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# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR HYTHE DOCUMENT

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# PREAMBLE

**The primary purpose of the Strategic Plan for Hythe is to help the people of Hythe, Town Councillors and Council Officers to hold in their minds the measures which will be required to maintain Hythe as a great place to live, work and have fun in.**

**The secondary purpose is to help Town Councillors and Officers allocate the necessary resources to deliver the ambitions of Hythe people in maintaining Hythe as a great place to live.**

## Process

A working group, the Strategic Plan Working Group, consisting of seven Hythe Town Councillors agreed ten questions and used the web-based Survey Monkey to conduct the initial poll. Hythe Town Council (HTC) consulted the Hythe Civic Society at an early stage in the process.

These ten questions and their responses were used as “conversation starters” during four face-to-face consultation sessions. These consultation sessions were held in the Town Hall and the Sports Pavilion.

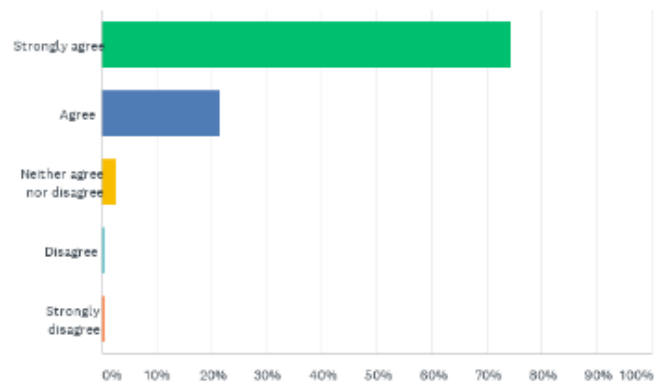
The feedback and responses received at the consultation sessions has been used to compile this first draft Strategic Plan Document.

The Council's intention is to review the Strategic Plan regularly, at least once a year and carry out a revision after five years. It is thought that the plan will have to be re-written after 10 years.

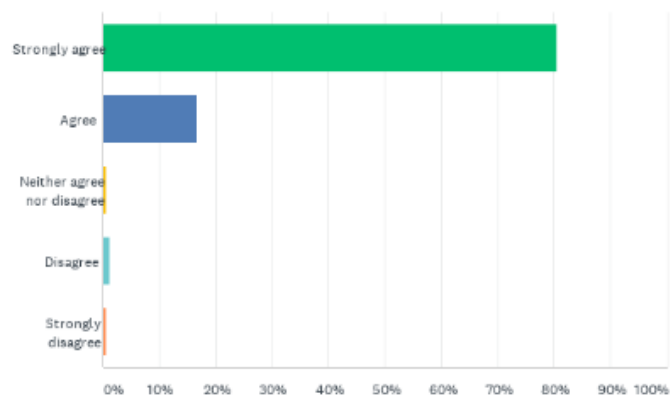
Hythe Town Council do not have the funds readily available to deliver this plan alone. The document is intended to create a plan that the Council can work to and be measured against.



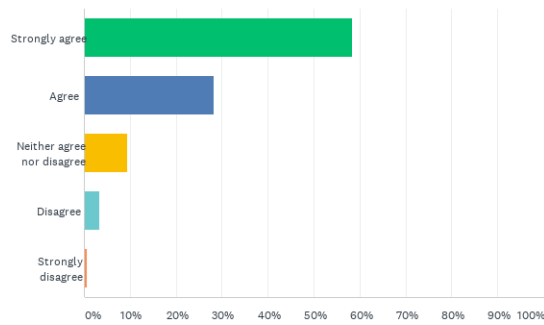
### Q1 Work to provide a safe environment in Hythe



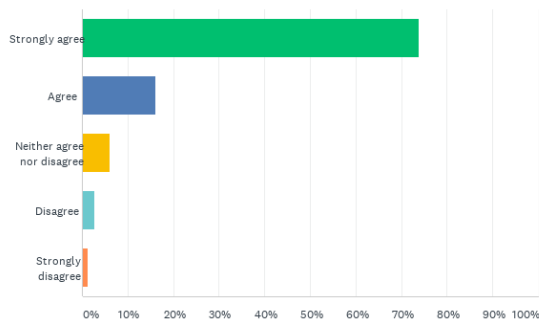
### Q2 Work to provide a clean environment in Hythe



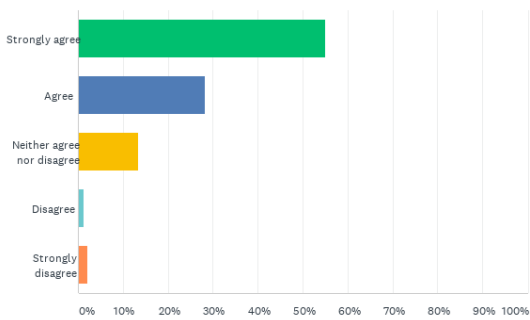
**Q3 Promote and encourage art and culture to contribute to the wellbeing of the local community**



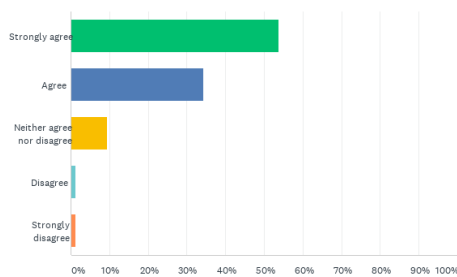
**Q4 Aim to strengthen the High Street as a community hub and retail centre**



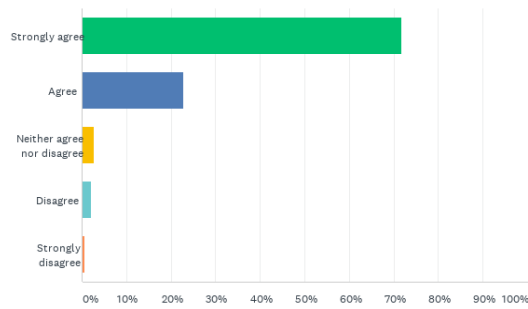
**Q5 Develop landmark events in and around the Council's facilities in the High Street, Oaklands Park and The Green**



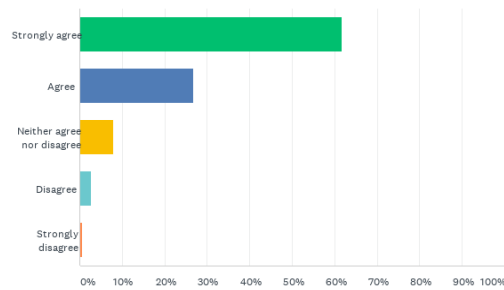
**Q6 Promote the Hythe Museum and Public Library. (To include Environmental Education and Local History)**



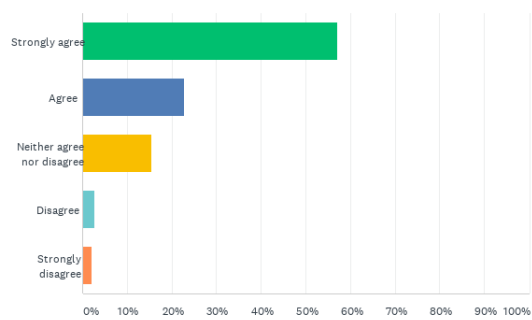
Q7 Protect and enhance Hythe's conservation area and historic buildings and features



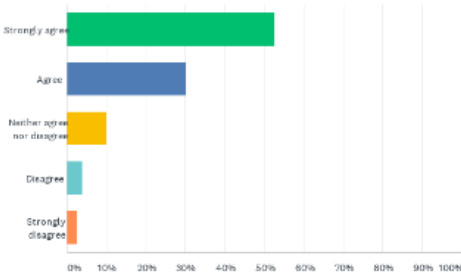
Q8 Develop and promote opportunities for exercise for all ages and physical abilities



Q9 Accelerate work towards being carbon neutral by 2025 and encourage others to follow suit, in conjunction with District Council, County Council and Central Government



Q10 Increase leisure, local education and development opportunities for our young people, 16 and under, Actively engage with Hythe Youth Groups and introduce a Hythe Youth Parliament





# Introduction



## Geography

Hythe is a long-established coastal community town on the edge of the Romney Marsh in the district of Folkestone & Hythe. The word Hythe or Hithe is an Old English word meaning Haven or Landing Place. The nearest towns are Folkestone (approx. three miles distance) and Ashford (approx. twelve miles distance).

Hythe is surrounded by rural countryside and small villages. The hinterland includes the parishes of Saltwood, Lympne, Stanford, Postling and Newington. The town sits on the edge of the English Channel, close to France and Belgium. It has four wards and incorporates a number of small communities that see themselves as having their own identity - Seabrook, Horn Street, West Hythe and Palmarsh.



## Location

- 3 miles west of Folkestone.
- 16 miles southwest of Dover.
- 14 miles to Ashford International High Speed 1 (HS1) - travel by road 20 minutes.

## Unique Features

Part of a wider, coastal community connected tourism provides an excellent tourism offer:

- Ancient church (heritage) and Royal Military Canal Diverse landscape.
- Safe beach and promenade walkway.
- Close proximity to continental Europe.
- A strong sense of identity - A place where residents want to stay and visitors do not want to leave.

## Benefits

- One of the five original Cinque Ports.
- Unique and beautiful heritage in the form of the Royal Military Canal and Norman St Leonard's Church with its Ossuary of human bones.
- Beautiful old coastal town, spreading up a steep hillside.
- Wide Victorian promenade and long stretch of coast around Hythe Bay.
- On a clear day you can see France.

## History

One of the original members of the Confederation of Cinque Ports - towns in South-East England which by Royal Command provided men and ships for the defence of Britain. It is the central Cinque Port of South Kent and East Sussex, sitting between Hastings and New Romney to the West and Dover and Sandwich to the East. It was once a bustling harbour, defended by Saltwood Castle and Lympne Castle.

The earliest known charter to the Cinque Ports collectively (a general charter) was granted by King Henry III in 1260, although dignitaries of the Court of Shepway (just inside Hythe's Northern boundary) were already meeting by 1150.

The town developed as a harbour and is proud to be a member of the original Coastal Community Alliance – although the last naval service was called upon in 1588. The town played a vital role in the defence of the country during the Napoleonic wars with the construction of the Royal Military Canal. Built to repel invasion, the canal now gives central Hythe a distinctive and attractive character and hosts the famous Hythe Venetian Fête on alternate years. Now shaded by trees, the canal is 30 feet wide, and stretches through the middle of Hythe and passes into Romney Marsh.

Built around the same time as a defence against possible invasion by Napoleon were the Martello Towers. In total 74 of these towers were built between Folkestone and



Seaford with many of them still surviving. This history has resulted in a set of unique features in the town. Military and marine history buffs much of Hythe's amazing past, but for the rest of the world it is one of England's most valuable yet hidden secrets.



## Community

### Demographics

Hythe has a population of approximately 15,500 (Est. 2020). The town has a wide range of services and facilities including a secondary school and five Primary Schools. Hythe has proportionately fewer people aged under 50 than the Kent average and has a much larger percentage of people aged over 60.

The majority of people in Hythe are single, but there are a significant number of people in a relationship of some form. The proportion of people who are divorced or single (as a percentage of the population aged over 16), is far higher than the Kent average.

Age	UK	Folkestone & Hythe	Hythe
0 – 15	19%	18%	12%
16 – 29	19%	16%	12%
30 – 44	21%	18%	17%
45 – 64	25%	28%	29%
65+	16%	20%	30%

Source:

**Census 2011 and Hythe Ward Profile, May 2015.**



There are 1,830 children and young people aged under 19 in Hythe ward. The proportion of children and young people in the ward is lower than the county figure.

## Community Groups

Hythe is a charming town with a friendly atmosphere. Hythe has gardening, horse riding, bowling, tennis, cricket, football, squash and sailing clubs, among others. It is part of the “Transition Town” network, with environmental and other projects headed by the Hythe Environmental Community Group. Hythe Rotary, the Royal British Legion, Dementia Aware Forum, and U3A are among other active groups adding to the community life and support with the town. Among groups supporting and nurturing open spaces are the Hythe Green Preservation Society, Hythe Triangle Group and Eaton Lands volunteers, Hythe in Bloom / Hythe Civic Society, Hythe Environmental.

## Youth Provision

Several groups aimed at children, young and old people:

- Project Salus in Hythe Youth Centre
- Hythe Aqua
- Kent Karate School
- Saltwood Cricket Club Juniors (Colts)
- Hythe Cricket and Squash Club
- Hythe Stars and Stripes Football Club
- Instep Dance Studio
- 1st Hythe Scout Group
- Hythe Guides
- Hythe St. John Ambulance Cadets
- Hythe Golden Jubilee Skatepark

During the consultations, a consistent point made by the majority of people was that more should be done to provide facilities for young people.

## Older Provision

- Age UK Hythe and Lyminge
- Dementia Aware Forum
- U3A

## Learning Difficulties Provision

- The Bridge Resource Centre
- The Shed

## Societies

There are many societies and activities for local residents:

- Hythe Arts Society
- Hythe Book Club



- Hythe Business and Tourism
- Hythe Bridge Club
- Hythe Civic Society
- Hythe in Bloom
- Hythe Flower Club
- Hythe and Romney Marsh Lions
- Umbrella Club of Hythe
- Hythe Women's Institute
- Hythe Townswomen's Guild
- Hythe Town Concert Band
- Hythe Twinning Association
- Various Allotment Societies (Eaton Lands Hythe Allotment Society)
- Hythe Green Preservation Society

## Churches

- St Leonard's, The Parish Church
- Holy Cross, Palmarsh
- Virgin Mother of Good Counsel (Roman Catholic), Lower Blackhouse Hill
- Salvation Army Hall, Portland Road
- Christian Community Church, Ormond Street
- Hythe Methodist Church, Prospect Road
- United Reform Church, East Street
- Christian Spiritualist Church, Mount Street
- Quaker group: (recently merged with Ashford)

## Sports

There is a very strong sporting ethos, home to many clubs:

- Castle Badminton Club
- Cinque Ports Angling Society
- Hythe Bowling Club
- Seapoint Canoe & Kayak Centre
- Hythe Cricket and Squash Club
- Hythe Green Cricket Club
- Hythe Cycling Club
- Movement and Dance classes
- Hythe Town Football Club (youth football teams and Isthmian League South-East first team)
- Sene Valley Golf Club
- Hythe Imperial Golf Course
- Hythe Aqua Swimming Club
- Hythe Round the Houses (Rotary) running and walking
- Blister Sisters (a running and walking group)





- Begin2run (a running and walking group)
- Hythe and Saltwood Sailing Club
- Hythe Lawn Tennis Club
- East Kent Health Walks Scheme
- Tai Chi and Qi Gong classes
- Yoga and Pilates classes
- Hythe Sports Pavilion runs a variety of classes.

## Allotments

There are a number of Allotments in Hythe operated by Hythe Town Council:

- Eaton Lands (Meadow, North and South)
- Twiss Road
- Longbridge
- Horn Street

Allotments are very popular and there is currently a long waiting list for allotments.

## Deprivation

Hythe is in Folkestone & Hythe District which is the second most deprived out of the 12 Kent Districts and 97th out of 326 in England according to the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation. Contrary to popular belief there are a number of pockets of deprivation in Hythe, where poverty and the regular use of food banks is common.

## Health

In the latest Census a high proportion of Hythe residents indicated they were in bad, or very bad health. Breastfeeding rates are above average. Under-75 mortality from circulatory conditions is amongst the lowest in Folkestone & Hythe. Emergency admissions for diabetes is above average.

Generally, during the consultation, people felt there were plenty of opportunities in Hythe for people to improve their own health, people felt that with facilities such as sports pitches, the tennis, cricket and bowls clubs that there was plenty opportunity for participatory sport. The Royal Military Canal offers a fantastic walking and cycling route, so there are opportunities for non-sport exercise.

Wellbeing is dependent on much more than exercise opportunities. As people are becoming more aware of the importance of maintaining one's mental health. There are a number of private counsellors available to help with emotional and relationship challenges as well as low-cost counselling centres in Folkestone and New Romney. Various forms of meditation are available locally to learn either individually or in a group.

## Arts in Hythe

Hythe has a wealth of artists and makers who enjoy being creative and displaying their work.





- Hythe Art Society: the larger group of artists which exhibits each year.
- hART: A smaller group which exhibits annually, and which also caters for photographers, textile artists and ceramicists.
- Shepway Singers: based in Folkestone.
- St Leonard's Church Choir.
- Hythe Town Concert Band.
- The Tin Tabernacle often hold locally themed exhibitions.

There are also multiple opportunities to learn to draw and paint in groups and individually.

Sewing and needlework tuition is available in friendly groups in shop premises in the High Street.

## Economy

Hythe is above the Kent average for the proportion of working aged (16-64) people who are retired or who are students. The ward has a lower proportion of people who are in full time work or are looking after the home/family.

## Skills

According to the Government's assessment, Hythe has 31% of people with a Level 4 skill level, (compared to 30% England & Wales) and 13% of people with no qualifications (compared to 15% England & Wales and 16% for other coastal communities). Hythe's Level 4 is slightly above the national average.

## Employment

72% employment rate (aged 16-64) and a 24% inactive rate (aged 16-64). The major employment sectors in Hythe are: construction, motor vehicle trades, education and health/social care. Hythe is above average for the proportion of its working age population employed in education and health/social care. Hythe is below average for the proportion employed in motor vehicle trades and water supply/sewage. Kent and Medway Key Sectors figures are sourced from 'The Kent and Medway Workforce Skills Evidence Base'.

The Kent figures suggest the Construction and Digital & Media sectors will grow the quickest over the period, although, in terms of the volume of jobs, construction and tourism will be most significant. For Hythe, construction is already a significant sector.

Hythe's magnificent heritage assets and strategic geography could make it very attractive to the Creative Digital Media and IT sectors. A possible further research project may identify the quantities of companies in that sector that are currently in Hythe, and those that could be attracted here.



## Connectivity / Transport

Hythe is accessible by:

Road: The main road through the ward is the A259 which runs from Folkestone to Hastings via Hythe, Dymchurch and New Romney.

- Bus: Bus services are operated by Stagecoach. In November 2014, new buses (to Gold Standard) were introduced on the route 16 between Hythe, Folkestone and Canterbury.
- Train: Sandling (SDG) Station is Northwest of the Hythe Ward, most people, however, use Folkestone West Station, in Cheriton to the Northeast of Hythe, where there is access to the High Speed rail link to London.
- Motorway: The M20 motorway is accessible to the Northwest of Hythe ward via Junction 11, access Ashford in 15 minutes, and to the Northeast of Hythe via Junction 12.
- Eurotunnel: Nearby Channel Tunnel carries High-Speed Eurostar passenger trains, the Eurotunnel Shuttle for road vehicles – the largest such transport in the world and international freight trains.
- STOP 24: Is a service station located at Junction 11 M20, only five minutes drive from the Channel Tunnel and 15 minutes from the Port of Dover.

Within a 30 minute road travel time you can access Rye, New Romney, Folkestone, Deal, Canterbury and Maidstone.

There are circa, 40 hotels and 43 restaurants/pubs within a 30 minute drive.

Click2Cycle runs a bike hire scheme.

The completion of the Cinque Ports Cycleway will provide a safe route on mostly dedicated or shared pedestrian/cycle paths from Folkestone onto Romney Marsh

## Income

Hythe is broadly in line with national average for household income.

Employment for residents is limited without a car or improved infrastructure. 22% (1,366) of Hythe residents commute for employment compared to the Coastal Communities average of 8%.

Hythe Ward Profile, May 2015.

## Housing

The average UK house price was £264,000 in August 2021, which was £25,000 higher than one year earlier. Average house prices increased over the year in England to £281,000 (9.8%), in Wales to £195,000 (12.5%), in Scotland to £181,000 (16.9%) and in Northern Ireland to £153,000 (9.0%).



Properties in Hythe had an overall average price of £371,698 over the last year.

The majority of sales in Hythe during the last year were terraced properties, selling for an average price of £301,278. Semi-detached properties sold for an average of £368,817, with detached properties fetching £530,946. Overall, sold prices in Hythe, over the last year were 4% up on the previous year and 9% up on the 2016 peak of £340,172.

Hythe is broadly in line with the national average for property size. Proportionately there are slightly fewer 3-4 bed properties.

The average visitor spend on second homes is estimated to be approx. £600,000. The estimate covers rates, maintenance, and replacement of furniture and fittings.

Hythe is often listed as a “property hot spot”, usually made on the back of key indicators including trendy eateries, good transport links, an established population.

There are around approximately 3,780 owner occupied households in Hythe.

15% are private rents.

Source: Housing Information Audit, Research & Evaluation, Kent County Council, 2015.

	Folkestone & Hythe	Kent
Detached houses or bungalows	27%	25.1%
Semi-detached houses	24.1%	30.5%
Terraced houses	22.1%	24.8%
Flats, maisonettes	26.3%	18.7%
Caravans or other temporary structures	0.6%	0.9%

## Strategic housing type for 2026

Around 6,000 new homes are expected up to 2026 in the whole District (Folkestone and Hythe). There are planned strategic development sites: Princes Parade, Foxwood School, Portex site and Hythe Swimming Pool site, it is likely that upwards of 600-1,000 new homes will be built in Hythe to the end of 2026.



## District Council's Housing Policy

Phase 2 of the Nickoll's Quarry (Martello Lakes) development is under way.

Land at Station Road is an undeveloped parcel of grassland, with potential for 40 family sized dwellings.

Land at the Saltwood Care Centre allocated for an appropriate Extra Care housing.

Foxwood School is allocated for a residential development with an estimated capacity of approximately 150 dwellings.

St Saviours Hospital is allocated for a landscape led residential development with an estimated capacity of approximately 35 dwellings.

Hythe Swimming Pool is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of approximately 50 dwellings.

Although not detailed in a policy, Hythe Town Council considers there is potential for office use / change of use above the shops in the High Street as they would provide additional business to the existing ground floor shops and restaurants.

There may be several office buildings where there might be spare capacity.

Princes Parade to include public open space, leisure, small scale commercial uses and up to 150 residential dwellings and a new swimming pool as part of the offer.

The Portex site (Smith's Industries site) has planning permission for a residential development and a care home.

During the consultations many people expressed their concerns about a lack of affordable housing for young people in particular. There is a chronic shortage of affordable housing in Hythe.

## Businesses

Hythe is the second-largest centre in the District and has a retail offer that is significantly different to that offered in Folkestone. The focus of the town centre use is on retail, but the offer is largely orientated towards independent retailers with a more specialist product offer, particularly in respect of comparison goods. The retail area is largely confined to the High Street. The primary shopping area benefits from a good concentration of retail and other footfall-generating activities such as independent cafes and restaurants.

There is a 4.7% vacancy rate on shop frontage in Hythe with a target not to exceed 10%.



## Folkestone & Hythe and national effects on Hythe

There has been concerted efforts on behalf of Folkestone & Hythe District Council, and local business figures like Sir Roger De Haan (former chairman and chief executive of Folkestone-based Saga Group), to regenerate the area and encourage more tourism.

The visitor economy is estimated to be worth a total of £235 million to the Folkestone & Hythe economy. This is based on 1.8 million overnight visitors and almost 4 million day visitors per annum.

Tourism employs around 4,500 (3,200 FTEs) which is the equivalent of 12% of all employment in Folkestone & Hythe. Most of the UK visitors who stay in Folkestone & Hythe come on holiday (75%). Some come to stay with friends and family (20%) whilst a smaller proportion (5%) come on business trips.

Pre pandemic figures indicate, our overseas visitors come to Folkestone & Hythe for a holiday (56%), to study (20%), to visit their friends and relatives (18%) and a few come on business (6%).

In Folkestone & Hythe, overnight visitors generated 38% of visitor spend in 2013, which compares well to Kent as a whole (35%), but less well compared to the national average for England where overnight visitors generated 42% of all visitor spend.

In Folkestone & Hythe only 5% of our UK visitors come to Folkestone & Hythe on business trips. They generate 30% of all UK visitor spend.

## Folkestone & Hythe visitor market segments

These Folkestone & Hythe market segments were identified in the Folkestone & Hythe Destination Management Plan. They provide a focus on the types of visitors Hythe needs to attract and what might appeal to them:

- Country-loving traditionalists
- Young professionals
- Family fun
- Specialist sports enthusiasts

## National Economy

Visit Britain has forecasted, visits will grow by 4.0% to 38.1 million. This represents a faster rate of growth than their earlier projection. In England, domestic and day trip coastal tourism is now collectively valued at £8 billion to the economy, representing 31% of domestic overnight holiday trips and 8% of tourism day visits.

Pre-pandemic, a relatively small 15% of international visitors make it to the English coast, valued at £927m per annum - but given Hythe's proximity to mainland Europe this could be considered an advantage. A weakened pound has helped too. Visitors



from overseas have more money to spend. East Kent is popular with German tourists in particular – 19% of visitors from abroad to the Folkestone & Hythe area are German.

Burgeoning boutique and lifestyle hotels in less populated areas are leading the way and so Hythe could offer a similar package to meet this trend.

## Hythe Character

Hythe town boasts one of the longest high streets in Kent measuring approximately half a mile. The historic buildings and heritage assets are often noted as principle elements in Hythe's character and charm.

Hythe Chamber of Commerce and Tourism was set up in 2008 sharing a common interest in promoting Hythe as an attractive place to live, visit, work and do business. Hythe Chamber of Commerce and Tourism evolved into the Hythe Business & Tourism Association (HBTA) with a specific focus on working together to promote Hythe High Street to more shoppers and the wider business community in Hythe.

## Events

Hythe enjoys a full calendar of events during the year.

- Hythe Venetian Fête
- Hythe Festival
- Concerts in St Leonard's Church
- Hythe Farmers' Market
- Guided Town Walks
- Hythe Life Food Festival
- Christmas Late Night Shopping
- Civic Sunday
- Annual programme of Sunday performances at the Oaklands Bandstand
- Boot Fairs and other events on the Green
- Hythe Food and Drink Festival

## Attractions/Shopping/Retail

- Old High Street
- Seafront
- Royal Military Canal
- Romney Hythe & Dymchurch Railway
- Westenhanger Castle
- Saltwood Castle
- Eaton Lands Trust
- Brockhill Country Park
- Coastal watersports - rowing, kite surfing





- Canal water activities (boat hire, canoeing)



## Infrastructure Policy

Scanlon's Bridge - A259/A261- Upgrades to improve vehicular capacity, safety, ease of use, and cycle and pedestrian movements.

Flood Defences - Hythe Ranges - Reinforcement of Defences including construction of rock revetment.

Cinque Ports Cycle Way.

## Town Centre, Destination and Sustainability Policy

The Town Centre Study (2015) indicated that the principal aim of the Council should be to protect the role and function of Hythe Town Centre as the District's second largest centre.

## Employment Land Policy

Sites identified for employment in Hythe are becoming fewer, with some employment land being provided at Martello Lakes.

Pennypot and commercial areas in the west of Hythe are to be retained but the Northern part of the Smiths Medical site in Range Road is proposed to be re-developed for housing – (see Places and Policy Plan).

It is unlikely that there will be a significant growth in manufacturing jobs. There may be some growth in logistics. The main job growth will be in tourism, hospitality and the service sector. This can cover many individual sectors from construction to massage.

Post pandemic, the growth in people working at home or people who mix some time in the office and some time at home, coupled with easy access to the high-speed rail link to London will impact Hythe. Growth in this type of work is wholly dependant on fast broadband connections.

Hythe as a destination has a lot to offer, particularly for the staycation market and in terms of jobs growth. Tourism is the principal opportunity for Hythe.

## Related Initiatives

There are a number of initiatives that are currently ongoing within Hythe, Folkestone & Hythe and Kent areas. These related initiatives complement and support a number of the objectives within this economic plan.

The initiatives are in the form of four key areas.

### Town Centre / Sustainability

- Heritage Strategy (to be commissioned)
- White Cliffe Countryside Partnership
- Great British High Street
- Romney Marsh Partnership
- Roger De Haan Charitable Trust
- Shorncliffe Trust
- New Romney Town Council
- Dymchurch Parish Council

### Business Growth / Support / Advice

- Folkestone & Hythe Business Advisory Board
- Start-up and Business Support (Proactive)
- Inward investment and Locate in Kent
- Strategic and Key sites for retail and employment use (Local Plan, Employment Land Review)
- Romney Marsh Partnership
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce



- Pro-actions Business Briefings
- Folkestone & Hythe Apprenticeship Scheme
- Folkestone & Hythe District Council

## Marketing / Branding / Visitor Destination Business Broadband / Connectivity

- Growing calendar of other local events
- Hythe Town Council promotional and civic activities
- Hythe Business and Tourism Association
- Cycle Folkestone & Hythe
- Creative Foundation

## Business Broadband / Connectivity

- Superfast broadband

## Ambition

The Strategic Plan has been developed by Hythe Town Council based on the need for Hythe to maintain and improve in the future.

To help deliver the ambition, it is useful to consider a number of secondary objectives that will help the strategy evolve and allow partners to see that they are moving in the right direction.

“Be a bustling coastal town, recognised as the central Cinque Port that engages residents, supports businesses and attracts visitors...”

Aim / interest	Objective / theme	Target / outcome / value
1. Connectivity Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a more connected Hythe, improving transport and high-speed broadband connectivity to sustain a growing population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating connectivity to and within Hythe.</li> <li>• Improving high speed broadband connectivity.</li> <li>• Exploring multi-mode transport integration.</li> </ul>
2. Identity Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a cohesive Hythe brand identity to increase its recognition and diversify employment base.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repositioning a distinct identity.</li> <li>• Identifying a creative cluster providing help and support</li> <li>• Supporting business start-up and growth.</li> </ul>
3. Tourism Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To increase visitor numbers and improve the visitor experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing a tourist destination.</li> <li>• A new visitor guide is essential.</li> </ul>



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating a Heritage visitor package.</li> <li>• Enhancing a Food and Drink visitor package.</li> </ul>
4. Community Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To create a sense of place for the community to improve quality of life and reflect the needs of the social mix for young and old</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging young and old to explore, learn and be active.</li> <li>• Identifying housing needs.</li> <li>• Creating focal point(s) to gather and share.</li> <li>• Enhances and creates local distinctiveness and reinforces a sense of place.</li> <li>• Responds to local character.</li> <li>• Makes a positive contribution to the public realm.</li> </ul>
5. Partnering Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To partner and engage with like-minded local communities to respond to collective needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing united coastal community teams.</li> <li>• Listening to provide connective community facilities.</li> </ul>

Needs of the community and the intentions of the team to meet them.

Community Needs	Intention to meet Hythe's economic needs
Connectivity Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract investment to create a more connected Hythe for a growing population.</li> <li>• Improve access to high speed broadband and opportunities for older residents to acquire and develop new skills.</li> <li>• Explore the need for multi-mode transport integration to connect the RH&amp;DR, canal, high street and seafront.</li> </ul>
Identity Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a cohesive Hythe brand identity to increase its recognition and diversify the employment base.</li> <li>• Support business start-up and growth increasing focus on high value/ high quality jobs, apprenticeships and the skills required.</li> <li>• Build on emerging job growth and successes in the creative and heritage sectors.</li> </ul>
Heritage Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Hythe Civic Society on a strategy to retain the heritage assets in Hythe.</li> <li>• To maintain and enhance the Conservation Area</li> <li>• Promote Hythe as a Heritage Destination.</li> <li>• Promote and highlight Hythe as a Head Port in the Confederation of Cinque Ports.</li> </ul>
Tourism Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the High Street to improve visitor numbers and income flows to the local economy. A new visitor guide is essential.</li> <li>• Capitalise on heritage assets to encourage more visitors to a spend longer time in Hythe and spend more money.</li> <li>• Support the sustainable expansion of the Food and Drink offer already in Hythe.</li> </ul>
Community Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a sense of place for the community to improve quality of life and reflect the needs of the social mix for young and old.</li> <li>• Improve the public realm and create focal points to gather and share experiences.</li> <li>• Identify and support sustainable housing needs.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with local groups: Rotary, Age UK, Schools, Traders, Scouts and The Shed to deliver community projects.</li> <li>• Develop and promote a “Community Engagement App”.</li> </ul>
Partnering Hythe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner and engage with like-minded local communities to respond to collective needs.</li> <li>• Marketing united coastal community teams with New Romney, Dymchurch and Folkestone.</li> <li>• Listening to provide connective community facilities that promotes access to active lifestyles, incorporate local food artisans.</li> </ul>

## Challenges and Opportunities for Hythe

Socio-economic needs challenges	Socio-economic opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills training to deliver higher paid jobs.</li> <li>• Promote active, safe routes to walk, cycle, access to RH&amp;DR, ease traffic flows.</li> <li>• Cater for an ageing population, sustainably delivered over 20 years.</li> <li>• Deliver the infrastructure required for a growing population (young and ageing population) and promote the existing nearby HS1 links.</li> <li>• Ensuring education standards remain high, by supporting schools.</li> <li>• Sustain a stable employment base that supports start-up survival rates.</li> <li>• Nurture high-value skills in key sectors to diversify the employment base.</li> <li>• Appearance needs continuing maintenance, in particular the Hythe Conservation Area.</li> <li>• Residential development pressure threatening the Heritage Assets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent, distinct brand story for Hythe.</li> <li>• Coordinated approach with New Romney, Dymchurch and Folkestone.</li> <li>• More focused, accessible tourism information.</li> <li>• Tap strategically into a coordinated effort for the visitor economy.</li> <li>• Work in partnership with nearby towns and District to manage public realm.</li> <li>• Focus new office development in Hythe Town Centre.</li> <li>• Martello Lakes to be recognised as an employment site protected for businesses use.</li> <li>• Respond to changing work patterns, an increase in remote office working, and the need for local businesses to maintain</li> <li>• an online presence with Superfast Broadband.</li> <li>• Underdeveloped coast site in West Hythe</li> <li>• Promote healthy food and drink.</li> <li>• Promote an active lifestyle, incorporate local food artisans.</li> </ul>

## Challenges

It is imperative to maintain the historic character of Hythe while accommodating significant and appropriate development. That means providing for improved local transport, maintaining good public services, ensuring the beautiful Hythe town is preserved and offering opportunities for well-paid employment.

Hythe is identified as a Strategic Town, by the Kent Coastal Communities Group, to '...accommodate significant development - in so far that it is consistent with maintaining





historic character - appropriate to the needs of their wider hinterlands in Folkestone & Hythe, and maintaining the viability of their local transport hubs, town centres and higher order tourism, employment and public services'.

The Folkestone & Hythe Policy CSD7 seeks to attract additional employment to the town, especially within the town centre. Other measures proposed in the strategy include delivering public realm improvements that enhance pedestrian circulation within the main retail frontage area and improving the setting of historic buildings.

Additional mixed-use development will be focused to the West of the town and on the seafront. The strategy also calls for the expansion of Hythe's tourism and leisure industries.

## Regional Analysis

<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic/Connectivity/Regeneration</li> <li>• High Speed Rail (HS1) Rail St Pancras London via Folkestone 55 minutes, via Ashford 38 minutes.</li> <li>• Accessibility and proximity to London, the Continent and major urban hubs – accessibility by HS1 and road (M20).</li> <li>• Investment by businesses, e.g. Romney Hythe &amp; Dymchurch Railway / Hythe Imperial Hotel.</li> <li>• Part of a continuous stretch of sand and shingle from Dungeness to Folkestone.</li> <li>• Attractive gardens and green spaces</li> <li>• Walks, bridleways, and cycle ways well signposted.</li> <li>• Travel time to Folkestone Central or Ashford International to access HS1 to London.</li> </ul> <p><b>Identity/Character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of Hythe as a distinctive heritage area.</li> <li>• Well established, iconic High Street.</li> <li>• Quality and variety of contrasting coastal and countryside landscapes.</li> <li>• RH&amp;DR, Royal Military Canal, Cinque Port.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visitor Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range and quality of heritage assets across Hythe.</li> <li>• High profile organisations investing within Hythe e.g. Roger de Haan Charitable Trust.</li> <li>• Diversity of quality eateries.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic/Connectivity</li> <li>• Perception of poor-quality hotel accommodation.</li> <li>• Access within district – poor links between town and countryside.</li> <li>• Traffic on main road can be very busy.</li> <li>• Much of Hythe looks to Canterbury, Ashford and Folkestone for services and shopping.</li> </ul> <p><b>Identity/Character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage and directional information poor in certain areas.</li> <li>• Dispersion of iconic features.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visitor Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Un-coordinated approach to marketing at district and local area level amongst accommodation providers.</li> <li>• Fragmented approach to promoting and sharing events information.</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local authority providing support to specific tourism activity in Hythe e.g. Royal Military Canal.</li> <li>Pool of talented retirees, possible volunteers.</li> <li>Mix of employment e.g. medium-high tech industry and manufacturing, providing better paid and local full-time employment.</li> </ul> <p><b>Environment/Public Realm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wide, 3km long promenade.</li> <li>Royal Military Canal.</li> <li>Long distance Canal Path extends for 26M for walking, running and cycling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited resource and funding for delivery of tourism.</li> <li>Employment/Skills/Planning/Housing.</li> <li>Manufacturing and distribution jobs have reduced.</li> <li>High proportion of ageing population (We need to harness the experience and wisdom of this age group rather than see them as a weakness).</li> <li>Uptake of second home properties (has very mixed benefits).</li> <li>Areas of deprivation, focused on the West of the town around Reachfields and Churchfields.</li> </ul> <p><b>Environment/Public Realm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problems with dog fouling in specific areas.</li> <li>Limited car parking.</li> <li>No large community space for indoor events except privately owned, relatively expensive venue on the edge of the town.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p> <p><b>Economic/Connectivity/Regeneration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefit from large scale local regeneration and building developments on Folkestone Seafront, Harbour Arm.</li> <li>Growth in staycations and increase in overseas visitors.</li> <li>RH&amp;DR.</li> <li>Otterpool.</li> <li>WiFi in the High Street.</li> <li>Building on well-established networks e.g. Cinque Ports.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visitor Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link to Coastal Community Fund bid by New Romney team.</li> <li>Availability of relevant national data through Visit England/Visit Britain.</li> <li>Pilgrim Trail and Military connections</li> <li>Explore more sports and leisure facilities.</li> <li>Focus on marketing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Identity/Character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adding value to the England Coastal Path National Trail.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Threats</b></p> <p><b>Economic/Connectivity/Regeneration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of resource and funding to lead or co-ordinate delivery of tourism development and promotion.</li> <li>Operation Brock impacts visitor numbers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Visitor Economy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competition from neighbouring districts with strong heritage assets – e.g. Dover and Canterbury (Whitstable and Herne Bay).</li> <li>Competition from neighbouring districts with strong coastal product – e.g. Thanet, Canterbury, Rother and Hastings – which have blue flag beaches.</li> </ul> <p><b>Identity/Character</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hythe's offer becoming overshadowed by increased profile of Folkestone.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-border working with Folkestone and New Romney.</li> <li>• Potential to develop the town square as a focus for activities.</li> <li>• Be recognised for Food Festival.</li> <li>• Employment/Skills/Planning/Housing.</li> <li>• Stimulate design, arts and IT business (collaboration with Folkestone and Romney Marsh).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Employment/Skills/Planning/Housing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second home buying.</li> </ul> <p><b>Environment/Public Realm</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic congestion and increasing difficulty parking with no easy solution in sight: i.e Park&amp; Ride or joined up (with station) convenient and cheap public transport.</li> <li>• Lack of facilities for teenagers and young adults.</li> </ul>
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Hythe should use its existing RH&DR and close by HS1 connectivity strengths to maximise opportunities to improve integrated links with the seafront, High Street and canal and partner with nearby communities and like-minded bodies.

The existing un-coordinated approach to marketing Hythe's identity should be addressed in order to exploit its upmarket tourism and 'best day trip' opportunities by positioning the range of quality heritage assets across Hythe.

Promote Hythe's strengths as a tourism destination by expanding the successful Food and Drink Festival.



## HYTHE SHOULD...

Over the 15year horizon in the year 2037, things will have changed. Automation will be everywhere, work and life patterns will have changed, the UK will have long exited the European Union. Hythe's population is already older than both the average of Folkestone & Hythe District Council and Kent, and there is no information to suggest this will change.

## Recommendations

1. Hythe Town Council should endeavour to ensure that Hythe is as safe an environment as possible.
2. Hythe Town Council should do their utmost to ensure that Hythe is as clean as possible.
3. Hythe Town Council should strive to promote art and culture to promote the wellbeing of the local community.
4. Hythe Town Council should use their best efforts to ensure that Hythe High Street is maintained as a community hub and retail centre.
5. Hythe Town Council should try to develop landmark events in and around the Council's facilities in Oaklands Park and The Green.
6. Hythe Town Council should do their utmost to promote the Hythe Museum and Library (including environmental education and local history).
7. Hythe Town Council should strive to protect and enhance Hythe's conservation area, historic buildings, heritage assets and features.
8. Hythe Town Council should use their best efforts to develop opportunities for exercise for all ages and physical abilities.
9. Hythe Town Council should endeavour to accelerate work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2025 and encourage others to follow suit, including the District and County Council's and Central Government.
10. Hythe Town Council should strive to increase leisure, local education and development opportunities for our young people, 16 and under. Actively engage with Hythe youth groups to establish a Hythe Youth Parliament

## Connectivity

1. Identify and promote separate walks and cycle routes for pedestrians along the promenade and canal to support the case to create pop-up cycle hire and support sustainable connectivity.
2. Identifying improvement for Wayfaring / Wayfinding for pedestrians, cyclists and cars - signage and links to improve connectivity within Hythe to the seafront, and High Street and across the canal.



3. Identify and lobby for funds to provide an electric bus to circle regularly in summer from Sandling station to Hythe Town Centre and then to seafront.

## Identity

4. Managing the repositioning of a distinct Hythe identity/logo that reinforces Hythe's values to help define its key messaging to include its unique heritage assets and values.

5. Ensure Hythe is well represented, and Hythe businesses are promoted through an online portal, to help build a case to position an Independent High Street offer to enter and win 'Great British High Street' awards.

## Tourism

6. Create a Hythe Destination Management Plan based on the Folkestone & Hythe Destination Management Plan to identify and engage with Hythe tourism ambassadors and independent business advocates to develop bespoke packaged strategies to promote the whole area.

7. Hythe Tourism Website, refresh and update content, benchmark other tourism related websites about Hythe based on the new [visitromneymarsh.com](http://visitromneymarsh.com), to champion existing visitor attractions, and promote existing visitor accommodation.

8. Identify and secure funding for a shared tourist office or person, potentially re-using an empty retail or business space on the High Street. This will help diversify and promote the Hythe offer to promote key events like the We Love Hythe Life Food and Drink festival.

## Community

9. Develop an inter-generational project to promote the positive influence of young people e.g. older residents educating young people about local history and the local coastal community and work with local groups to develop this.

10. Identify more useable public space to create a focal point(s) to gather and share public art, local community performances and regular town centre activities in and around the High Street in Hythe.

## Partnering

11. Work and engage with the local Coastal Community Teams of New Romney, Dymchurch and Folkestone to develop a united coastal community strategy, for example a Cinque Ports Strategy and co-promotion (Cinque Port Cycle Way/Hythe ranges).

## Building Resilience against Climate Change



We will work with partners in ensuring a clean, attractive and safe environment for residents, visitors and businesses.

We recognise the connection between environmental quality and health and wellbeing (both mental and physical) and we will embed this in service provision and planning. We will work with both Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Kent County Council in providing more opportunities for active travel and recreation, improved cycling and walking routes and partnership work with health and the voluntary sector to increase the benefits.

We will take positive measures to encourage biodiversity, both by adapting existing practices (e.g. in relation to grass cutting, tree and flower planting) and by ensuring a net biodiversity gain wherever possible.

Internally, we will improve the Council's energy and resource efficiency. Over the longer term, we will adapt our operating model to become increasingly environmentally sustainable.

We will, through the planning process, support higher sustainability standards in new developments, including solar power, rainwater harvesting and electric vehicle charging points.

We will take advantage where possible of initiatives to retrofit energy efficiency measures in existing HTC buildings, and working with partners, we will promote these actively.

We will seek to drive up recycling rates, and we will work with partners to increase the re-use of materials.

Education is a key part of increasing environmental awareness. We will work with partners such as the Bumblebee Trust, Hythe Environmental Community Group, schools and community groups to raise awareness of the many environmental challenges and we will take measures to raise pride in Hythe.



## Bibliography

Hythe Coastal Community Team (2017) Economic Plan 2017-2037 (VOL 1), Kent.