, web, social graphics and online advertising

Additional sources of funding may be available from the public sector (most likely Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council and New Anglia LEP), membership, sponsorship, campaigns and grants.

**Annual costs (excluding VAT) to deliver against actions are as follows:**

Staff time EL/FW/JC each one day per week plus admin LA when needed per annum	£20,000	To be covered by IC
All About Ipswich website provision	£11,300	To be covered by IC
Top 10s, weekend stay packages, extended campaigns beyond IC core campaigns and joint collaboration campaign with other DMOs ie Raw Suffolk extension, uni guides	£35,000	Additional funding required
Additional staff resource for finding funding opportunities	£5,000	In kind support from other organisations?

Supported and produced by Ipswich Central, the town centre's Business Improvement District (BID) Company and provider of All About Ipswich

