



# Hastings Castle

Audience Development Plan

September 2022

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# Hastings Castle

## Audience Development Plan

September 2022

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction to the Audience Development Plan

This report presents the Audience Development Plan for the Hastings Castle project. The report has been commissioned by the Hastings Borough Council as part of the Town Deal submission of the project and subsequent application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The Audience Development Plan builds on the previously submitted work from Hastings Borough Council to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and has been prepared by Mott MacDonald with the support of specialist heritage consultants Design Lab London Limited. It should be considered a draft document and recut following the outputs of an Activity Plan, currently planned to be completed during the development phase of the project.

The plan aims to bring change for Hastings Castle and achieve a range of audience aims. Focus on the Audience Development Plan is on social, financial, and educational activities whilst helping to manage the competing priorities for the project.

It should be noted that this Audience Development Plan is not designed to act as a marketing or campaign plan for a specific activity or season at the Castle, nor is it an outreach initiative. The Audience Development Plan in this instance rather sets the context for such activities and informs a delivery plan on behalf on the Council organisation.

## 1.2 Hastings Castle - Project Overview

Hastings Borough Council has set out a clear vision to turn Hastings Castle into a must-see visitor destination, providing full access for all with a real link between the building and the battle that made the town famous around the world. The site needs to re-tell the Castle's story using all the available technology of today and implement the infrastructure to improve the visitor experience ensuring prosperity, sustainability, and growth.

The project focuses on the following key areas that cover – Hastings Castle, Ladies Parlour, the upper station of the West Hill Lift (including café and public toilets), as well as the lift carriages. In order to transform Hastings Castle into a leading destination, this proposed project includes making the following provision.

- Making the West Hill lift fully accessible.
- Refurbishing the West Hill lift upper station, café and public toilets and adding an Interpretation Centre.
- Re-instating the original entrance to the Castle via a connection from Ladies Parlour.
- A covered area within the Castle, subject to Historic England agreement.
- Landscaping the surrounding grounds.
- Incorporating digital technologies to vastly improve the visitor experience.

The above sets out core strategies to deliver the necessary interventions that align with the Castles ambition and vision.

### 1.3 Audience Development Plan Background

This Audience Development Plan should be read in conjunction with other reports related to the National Lottery Heritage Fund application. These include:

- The proposals for the interventions in the form of the RIBA Stage 1 Design Report.
- The cost report for the Hastings Castle project.
- The Interpretation and Business Plan for the Hastings Castle project.
- Hastings Castle Heritage Statement.
- Stakeholder Engagement Report and Public Consultation Exercise.



**Figure 1 - Hastings Castle (Grounds Overlooking Ladies Parlour)**

### 1.4 Basis of Information

This Audience Development Plan contains and relies on information provided by third parties including Hastings Borough Council, and the current management of the Castle (Blue Reef) as an example. Information provided by third parties has been sourced within the document. Where this information has been made available under a Non-Declaration (i.e. confidentiality) Agreement between Mott MacDonald and third parties, the information is held by Mott MacDonald. Mott MacDonald has been provided with several documents through various 'Requests for Information' from the Council including Marketing Strategy, Heritage Reports, Previous Technical Studies, Tourism Assessments, Conservation Management Plans, National Lottery Heritage Fund Bid Documents, and Interpretation Surveys.

## 1.5 Audience Development Plan Objectives and Methodology

The purpose of this Audience Development Plan was to develop an explicit and suitably detailed Audience Development Plan that adheres to the National Lottery Heritage Fund guidelines, along with this bringing about change and achieving a range of audience aims.

This Audience Development Plan has been developed using primary and secondary research. Desk research has informed the key aspects of the Plan. Consultation workshops have been carried out with Officers from Hastings Borough Council and stakeholder groups identified further into this Audience Development Plan.

## 1.6 Hastings Strategic Overview

Hastings is located on the south coast of England. It has almost eight miles of coastline and is surrounded by the mainly rural district of Rother. The natural and open space of the High Weald is located to the north and Hastings Country Park to the east. Combe Valley Countryside Park lies to the western side of the town.

Hastings developed from a small fishing port to a substantial town and is known worldwide for its rich history including the Norman Conquest in 1066, almost 1,000 years ago. Hastings' history is shaped partly by its relationship to the sea and the physical constraints of its environment, wrapped as it is by the rural landscape of Rother to the north, east and west, and the sea to the south. It is also influenced by its distance of just 65 miles from central London.

Following a period of significant economic decline over the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hastings is at a turning point in terms of its regeneration journey.

Over the last 20 years it has recently benefitted from considerable capital investment, including: Hastings Station rebuilding; a new link road freeing land for employment and housing. University Centre Hastings (part of University of Brighton); a new Further Education college; new office blocks at Priory Quarter; Robertson Street and Innovation Centre; investment in new school buildings' new cultural assets – Pier, Source Park, Hastings Contemporary, Stade open space, Classroom on the Coast; neighbourhood investments in housing, heritage and public realm.

There have been setbacks and not all the investments have delivered the outcomes originally expected. The University of Brighton left Hastings in 2019 leaving three large buildings standing empty, and the Pier went into liquidation in 2018 following a major refurbishment and is now under new ownership.

The opportunities created by the Town Deal funding opportunity are expected to kick start the next stage of Hastings renewal of inclusive growth, with greater and better direct benefits to residents living in the most deprived areas.

Hastings was a major town long before the coming of the railway in Victorian times, which is when most seaside resorts developed. Coastal towns which had 180-degree catchment areas were real positives for investment then and not the negative as sometimes perceived now.



**Figure 2 - Hastings Connectivity Overview**  
*Source: Hastings Castle, RIBA Stage 1 Design Report*

## 1.7 Current Challenges

Mott MacDonald’s strategic document review highlighted challenges facing the Hastings economy:

- Hastings is the 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived town in England with a quarter of children living in poverty. Thus, highlighting the need for the Council to remain committed to changing this and other intrinsic struggles through recognising and acting upon them. Low-income levels should be considered when decided on admission fees etc.
- Jobs density (jobs per person) is just 0.66 well below the South East with 0.88. Unemployment traditionally hovering around 5%. 22% of the working age have no qualifications to report. Hastings has a significant number of retirees when compared to the average of England with 53% for Hastings and 45% across England. Volunteer audiences and involvement should be continued as previously in this Audience Development Plan and more widely with the Hastings Castle project.
- There is a marked imbalance in the demographic of the 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle with a higher percentage of residents over 60 than the England average and a missing generation between the ages of 20 – 39. Thus, highlighting the need to focus on improving opportunities for young people in Hastings to work and live in the area, encouraging them to stay and settle through projects such as the Castle.

## 1.8 Relevant Strategies and Investment

Several strategies are under development or in place which are attempting to address the challenges outlined above. There is considerable opportunity for the Hastings Castle project to contribute, particularly in terms of encouraging young people to stay in the area, fostering pride in the history and heritage of Hastings, and improving economic opportunities through tourism. Initiatives of relevant to the project are as follows.

### 1.8.1 Local Policy Alignment

Strategy / Initiative	Details	Relevance
<b>Hastings Draft Local Plan.</b>	The Council introduced a draft local plan in 2019 following changes to the National Planning Policy Framework. The local plan for 2019 – 2039 provides a plan for the development and infrastructure of borough needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project will enhance the significance of the Castle.</li> <li>• The visitor attraction will be transformed into a sustainable organisation, that demonstrates economic viability.</li> <li>• Provides increased reason to visit the Town Centre.</li> </ul>
<b>Hastings Culture Led Regeneration Strategy.</b>	The Culture led regeneration strategy for 2016 – 2021 placed culture at the heart of Hastings’ development, recognising the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project will help in developing and promoting a refreshed identity for Hastings which</li> </ul>

	<p>important contribution it has already made and in a bid to maximise future potential.</p>	<p>brings contemporary culture and heritage together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps demonstrate the towns distinctive heritage to generate local pride and draw visitors and tourists both nationally and internationally.</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for Hastings Castle to be better conserved and protected.</li> <li>• Will address the National Lottery Heritage Fund's suggestion around potential to make better use of heritage assets through increased activity.</li> <li>• The Castle organisation is expected to draw on support from local voluntary groups and organisations.</li> <li>• The Hastings Castle project supports the local heritage sector in developing marketing capacity and skills, particularly through the use of social media.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hastings Town Investment Plan.</b></p>	<p>Sets out a long-term strategy for change to drive sustainable and inclusive long-term economic growth in Hastings up to 2030, including recovery from the pandemic. This is an agreement between Central Government, Hastings Borough Council, and the Hastings Town Deal Board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project is expected to transform the World Heritage Destination, creating new jobs and an increase in visitors.</li> <li>• Improves the overall condition of the Castle asset and combats its current hidden nature.</li> <li>• Addresses the access and connection of the Castle to Ladies Parlour, the Old Town and links to the Station and the seafront.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hastings Heritage Strategy.</b></p>	<p>The Hastings Heritage Strategy identifies the heritage of the town in the broadest sense, to assess</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hastings Castle will move towards the heart of understanding, through</li> </ul>

<p>its significance, and to suggest means and priorities for conserving and sustaining it in support of the Culture-Led Regeneration Strategy and in the context of wider economic and cultural regeneration of Hastings.</p>	<p>storytelling, appreciating and promoting the heritage of Hastings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Castle will be positioned as a key visitor focus of 1066 Country alongside Pevensey and Battle, as so attract a cultural tourism audience which will also be encouraged to explore the Old Town of Hastings.</li> <li>• Direct management by the Council will facilitate improvements to the Castle and provide access to grant funding sources.</li> <li>• The National Lottery Funding bid represents the wider Castle site and the importance to the public.</li> </ul>
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### 1.8.2 Regional Policy Alignment

Strategy / Initiative	Details	Relevance
<b>East Sussex Cultural Strategy.</b>	The 2013 – 2023 East Sussex Cultural Strategy is the interface between regional, national and international policy and local areas, a two-way relationship which provides strategic context for local policy and activity whilst projecting a collective voice at a strategic level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project attempts to provide a heritage experience that is available to a wider audience and enhances the quality of life.</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity to attract and retain other businesses.</li> <li>• Support a thriving and high value visitor economy, providing a great place to enjoy, renowned for its unique heritage.</li> </ul>
<b>East Sussex Economic Recovery Plan.</b>	The East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan focuses on businesses, skills and employment in a post COVID-19 landscape. The plan supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an opportunity to attract and retain other businesses.</li> </ul>

activities being progressed at a local level, including climate change and health and wellbeing initiatives.

- Support a thriving and high value visitor economy, providing a great place to enjoy, renowned for its unique heritage.
- Develop heritage specific skills, particularly amongst young people.
- The Hastings Castle project will work with the voluntary sector to develop activities for residents, acknowledging the significant effects on wellbeing caused by the pandemic.
- Encouraging engagement and diversity of audience for Hastings Castle.
- Consideration of ways in which clean energy technologies and de-carbonisation can be accelerated within the development.
- Grow the digital presence of Hastings Castle.

**East Sussex  
Council Plan  
2022 / 2023**

The Council Plan sets out the ambitions of what East Sussex Council plan to achieve by 2025 for their priority outcomes associated with driving sustainable economic growth, keeping vulnerable people safe, helping people help themselves, and making best use of resources now and in the future.

- The Hastings Castle project will grow the visitor economy by raising the visibility of Sussex, enhancing perceptions, increasing the number of visitors to the coast, increasing length of stay and spend.
- Boosted East Sussex economy and creating more jobs by through Council management of the heritage asset.
- The Hastings Castle project is proposed to deliver through strong and sustained partnership working across the public,



voluntary community, and private sectors to achieve maximum benefits.

### 1.8.3 National Policy Alignment

Strategy / Initiative	Details	Relevance
<p><b>National Planning Policy Framework</b></p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for development can be produced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project sets out a positive strategy for the enjoyment of the historic environment which is currently at risk through decay and neglect.</li> <li>• Prevents the loss of Hastings Castle and presents reasonable steps to ensure that it doesn't occur in Hastings.</li> <li>• Consideration has been given to how to meet the need for continued maintenance and repair of Hastings Castle.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Lottery Heritage Funding Framework 2019 – 2024</b></p>	<p>The Strategic Funding Framework sets out the Lottery's vision and the principles to guide investment for the five years. It sets out how they expect to invest around £1.2 billion in the UK's heritage and cultural sectors, will introduce a streamlined grant-making portfolio, increasingly focus on wellbeing, capacity building and innovation (both nationally and internationally), explore the use of social investment, commit to increased devolution in decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project brings the ruins into better condition, inspiring the value of heritage.</li> <li>• The organisation is expected to be more robust, enterprising, and forward looking than under the current management.</li> <li>• Provides a greater contribution to the local and UK economy.</li> <li>• Reflects the benefits of National Lottery players, particularly disabled people, young people, people from minority ethnic and LGBT+ communities, and power from lower socio-economic backgrounds.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Levelling Up White Paper / Towns Fund Prospectus</b></p>	<p>The Central Government fund looks set to address growth constraints. The white paper outlines the importance of a strong economy, cultural / heritage facilities which bring people together and contribute to the quality of life. The strategy also focuses on growing the economy of cities to bring back these facilities and drive improvements in living standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project ensures access to heritage facilities for hard-to-reach segments.</li> <li>• Supports the strength of the historic environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</b></p>	<p>The Net Zero Strategy sets out clear policies and proposals for keeping the UK on track for coming carbon budgets, ambitious targets around the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and then sets out the vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project supports active travel, also ensuring that clean growth principles underpin investment in the scheme.</li> </ul>

## 1.9 Heritage Transformations in Hastings

There are many significant transformations which reflect how heritage has been a central feature of Hastings Borough Council’s ambition to regenerate the town.

- Jerwood Gallery and the Stade open space – the investment by the gallery, the council and other partners have transformed the former coach and lorry park, and the gallery, Stade Hall, the classroom on the coast and Stade open space are now a central focus of Hastings’ cultural activity.
- Townscape Heritage Initiatives – restoration of St Leonards seafront buildings, Kings Road shop fronts, Christ Church, Pelham Place, and currently in progress St Leonards Congregational Church and many other buildings. Parts of the town, including the Old Town and the Kings Road / Norman Road area of St Leonards have now achieved a new momentum where they are favourably compared to the regenerated parts of towns elsewhere.
- White Rock Baths and its reuse as a BMX / skate park by a local business – winning an Historic England ‘Heritage Angel’ prize in 2017.
- Alexandra Park and St Leonards Gardens – both awarded green flag status since their restoration.

## 1.10 Key Messages / Conclusion

- Overall, the Hastings Castle project has a strong strategic fit with the wider objectives of the Hastings Borough Council, East Sussex Council and Central Government to address challenges related to town centre footfall, jobs, economic growth and tourism outcomes.
- Although there has been considerable investment in Hastings, the impact on economic wellbeing on many of its residents has been limited. Overall deprivation in the town remains stubbornly high and, in some areas, it is getting worse. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, on the overall 'rank' measure at local authority level, Hastings has fallen from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority area in England.
- Jobs density (jobs per person) is just 0.66 well below the South East with 0.88. Unemployment traditionally hovering around 5%. 22% of the working age have no qualifications to report. Hastings has a significant number of retirees when compared to the average of England with 53% for Hastings and 45% England.
- There is a marked imbalance in the demographic of the 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle with a higher percentage of residents over 60 than the England average and a missing generation between the ages of 20 – 39. Thus, highlighting the need to focus on improving opportunities for young people in Hastings to work and live in the area, encouraging them to stay and settle through this project.
- Previous regeneration programmes have primarily relied on economic 'trickle down' effect which has never materialised. The Hastings Castle project will require dedicated resource to capitalise on investment.
- The tourism sector has slightly declined with 240 million trips made to East Sussex in 2019, down 3% from 247 trips in 2018. In total, spend increased by a significant 28% in the region in 2019 compared with the previous year (from £2,020 billion to £2,591 billion).

## 1.11 Audience Development Plan Structure

The remainder of this Audience Development Plan is structured as follows:

- Section 2: The Strategic Context – this section of the Audience Development Plan sets out the wider strategic context that could impact on audience development and engagements with the Hastings Castle project.
- Section 3: Market Appraisal – this section of the Audience Development Plan considers Hastings generally and the 1-hour drive time catchment of Hastings Castle specifically. In appraising the market consideration has been given to the scale and characteristics of the resident and visiting population, and the performance of heritage related visitor attractions and associated businesses.
- Section 4: Audience Mapping – this section of the Audience Development Plan presents key findings from desk-based research in relation to potential audiences for Hastings Castle against an analysis of audience segments who engaged within a 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle.

- Section 5: Comparator Analysis – this section of the Audience Development Plan provides a comparator analysis as a useful way of benchmarking other schemes and initiatives within the UK which share an exact similar focus. In considering their performance the plan assesses what has worked well and draws lessons to inform the development of the Hastings Castle project.
- Section 6: Audience Development Strategy – this section of the Audience Development Plan sets out the strategy and actions to encourage enhanced and extended engagement with Hastings Castle.
- Section 7: Next Steps and Action Plan – this section of the Audience Development Plan sets out the next steps and action plan to develop audiences of Hastings Castle. This includes a summary of initiatives and activities that can contribute to developing audiences for Hastings Castle in conjunction with the project.

## 2 The Strategic Context

### 2.1 Introduction

This section of the Audience Development Plan sets out the strategic context for the Hastings Castle project. We have considered the socio-economic profile and various development strategies for the wider Hastings area and beyond to position the Hastings Castle project in the current and future strategic environment, determining current priorities and opportunities to which the Hastings Castle project can effectively contribute.

### 2.2 Hastings Strategic Overview

Hastings is located on the south coast of England. It has almost eight miles of coastline and is surrounded by the mainly rural district of Rother. The natural and open space of the High Weald is located to the north and Hastings Country Park to the east. Combe Valley Countryside Park lies to the western side of the town.

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The opportunities created by the Town Deal funding opportunity are expected to kick start the next stage of Hastings renewal of inclusive growth, with greater and better direct benefits to residents living in the most deprived areas.

Hastings was a major town long before the coming of the railway in Victorian times, which is when most seaside resorts developed. Coastal towns which had 180-degree catchment areas were real positives for investment then and not the negative as sometimes perceived now.

## 2.3 Current Challenges

Mott MacDonald’s strategic document review highlighted challenges facing the Hastings economy:

- Hastings is the 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived town in England with a quarter of children living in poverty. Thus, highlighting the need for the Council to remain committed to changing this and other intrinsic struggles through recognising and acting upon them. Low-income levels should be considered when decided on admission fees etc.
- Jobs density (jobs per person) is just 0.66 well below the Southeast with 0.88. Unemployment traditionally hovering around 5%. 22% of the working age have no qualifications to report. Hastings has a significant number of retirees when compared to the average of England with 53% for Hastings and 45% across England. Volunteer audiences and involvement should be continued as previously in this Audience Development Plan and more widely with the Hastings Castle project.
- There is a marked imbalance in the demographic of the 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle with a higher percentage of residents over 60 than the England average and a missing generation between the ages of 20 – 39. Thus, highlighting the need to focus on improving opportunities for young people in Hastings to work and live in the area, encouraging them to stay and settle through projects such as the Castle.

## 2.4 Relevant Strategies and Investment

Several strategies are under development or in place which are attempting to address the challenges outlined above. There is considerable opportunity for the Hastings Castle project to contribute, particularly in terms of encouraging young people to stay in the area, fostering pride in the history and heritage of Hastings, and improving economic opportunities through tourism. Initiatives of relevant to the project are as follows.

### 2.4.1 Local Policy Alignment

Strategy / Initiative	Details	Relevance
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<b>Hastings Culture Led Regeneration Strategy.</b>	The Culture led regeneration strategy for 2016 – 2021 placed culture at the heart of Hastings’ development, recognising the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project will help in developing and promoting a refreshed identity for Hastings which</li> </ul>

	<p>important contribution it has already made and in a bid to maximise future potential.</p>	<p>brings contemporary culture and heritage together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helps demonstrate the towns distinctive heritage to generate local pride and draw visitors and tourists both nationally and internationally.</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for Hastings Castle to be better conserved and protected.</li> <li>• Will address the National Lottery Heritage Fund's suggestion around potential to make better use of heritage assets through increased activity.</li> <li>• The Castle organisation is expected to draw on support from local voluntary groups and organisations.</li> <li>• The Hastings Castle project supports the local heritage sector in developing marketing capacity and skills, particularly using social media.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hastings Town Investment Plan.</b></p>	<p>Sets out a long-term strategy for change to drive sustainable and inclusive long-term economic growth in Hastings up to 2030, including recovery from the pandemic. This is an agreement between Central Government, Hastings Borough Council, and the Hastings Town Deal Board.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project is expected to transform the World Heritage Destination, creating new jobs and an increase in visitors.</li> <li>• Improves the overall condition of the Castle asset and combats its current hidden nature.</li> <li>• Addresses the access and connection of the Castle to Ladies Parlour, the Old Town and links to the Station and the seafront.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hastings Heritage Strategy.</b></p>	<p>The Hastings Heritage Strategy identifies the heritage of the town in the broadest sense, to assess</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hastings Castle will move towards the heart of understanding, through</li> </ul>

<p>its significance, and to suggest means and priorities for conserving and sustaining it in support of the Culture-Led Regeneration Strategy and in the context of wider economic and cultural regeneration of Hastings.</p>	<p>storytelling, appreciating and promoting the heritage of Hastings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Castle will be positioned as a key visitor focus of 1066 Country alongside Pevensey and Battle, as so attract a cultural tourism audience which will also be encouraged to explore the Old Town of Hastings.</li> <li>• Direct management by the Council will facilitate improvements to the Castle and provide access to grant funding sources.</li> <li>• The National Lottery Funding bid represents the wider Castle site and the importance to the public.</li> </ul>
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### 2.4.2 Regional Policy Alignment

Strategy / Initiative	Details	Relevance
<b>East Sussex Cultural Strategy.</b>	The 2013 – 2023 East Sussex Cultural Strategy is the interface between regional, national, and international policy and local areas, a two-way relationship which provides strategic context for local policy and activity whilst projecting a collective voice at a strategic level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project attempts to provide a heritage experience that is available to a wider audience and enhances the quality of life.</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity to attract and retain other businesses.</li> <li>• Support a thriving and high value visitor economy, providing a great place to enjoy, renowned for its unique heritage.</li> </ul>
<b>East Sussex Economic Recovery Plan.</b>	The East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan focuses on businesses, skills and employment in a post COVID-19 landscape. The plan supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides an opportunity to attract and retain other businesses.</li> </ul>



activities being progressed at a local level, including climate change and health and wellbeing initiatives.

- Support a thriving and high value visitor economy, providing a great place to enjoy, renowned for its unique heritage.
- Develop heritage specific skills, particularly amongst young people.
- The Hastings Castle project will work with the voluntary sector to develop activities for residents, acknowledging the significant effects on wellbeing caused by the pandemic.
- Encouraging engagement and diversity of audience for Hastings Castle.
- Consideration of ways in which clean energy technologies and de-carbonisation can be accelerated within the development.
- Grow the digital presence of Hastings Castle.

**East Sussex Council Plan 2022 / 2023**

The Council Plan sets out the ambitions of what East Sussex Council plan to achieve by 2025 for their priority outcomes associated with driving sustainable economic growth, keeping vulnerable people safe, helping people help themselves, and making best use of resources now and in the future.

- The Hastings Castle project will grow the visitor economy by raising the visibility of Sussex, enhancing perceptions, increasing the number of visitors to the coast, increasing length of stay and spend.
- Boosted East Sussex economy and creating more jobs by through Council management of the heritage asset.
- The Hastings Castle project is proposed to deliver through strong and sustained partnership working across the public,

voluntary community, and private sectors to achieve maximum benefits.

### 2.4.3 National Policy Alignment

Strategy / Initiative	Details	Relevance
<p><b>National Planning Policy Framework</b></p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for development can be produced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project sets out a positive strategy for the enjoyment of the historic environment which is currently at risk through decay and neglect.</li> <li>• Prevents the loss of Hastings Castle and presents reasonable steps to ensure that it doesn't occur in Hastings.</li> <li>• Consideration has been given to how to meet the need for continued maintenance and repair of Hastings Castle.</li> </ul>
<p><b>National Lottery Heritage Funding Framework 2019 – 2024</b></p>	<p>The Strategic Funding Framework sets out the Lottery's vision and the principles to guide investment for the five years. It sets out how they expect to invest around £1.2 billion in the UK's heritage and cultural sectors, will introduce a streamlined grant-making portfolio, increasingly focus on wellbeing, capacity building and innovation (both nationally and internationally), explore the use of social investment, commit to increased devolution in decision-making.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project brings the ruins into better condition, inspiring the value of heritage.</li> <li>• The organisation is expected to be more robust, enterprising, and forward looking than under the current management.</li> <li>• Provides a greater contribution to the local and UK economy.</li> <li>• Reflects the benefits of National Lottery players, particularly disabled people, young people, people from minority ethnic and LGBT+ communities, and power from lower socio-economic backgrounds.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Levelling Up White Paper / Towns Fund Prospectus</b></p>	<p>The Central Government fund looks set to address growth constraints. The white paper outlines the importance of a strong economy, cultural / heritage facilities which bring people together and contribute to the quality of life. The strategy also focuses on growing the economy of cities to bring back these facilities and drive improvements in living standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project ensures access to heritage facilities for hard-to-reach segments.</li> <li>• Supports the strength of the historic environment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener</b></p>	<p>The Net Zero Strategy sets out clear policies and proposals for keeping the UK on track for coming carbon budgets, ambitious targets around the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), and then sets out the vision for a decarbonised economy in 2050.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hastings Castle project supports active travel, also ensuring that clean growth principles underpin investment in the scheme.</li> </ul>

## 2.5 Heritage Transformations in Hastings

There are many significant transformations which reflect how heritage has been a central feature of Hastings Borough Council’s ambition to regenerate the town.

- Jerwood Gallery and the Stade open space – the investment by the gallery, the council and other partners have transformed the former coach and lorry park, and the gallery, Stade Hall, the classroom on the coast and Stade open space are now a central focus of Hastings’ cultural activity.
- Townscape Heritage Initiatives – restoration of St Leonards seafront buildings, Kings Road shop fronts, Christ Church, Pelham Place, and currently in progress St Leonards Congregational Church and many other buildings. Parts of the town, including the Old Town and the Kings Road / Norman Road area of St Leonards have now achieved a new momentum where they are favourably compared to the regenerated parts of towns elsewhere.
- White Rock Baths and its reuse as a BMX / skate park by a local business – winning an Historic England ‘Heritage Angel’ prize in 2017.
- Alexandra Park and St Leonards Gardens – both awarded green flag status since their restoration.

## 2.6 Key Messages / Conclusion

- Overall, the Hastings Castle project has a strong strategic fit with the wider objectives of the Hastings Borough Council, East Sussex Council and Central Government to address challenges related to town centre footfall, jobs, economic growth and tourism outcomes.
- Although there has been considerable investment in Hastings, the impact on economic wellbeing on many of its residents has been limited. Overall deprivation in the town remains stubbornly high and, in some areas, it is getting worse. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019, on the overall 'rank' measure at local authority level, Hastings has fallen from the 20<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority area in England.
- Jobs density (jobs per person) is just 0.66 well below the South East with 0.88. Unemployment traditionally hovering around 5%. 22% of the working age have no qualifications to report. Hastings has a significant number of retirees when compared to the average of England with 53% for Hastings and 45% England.
- There is a marked imbalance in the demographic of the 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle with a higher percentage of residents over 60 than the England average and a missing generation between the ages of 20 – 39. Thus, highlighting the need to focus on improving opportunities for young people in Hastings to work and live in the area, encouraging them to stay and settle through this project.
- Previous regeneration programmes have primarily relied on economic 'trickle down' effect which has never materialised. The Hastings Castle project will require dedicated resource to capitalise on investment.
- The tourism sector has slightly declined with 240 million trips made to East Sussex in 2019, down 3% from 247 trips in 2018. In total, spend increased by a significant 28% in the region in 2019 compared with the previous year (from £2,020 billion to £2,591 billion).

## 3 Market Appraisal

### 3.1 Introduction

This section of the Audience Development Plan assesses the market for Hastings' Castle considering the local market and associated catchment for the visitor attraction as well as the visiting population, and the performance of heritage related visitor attractions and associated businesses in close vicinity.

This exercise is an important pre-cursor for the development of an Action Plan for Hastings Castle. The market appraisal principally draws from desk-based research but is complemented by primary research gained during a site visit and several in-person engagement sessions.

### 3.2 Local Market

The Hastings Castle project is reliant on residents and those situated in the surrounding catchment to engage with the visitor attraction post intervention. This section considers Hastings generally and the 1-hour drive time catchment of Hastings Castle specifically. Figure 2 below illustrates the extent of the catchment in a map.

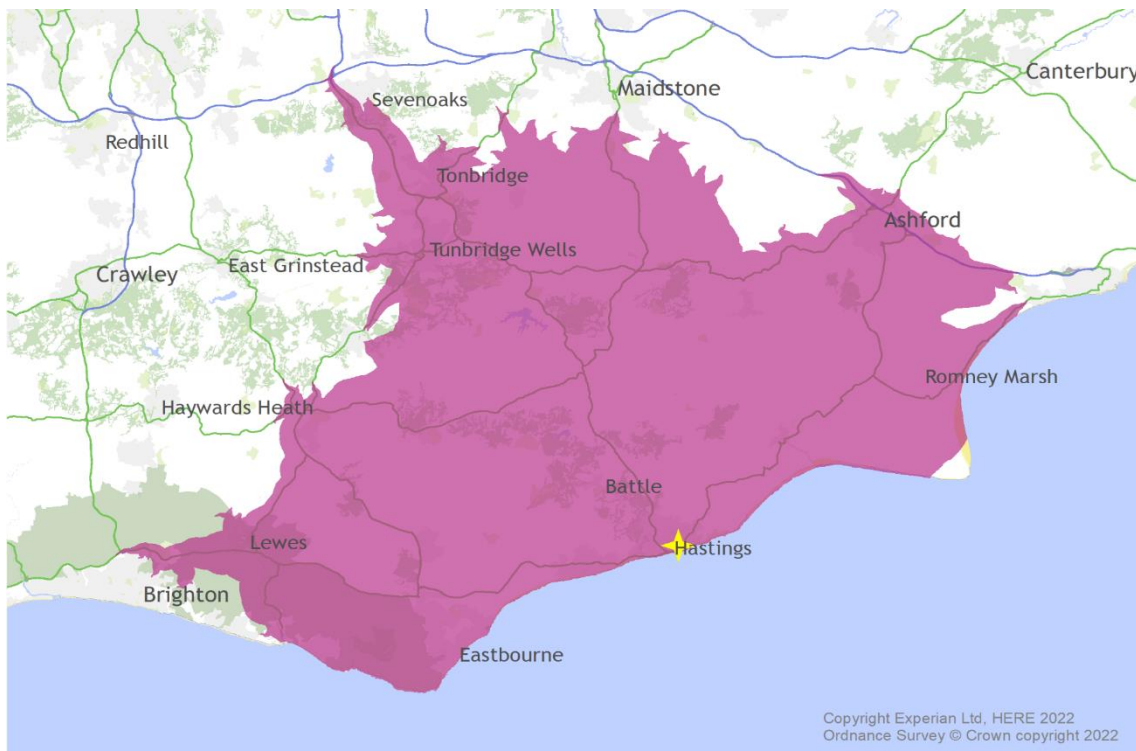


Figure 2 – Map Illustrating 1 Hour Drive Time Catchment of Hastings Castle

### 3.2.1 Population of the Catchment

The total adult population (15+) of the 1-hour drive time catchment for Hastings Castle is 712,025, and the total for the base area (England) is 46,663,612. Based on where Hastings Castle is currently drawing audience and the competing visitor attractions (detailed further later in this section), the Audience Agency recommend that focusing on the 1-hour drive time catchment for this Audience Development Plan is appropriate.

The largest percentage of the population is aged between 45 – 49, circa 3,879,815 people. There is a marked imbalance in the population of the 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle with a significant number of residents aged over 60 (equating to 28% of the total population), compared to 22% of the base population of England.

Figure 3 below breaks down the population and households for the catchment.

Age group	60 minute drivetime from Hastings Castle		England		Index
	Count	%	Count	%	
Age 0 - 4	44,767	6%	3,318,449	6%	89
Age 5 - 9	43,622	5%	2,972,632	6%	97
Age 10 - 14	48,692	6%	3,080,929	6%	105
Age 15	10,129	1%	650,826	1%	103
Age 16 - 17	21,380	3%	1,314,124	2%	108
Age 18 - 19	20,393	3%	1,375,315	3%	98
Age 20 - 24	42,140	5%	3,595,321	7%	78
Age 25 - 29	40,974	5%	3,650,881	7%	74
Age 30 - 34	40,540	5%	3,509,221	7%	76
Age 35 - 39	47,475	6%	3,549,116	7%	89
Age 40 - 44	58,207	7%	3,885,934	7%	99
Age 45 - 49	60,546	8%	3,879,815	7%	103
Age 50 - 54	52,868	7%	3,400,095	6%	103
Age 55 - 59	48,099	6%	2,996,992	6%	106
Age 60 - 64	56,287	7%	3,172,277	6%	117
Age 65 - 69	45,850	6%	2,508,154	5%	121
Age 70 - 74	36,696	5%	2,044,129	4%	119
Age 75 - 79	31,084	4%	1,669,345	3%	123
Age 80 - 84	25,139	3%	1,258,773	2%	132
Age 85+	25,977	3%	1,180,128	2%	146
All usual residents	800,867		53,012,456		

Figure 3 – Age Group Breakdown in 1 Hour Drive Time of Hastings Castle

### 3.2.2 Demographics of the Catchment

The following demographics describe all usual residents within a 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle. This was outlined in the Audience Agency’s Engagement Area Profile Report which contained data about the population.

- Age profile: the dominant adult age group is 45 – 49.
- Ethnic profile: 5% are non-white ethnicity groups, which is significantly lower than the 15% of the base population of England.
- Health: 95% are not limited in their day-to-day activities by ill health or disability.
- Social grade: (based on households with at least one 16 – 64-year-old) A / B / C1 households make up 55% of all households in the catchment, compared with 54% of households in the England base area.

- Employment: 91% of those who are economically active are in full / part time work or self-employed, compared with 88% of the base population. Of those who are economically inactive, 53% are retired compared with 45% of the base population.
- Education: 27% of those aged 16+ have achieved a Level 4 qualification and above (e.g., Higher Education / Higher diploma) which is on par with the base population.
- Family structure: 40% of all families in households have dependent children.

### 3.2.3 Ethnicity in the Catchment

There is relatively low ethnic diversity in the 1-hour drive time catchment for Hastings Castle. The Audience Agency's Engagement Area Profile Report states that 4% identified part of an ethnic minority, compared with 15% across England. The majority of the catchment identify as White (95%) compared with 85% across England. It's worth noting that 1,993 travellers were captured as part of the catchment which is considerably higher than the benchmark for England.

### 3.2.4 Economic Activity and Deprivation

In terms of employment 394,629 of the 712,025 adults (55.4%) in the catchment are economically active, with the majority in full time employment. The catchment has relatively high amounts of self-employment representing approximately 15% of employment in the catchment.

Of the 176,826 that are economically inactive 93,451 are retired which is 14% higher than the base population (England). Figure 4 gives a summary of the economic activity in the catchment broken down into employed, self-employed, unemployed, and full-time student.

This suggests engaging retirees in the Hastings Castle project through volunteering or activities would be an appropriate measure. It would also support daytime activity-based offers, performing better than other locations typical of the national average.

Economically active	60 minute drivetime from Hastings Castle		England		Index
	Count	%	Count	%	
Employed or self-employed: all	357,167	91%	24,143,464	89%	102
Employee: Part-time	82,601	21%	5,333,268	20%	107
Employee: Full-time	202,570	51%	15,016,564	55%	93
Self-employed with employees: Part-time	2,407	1%	148,074	1%	112
Self-employed with employees: Full-time	12,244	3%	715,271	3%	118
Self-employed without employees: Part-time	20,041	5%	990,573	4%	139
Self-employed without employees: Full-time	37,304	9%	1,939,714	7%	132
Unemployed	20,122	5%	1,702,847	6%	81
Full-time student	17,341	4%	1,336,823	5%	89
<b>Economically active: Total (Residents aged 16-74)</b>	<b>394,629</b>		<b>27,183,134</b>		

**Figure 4 - Economic Activity in 1 Hour Drive Time of Hastings Castle**

Overall, despite Hastings being one of the most deprived areas in England. Pockets of deprivation are apparent when viewing the Index of Multiple Deprivation data zones where

deprivation is more acute than the regional statistics suggest, mostly relating to income and employment and education. The Audience Agency Engagement Area Profile Report indicates that A / B / C1 households make up 55% of all households in the catchment, compared with 54% of households in the base area of England. C2 / D / E households make up 45% of households in the catchment area, compared with 46% of households in the base area of England.

Years of research have shown that in general, people that live in areas of higher deprivation are less likely to engage with heritage sites without specific and targeted intervention, e.g., activities designed to address and remove barriers, participatory activities tailored to an individual group or audience. Of course, every area is different and, in some areas, engagement with people from deprived areas can be considerable. Mapping tools can be used to identify data zones and to target areas where stereotypically speaking lower levels of engagement with Hastings Castle can and should be anticipated.

### 3.3 Day Visitor Market

The day visitor market for the purpose of this Audience Development Plan is the population who could conceivably travel to Hastings Castle and return home on the same day. For Hastings Castle the day visitor market has been defined through the development of a 1066 Country South East Tourism Report, which gives specifics for Hastings attractions.

There remains significant opportunity in Hastings to strengthen the day trip tourism appetites. It is estimated that c. 3.8 million tourism day trips were made to Hastings in 2019, a rise of 12% compared to 2018. There was also an increase in day visitor expenditure of 14%. This is a relatively large day trip population, as a result of the seafront nature of Hastings and the proximity of Hastings to Central London.

### 3.4 Tourist Market

According to the same 1066 Country South East Tourism Report, in 2019 there were approximately 15,800,000 overnight trips by domestic visitors to the South East and 5,770,000 overnight trips by international visitors to the South East. This represented a 17% increase in trips by overseas visitor to the South East, meanwhile a 7% reduction in the domestic visitor category. In 2019, 9% of all visits (239,750,000) were staying visits – this was a decrease of 2% on figures reported for 2018. In total, there were 1.15 million overnight visits to the South East.

In 2019, 21.5% was employed because of tourism in 1066 Country, £664.73 spent in the local area as a result of tourism, with £49.36 million spent on average in the local economy every month. Table 1 below summarises the mosaic profiles amongst 1066 Country tourists. Information has been sourced from the Marketing Strategy for 1066 Country.

Mosaic Segment	Description
<b>Prestige Positions.</b>	Prestige Positions are affluent married couples who successful careers have afforded them financial security and a spacious home in a prestigious and established residential area. While some are mature empty-nesters or elderly retired couples, others are still supporting their teenage or older children.



<p><b>Country Living.</b></p>	<p>Country Living are well-off homeowners who live in the countryside often beyond easy commuting reach of major towns and cities. Some people are landowners or farmers, others run small businesses from home, some are retired, and others commute distances to professional jobs.</p>
<p><b>Domestic Success.</b></p>	<p>Domestic Success are high-earning families who have affluent lifestyles in upmarket homes situated in sought after residential neighbourhoods. Their busy lives revolve around their children and successful careers in higher managerial and professional roles.</p>
<p><b>Aspiring Homemakers.</b></p>	<p>Aspiring Homemakers are younger households who have, often, only recently set up home. They usually own their homes in private suburbs, which they have chosen to fit their budget.</p>

**Table 1 – Mosaic Profile Segments of 1066 Country**

The box below summaries the behaviour, preferences, and opinion amongst 1066 Country tourists, directly from the Marketing Strategy for 1066 Country.

- The main markets for 1066 Country are Empty Nesters (couples – both day and stay) and Families, who visit in school holidays and make up between 1 / 5 to 1 / 3 of all visitors. These visitors are mainly in 1066 on holidays (91%). 7% are visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and only 1% are on business. Around 40% are first time visitors.
- Almost a third of visitors are from the ‘AB’ socio-economic group while 38% are from C1 and 25% from C2 and there is some variation between the different destinations with a slightly higher proportion of AB in Rye and more C2, DE in Hastings.
- A high proportion of staying visitors (45%) come for around 5 nights and are travelling by car. 1066 Country is attracting holiday trips in far greater numbers than you would find in comparator destinations in the South East and bucking a national short break trend.
- A third of day trips are visitors on holiday and staying in accommodation outside 1066 Country, in particular Eastbourne (reflecting the size and range of accommodation stock). Other day trips are relatively local and frequent repeats – coming from Kent, East Sussex, and London. On average day visitors spend £22 per head.

### 3.5 Education Market

There are 18 primary schools in Hastings and three secondary schools. Of the 18 primary schools, one is an infant school, and one is a junior school. Nine of the primary schools have nursery provision. One secondary school has sixth form provision. There is a total of 5,872 pupils in those schools. This data has been published by the UK Government as part of a dataset that captures all of Hastings and Rye.

### 3.6 Local Landmarks and Attractions

Hastings has a wealth of cultural and heritage assets. Asset mapping completed as part of the RIBA Stage 1 Design Report for Hastings Castle identified 30 assets which can be considered a local landmark or attraction. The definition of local landmark or attraction for the purpose of this Audience Development Plan includes any asset which relates to the distinctive heritage of Hastings and is available for public engagement. This includes a wide variety of attraction types and a range of visitor experiences, from those which are purposely designed with the visitor in mind (such as the museum) to those where there is limited to no intervention allowing independent exploration (such as Ladies Parlour).

### 3.7 Market Appraisal Conclusion

- Hastings Castles 1-hour drive time catchment has an older population than the base population of England. There are opportunities to engage retirees and older segments of the population by developing daytime activities, volunteering opportunities, and developing partnerships with groups such as local history societies.
- The catchment has significantly less 20 – 39-year-olds than the base population of England. Hastings Castle will provide development that brings a sense of pride amongst the younger audience, employment, and other benefits.
- Education is a very important demographic that will keep the rich history of Hastings alive. There are 5,872 pupils in the Rye and Hastings area. Currently the condition of the Castle and the surrounding grounds restricts it being part of the curriculum, with many schools considering the asset unsafe. There is significant potential for an effective offer to schools provided it is clearly focused on the requirements of the national curriculum.
- While it should be possible to organise, some high-end income generating events once the Castle interventions are complete, such as festivals and events at Ladies Parlour and inside the Castle grounds, much larger numbers of people in the catchment are likely to be attracted by a regular programme of activities.
- Tourism plays a major part of the East Sussex, 1066 Country and Hastings economy. Audiences will be seeking an enhanced visitor experience provided through interpretation, storytelling, and technology.

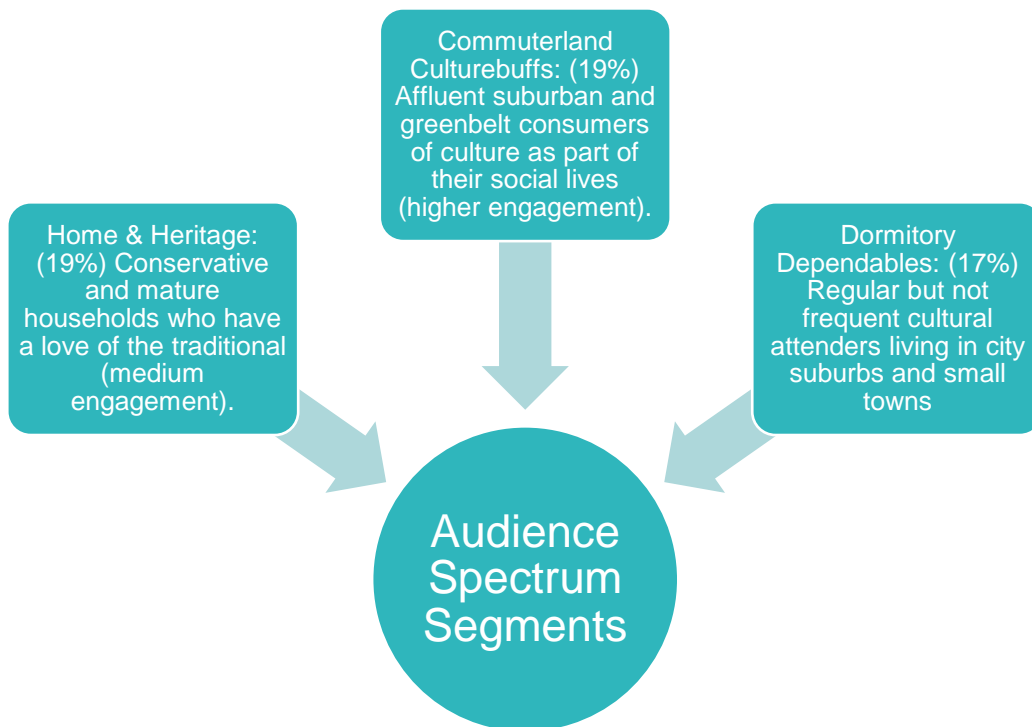
## 4 Audience Mapping

### 4.1 Introduction

This section of the Audience Development Plan sets out a review of the audiences of Hastings Castle, examining Audience Agency segmentation from based on a 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle, data on tourism to the area, data on schools and HEFE, location and demographic information and population profiling.

### 4.2 Potential Audiences for Hastings Castle

An Audience Agency Engagement Area Profile Report based on the 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle, identified the following target audiences:



**Figure 5 - Target Audiences for Hastings Castle**

*Source: Audience Agency (Engagement Area Profile Report, Hastings Castle)*

54% of the target population belong to one of three segments, compared with 37% of the base population of England. The remaining audience segments as follows: Trips and Treats (14%), Up Our Street (11%), Facebook Families (9%), Experience Seekers (8%), Heydays (3%), Metroculturals (1%), Kaleidoscope Creativity (1%).

The Engagement Area Report also concluded that, in addition to the above segments, there were several other key audiences to consider, develop and target for engagement with the

Hastings Castle project. It is important to remember that many of the target audiences are likely to overlap. These were families, older people, schools, and tourists.

Hastings ranks as the most deprived lower tier local authority in the South East, Transport for South East (TfSE) area and South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP) by almost all measures. Nationally, it ranks as 13<sup>th</sup> most deprived in terms of rank of average rank, out of 317 lower tier local authorities, and in terms of local concentration, it is 16<sup>th</sup>.

Table 2 below summarises the target audience spectrum segments for the Hastings Castle project. Full details on the profiles can be found on the Audience Agency website.

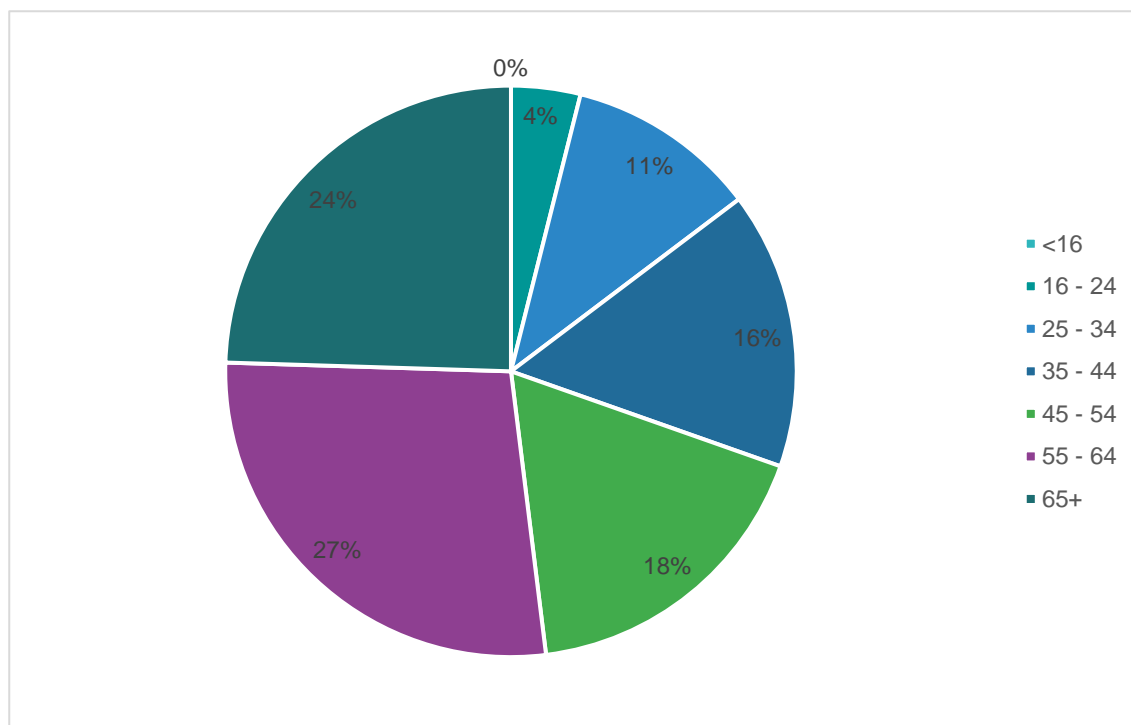
Segment Summary	Castle Project / Activity Considerations
<p><b>Home and Heritage.</b> Conservative and mature households who have a love of the traditional (medium engagement).</p>	<p>To appeal to this group the Castle project should target all things traditional.</p> <p>The Home and Heritage segment tend to look for activities to match their needs and interests, such as accessible day-time activities or context exploring historical sites.</p> <p>This group is limited in its ability to travel independently, as such organised daytrips are key.</p> <p>Personalised communications, through traditional media are the best way to talk to a group that values plain speaking, familiarity of content and local contention.</p>
<p><b>Commuterland Culturebuffs.</b> Affluent suburban and greenbelt consumers of culture as part of their social lives (higher engagement).</p>	<p>To appeal to this group the Castle project should target a premium experience and opportunities for social and self-improvement.</p> <p>The Commuterland Culturebuffs segment expect clear, subject-matter specific information and exemplary customer service, value expert endorsements and can be strong advocates in their own networks.</p> <p>The group's comfort with using websites for trip planning purposes has primed them for an easier pivot to engage with heritage content online.</p>
<p><b>Dormitory Dependables.</b> Regular but not frequent cultural attenders living in city suburbs and small towns.</p>	<p>To appeal to this group the Castle should look to move the Castle beyond the thinking that it is an occasional treat or family outing.</p> <p>The wrap around offer is extremely important and group-based discounts appeal, given the tendency to attend with friends and family.</p>

Whilst not glued to devices, they none-the-less expect to be able to find whatever information they need online, both for heritage planning and news consumption.

Detail and directness are the keys to communicating with this busy, no-nonsense group, both in the messaging they require and the ways in which they like to receive it.

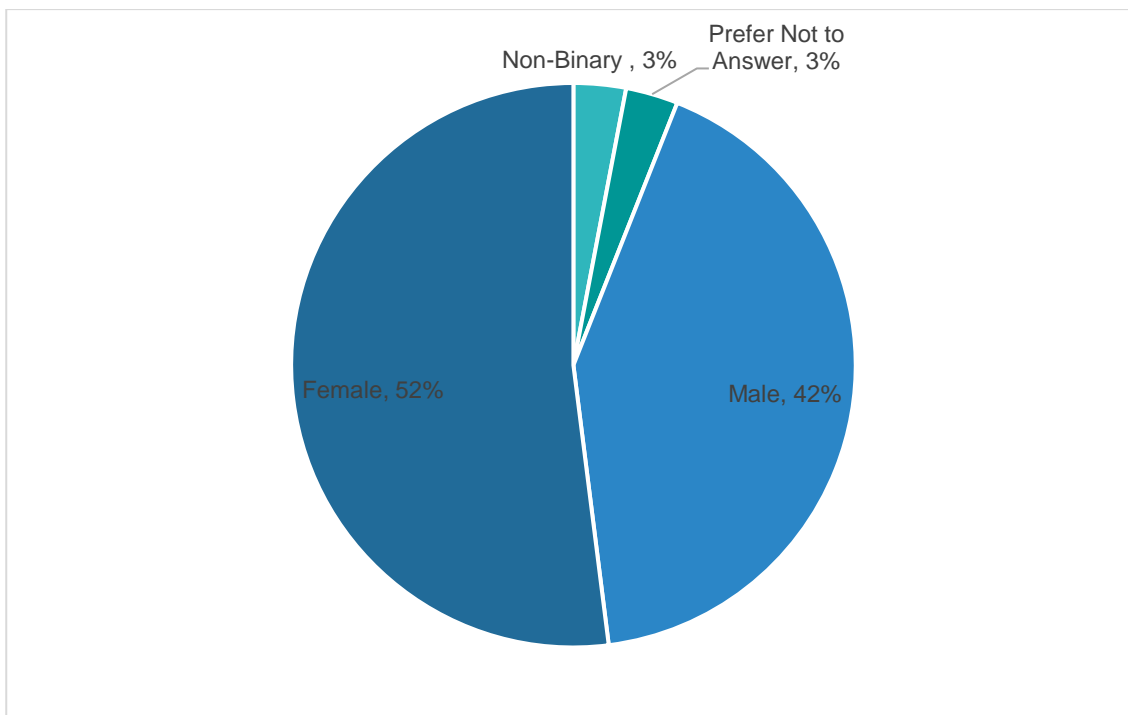
**Table 2 – Audience Spectrum Segments for Hastings Castle**

Normally we would show analysis of postcode visitation of an asset such as Hastings Castle from data collection and surveys. However, under the current management contract with Blue Reef Leisure this information has not been made available. However, stakeholder engagement indicated the Castle was successful in attracting 55 – 64 years olds.



**Figure 6 - Hastings Castle Attendance (Age Breakdown)**

Source: Hastings Castle Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultation Report



**Figure 7 - Hastings Castle Attendance (Gender Breakdown)**

*Source: Hastings Castle Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultation Report*

Most of the existing audience cited taking friends and family or attending events as the main reason for visiting Hastings Castle. There were slightly more users who identified as female than male users as part of the stakeholder engagement exercise.

### 4.3 Demographics for Consideration

Alongside the Hastings Castle Audience Spectrum segmentation, which has been specifically designed to measure engagement and behaviour, it is also important to consider key demographic characteristics when thinking about audience development. Below summarises the key demographics of a 1-hour drive time of Hastings Castle, which should impact thinking and actions around audience development. They have been sourced from the Engagement Area Profile Report for the Audience Agency which analysed attendance, participation and engagement within the catchment.

- The 2020 estimate from the Audience Agency suggests that the total population of the catchment is 857,070, containing 712,025 aged 15+.
- 31% of households were one-person households, with a fairly even split between those aged 35 years and above and other.
- Upwards of 21% of households were made up of married couples with no children.
- Lone parent households accounted for approximately 14% of households, with 66% of those lone parents having one or more dependent children.
- The medium age is higher than the average for England – 28% of the population are in the 35 – 54 age groups.

- 24% of the population are aged 0 – 19 years. 13% of the population are 10 – 19 years.
- There is a higher proportion of people in occupation type relating to managers, directors, and senior officials than the average for England.
- Amongst those who are economically inactive, 53% are retired, whilst the remaining 47% are students 15%, looking after home or family 14%, long-term sick or disabled 12%, and other 6%.
- 8% of males and females in 2020 stated they had a disability that limited them a lot.
- 95% of the 1-hour drive time from Hastings Castle identify as White, followed by Mixed / multiple Ethnic Groups 1% and Asian / Asian British: Other Asian 1%.
- The proportion of the population with Level 4 and above (e.g., Higher Education and Higher Diplomas) is 27% when is on par with the average for England.
- The number of primary schools in Hastings / Rye in 2020 was 31, representing
- The number of secondary schools in Hastings / Rye in 2020 was 13, representing
- The number of colleges in Hastings / Rye in 2020 was 5, representing
- 43% of the LSOA's in Hastings are among the most deprived 20% nationally in 2019, compared to 40% in 2015.

#### 4.4 Workshop Feedback

This section sets out the feedback from questions asked in multiple workshops to inform the development of this Audience Development Plan. These workshops were attended by representatives of Hastings History House, Hastings – St Leonards Museum Association, Dudley Infant Academy, Hastings Youth Council, Shipwreck Museum, and Christ Church CE Primary and Nursery Academy.

Several attendees at the workshops felt that the key to keeping existing audiences returning to the Castle was to provide a wide range of events, as this would make every visit feel unique. Other attendees commented that the West Hill audience are key returning people. They felt that more could be done to engage those residents and make them visit the Castle again. Attendees also provided feedback about the need for café / retail offer, changing displays and an interpretation centre telling the story of the Castle and wider context.

#### 4.5 Public Consultation / Survey Feedback

Public consultation was completed by Mott MacDonald in conjunction with Hastings Borough Council with the aim of this exercise being to raise awareness of the redevelopment of Hastings Castle, gain feedback on what people think of the redevelopment options, gain feedback on what stories people would like to be told about Hastings Castle, gain feedback on what activities people would like to be available at Hastings Castle, understand why people visit Hastings Castle. Given the scheme is at concept design stage, it was made clear through the public and stakeholder engagement process that interventions would be subject to viability analysis.

The public consultation was hosted on the HBC Town Deal Citizen Lab webpage. The page was used for all Town Deal projects and consultations. The online consultation period ran for 3 weeks from 25 May 2022 to 15 June 2022.

Wider engagement was conducted via email to the Visit 1066 membership. In total 79 members were notified of the consultation and how to access the survey.

Public drop-in events were held in Hastings on the 31 May 2022. Members of the public were encouraged to complete the survey online, leaflets with details of the consultation platform were available for people to take away. There was also an opportunity for members of the public to share what they thought about the Castle as well as how they felt it could be improved in the future. The top themes are summarised below:

- People made a number of suggestions for events and activities that they would like to see at the Castle ranging from jousting, storytelling, re-enactment of living history. There was also a suggestion that the Castle could be used as a wedding venue.
- Interpretation was mentioned by a number of people spoken to. People would like to see newer interpretation that incorporates an element of virtual reality, interactive features or QR codes. There was also a suggestion for audio guides to be provided like at other attractions.
- Accessibility was another common theme mentioned by members of the public. This ranged from the difficulty some people had physically accessing the site due to the steepness of the hill, to comments about the way people could access the information whilst visiting the Castle. Suggestions were made for sign language guides and interpretation on television screens to enable sound and captions.

#### 4.6 Reasons Stopping Visits

The public consultation survey asked residents 'what stops them from visiting the castle if anything?'. Respondents being able to choose from unaffordable, no activities, no places to sit, no places to eat and drink, not interested in it, not accessible, nothing stops me, and other as options. Of those who responded to the survey, the highest number of respondents chose 'No activities' (29.3%) followed by 'No places to eat and drink' (20.4%).

What stops you from visiting the castle if anything?	Response Number	Percentage
No activities.	154	29.3%
No places to eat and drink.	107	20.4%
Nothing stops me.	84	16.0%
Unaffordable.	72	13.7%
Nowhere to sit.	59	11.2%
Not accessible.	26	5.0%
Not interested in it.	23	4.4%
Other	0	0.0%



<b>Total</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
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**Table 3 – Barriers to Engaging with the Castle**

*Source: Hastings Castle Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultation Report*

Respondents were also able to use a free text box to provide more detail to their answer if they wanted to, 141 respondents provided free text comments. The main themes of the comments were visitor experience, cost, and historical education.

Several respondents commented on the visitor experience at the castle detailing that there is a lack of activities and events at the castle. Many respondents commented on the lack of maintenance of the castle grounds and lack of facilities resulting in respondents not taking multiple visits to the castle or spending a lot of time there.

Several respondents commented on the affordability of the entrance fee to the castle and whether the cost provides value for money. Some respondents commented that they would visit more if there were more exciting exhibitions with interactive learning based on historical information. They also commented on the lack of promotion and education of the history.

#### 4.7 Motivations to Engage / Visit

The public consultation survey asked residents ‘why do you visit the castle?’. Respondents were able to choose from the following options day trip, to take friends and family, for educational visits, as part of a holiday, I don’t visit the castle, or other. Of those who responded to the survey, the highest number of respondents chose ‘to take friends / family’ (41.1%) followed by ‘other’ (25.5%) and ‘I don’t visit the castle’ (14.5%).

<b>Why do you visit the castle?</b>	<b>Response Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
To take friends / family.	134	41.2%
Other.	83	25.5%
I don’t visit the castle.	47	14.5%
For educational visits.	26	8.6%
Day trip.	26	8.0%
As part of a holiday.	7	2.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

#### Table 4 – Reasons for Visiting the Castle

Source: *Hastings Castle Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultation Report*

Respondents were again able to use a free text box. 152 respondents chose to provide additional comments. The main themes of the comments were events, affordability, historical information.

Several respondents commented that they only visit the castle when events are held there. Respondents also commented on the lack of events at the castle and have visited less for this reason. Several respondents commented that the affordability of parking, travel and activities was a barrier for accessing facilities at the castle.

Some respondents commented that they visit the castle for the historical information the castle provides. Several respondents commented that whilst they are interested in the historical information there isn't enough information or activities to encourage a return visit.

#### 4.8 Perceptions of Missing Activities at the Castle

The public consultation survey asked residents 'what activities would draw you to the castle?'. Respondents were able to choose from the following options: archery/axe throwing, family-friendly events such as a pop-up outdoor cinema, theatre or seasonal event, enhanced audio-visual interpretation, greater retail offer, greater food and refreshment offer, guided tours on history of the castle, improved children's activities, improved information boards, living history e.g. activities that incorporates historical tools, activities and dress giving visitors a sense of stepping back in time, more interactive displays, re-enactment of significant events, virtual reality walk through of site, private hire e.g. weddings, events etc. themed heritage days, other.

Of those who responded to the survey, the highest number of respondents chose 'Family-friendly events such as a pop-up outdoor cinema, theatre or seasonal event' (11.1%) followed by 'Living History e.g., activities that incorporates historical tools, activities and dress giving visitors a sense of stepping back in time.' (10.2%) and 'Guided tours of the castle' (9.5%).

What activities would draw you to the castle?	Response Number	Percentage
Family-friendly events such as a pop-up outdoor cinema, theatre, or seasonal event.	222	11.1%
Living History e.g. activities that incorporates historical tools, activities and dress giving visitors a sense of stepping back in time.	205	10.2%
Guided tours on history of the castle.	191	9.5%

Improved children's activities.	177	8.8%
Re-enactment of significant events.	165	8.2%
Themed heritage days.	163	8.1%
Improved information boards.	149	7.4%
Enhanced audio-visual interpretation.	146	7.3%
More interactive displays.	138	6.9%
Archery / axe throwing.	131	6.5%
Greater food and refreshment offer.	95	4.7%
Virtual reality walk through of site.	91	4.5%
Private hire, e.g. weddings, events, etc.	67	3.3%
Greater Retail Offer.	65	3.2%
Other.	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 5 – Activities to Consider for Audience Development**

*Source: Hastings Castle Stakeholder Engagement and Public Consultation Report*

Respondents were again able to use a free text box. 94 respondents chose to provide additional comments. The main themes of the comments were visitor experience, historical accuracy, and events. Several respondents commented on the visitor experience of the castle and that there is a lack of activities, exhibitions, and retail. They suggested that there should be more links to Hastings Museum.

A number of respondents commented on a historical accuracy of some exhibitions of the castle. They noted that the film is outdated and lack of staff with expertise on the history of the castle. Respondents also commented that they would like to see more events being held there and connecting with the local community more.

#### 4.9 Overarching Barriers to Engagement

The following provides a summary of the main barriers for engagement with Hastings Castle, as identified through a review of the available activities, site visits, consultation with residents and heritage representatives, and online surveys through the Town Deal portal.

#### 4.9.1 Local Residents

- There is the perception amongst some residents that the Castle will always be there and as such there is no impetus to visit or engage now.
- Lack of awareness of what is on offer / becoming 'blind' to the experience.
- The Castle can be seen by locals as a tourist attraction and as such, not for the local community.
- If events / activities do not change, there is no incentive to re-visit if they have already attended. This can be exacerbated at Hastings Castle given the admission fee.
- The stories and narratives presented by the current operator do not necessarily capture the local voice and narratives that are of interest to local residents.
- Visiting the Castle is not a priority activity for resident's leisure and free time.
- Lack of awareness of how to get involved in the Castle organisation, as a volunteer or active participant in Hastings' wider heritage offer.
- Perception from some segments that nobody will be interest enough in the history of the Town to travel and visit both domestically and from overseas.
- People are not aware of any improvement activity to the Castle that has enhanced / changed the experience in the past 10 years+.

#### 4.9.2 Schools

- Pressures on curriculum limiting time to spend on out of school activities.
- Cost of travel to and activities delivered at Hastings Castle.
- Internal competition within the heritage sector in Hastings and wider region for school visits / engagement.
- Lack of capacity within the current operating contract to develop, promote and deliver education resources and experiences at Hastings Castle.

#### 4.9.3 Young People

- Other pursuits are of greater interest.
- Themes are not of interest or relevance to young people.
- Traditional methods of storytelling and interpretation are not immediately appealing.
- Negative view of Hastings Castle and themes influenced by experienced by experiences from earlier life e.g., schools' trips.
- Young people do not see themselves or their stories reflected in the interpretation at Hastings Castle or the wider site including Ladies Parlour.
- Need for more inspiring people and activities to encourage engagement and participation.

#### 4.9.4 Tourists

- Competition from other heritage assets both within Hastings and beyond in close by areas such as London and Brighton.

- The Hastings Castle offer could be promoted more robustly as part of the 1066 Country marketing and independently through social media / website etc.
- Hastings is predominantly remembered for the Battle and as such tourists typically prefer to attend Battle Abbey as opposed to the Castle.
- The stories told in the Castle are not necessarily connected to what is told in Battle Abbey or elsewhere throughout the Town.
- There are several stories and teams that are not as prevalent as they should be.

#### 4.9.5 Castle Operator

- Lack of common and consistent approach to capturing visitor and non-visitor data which means there is no robust baseline of engagement for the Castle.
- Further collaboration and partnership working, sharing information and programme planning across 1066 Country would contribute to developing an enhanced visitor experience and journey.
- Capacity constraints of the organisation responsible for providing access to the Castle – potential to achieve more with volunteer support. Ultimately, effecting the opening hours and season.
- The Castle does not effectively sign post Smugglers Adventure or other heritage assets, which limits to engagement of visitors to explore further, attending more sites and being directed from other sites to the Castle.

#### 4.9.6 Access and Circulation

- The Castle site has a challenging topography on approach, and access and circulation challenges within the site.
- When coming from the Old Town, attendees are required to use the West Hill lift or undertake a substantial walk-in order to access.

## 5 Comparator Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

A comparator analysis has been undertaken as a useful way to benchmark other heritage schemes and initiatives within the UK which have a similar focus as the Hastings Castle project. In considering their performance we can assess what has worked well and draw lessons to inform the development of the Hastings Castle project.

The initiatives identified in this section have or expect to have increases in visitation. Cultural achievements are also considered such as providing improvements in accessibility for disabled groups and youth, schemes that have involved volunteers and developed skills, and initiatives that enable the wider area being a better place to live and visit.

### 5.2 Comparator Attractions

The comparators selected include the following:

- Tintagel Castle, Cornwall
- Newcastle Castle, Newcastle
- Norwich Castle: Royal Palace Reborn Project, Norwich
- Dover Castle, Kent

### 5.3 Analysis of Comparator Attractions

#### 5.3.1 Tintagel Castle – Area Wide Benefit

The proposed reinstatement of the original entrance to the Castle via a connection from Ladies Parlour is similar in nature to the works completed in 2019 at Tintagel Castle in North Cornwall to reconnect the two sides of the ruins by a footbridge.

The new bridge at Tintagel Castle improves visitor's accessibility around the castle, avoiding the need to access the castle via over a hundred steps, whilst also reinstating the original route. The bridge is part of a larger programme which includes improving the footpaths around the site, to help in limiting the impact of visitors on the archaeology and ecology of the site.

The Castle experienced 267,000 visitors in 2021 in comparison to a yearly average of approximately 235,000 in the three years prior to the castle closing for construction of the bridge. It was also reported that local business owners linked the opening of the footbridge to an increase in footfall in local shops and restaurants.<sup>1</sup>

#### 5.3.2 Newcastle Castle – Digital Engagement

In 2015, Newcastle Castle (previously known as Castle Keep) reopened after refurbishment works that included improved accessibility, an education centre, and digital installations to improve storytelling of the site.

The Heart of the City Partnership reported that there were 27,665 paying visitors in 2016. This further increased to 34,690 paying visitors in 2019. In comparison, there was a yearly average of 13,900 attending the castle in the three years prior to the refurbishment works.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/new-5m-tintagel-castle-footbridge-4506533>

The 2019 annual report for The Heart of the City Partnership indicates that marketing campaigns through social media and radio have increased the overall engagement with the castle in Newcastle, with website visitors and social media engagement also increasing.

### 5.3.3 Norwich Castle – Community & Youth Engagement

Norwich Castle is currently undergoing the “Royal Palace Reborn” project, which involves rebuilding the floors and rooms of the Keep. The works will allow for the British Museum to have its first Medieval gallery outside of London, improving the heritage offering of Norwich and in turn encouraging more visitors to Norwich Castle and the wider city. It is expected that the enhancements to the castle will attract an additional 100,000 visitors per year to over 300,000 visitors.<sup>2</sup> The project is also expected to increase youth engagement through the ability to have capacity for 30,000 school children to visit per year.

### 5.3.4 Dover Castle – Raised Awareness

A priority of Hastings Castle is to increase community engagement. Dover Castle successfully achieved local community engagement as part of the Fortress Dover project. Engagement included community events to raise awareness around Dover’s role in the First World War, including theatrical performances, education projects, and film screenings. Community engagement has continued since these events with local people volunteering at Dover Castle.

Historic chalk grassland has been restored at Dover Castle, linking the cultural history of Dover with the surrounding landscape. This project was supported by volunteers from the local community who developed their skills and knowledge in conservation, which in turn will help to support wider efforts of wildlife conservation in Dover.

## 5.4 Key Messages

- Engaging with local communities is a challenge for larger initiatives such as the Dover Castle restoration but is achievable and should be strived for.
- Those comparators which have involved local communities and young people have demonstrated that involvement in heritage interpretation initiatives can have a profound and meaningful impact on people’s lives, helping some to realise that heritage and history is relevant to themselves and others (i.e., Norwich Castle school visits), and is something to take pride in.
- Comparators have shown there a multitude of creative ways to utilise storytelling as a powerful way to engage visitors and locals alike, from signage, websites, workshops, and events (e.g., the ghost tours or knight tournament at Dover Castle).
- There is the potential to draw upon stories of the wider geographical area and increase tourism. To be effective strong themes and branding such as extending the 1066 Country are needed to create a holistic visitor experience.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2018/07/plans-submitted-to-transform-norwich-castle-keep-and-create-a-new-visitor-entrance-cafe-and-shop>

## 6 Audience Development Strategy

### 6.1 Introduction

This section sets out an audience development strategy and actions to encourage enhanced and extended engagement with Hastings Castle. This section begins with an exploration of barriers before considering the strategic and operational activities to overcome issues and capitalise on the opportunities afforded by the wider context.

### 6.2 Audience Development Strategic Framework

Figure 8 below sets out the vision, supporting strategic objectives and guiding principles for audience development for Hastings Castle which constitutes a guiding framework. An explanation of the principles follows.

#### 6.2.1 Vision

The vision remains to transform Hastings Castle into a must-see visitor destination, providing full access for all with a real link between the building and the battle that made the town of Hastings famous around the world.

#### 6.2.2 Objectives

The Hastings Castle project aims to:

- Provide greater access to Hastings Castle.
- Reinststate the sense of pride and historical importance of Hastings Castle.
- Improve economic opportunities within Hastings.
- Develop and enhance the visitor experience of Hastings Castle.
- Enhance awareness and popularity of the asset through education.

#### 6.2.3 Principles

Section 6.3 below set s out the guiding principles that have been developed that should inform every audience development activity planned and delivery in conjunction with the Hastings Castle project. Following these principles will play a mission critical role in propelling Hastings Borough Council towards realising its vision for the Castle and audience development.



- Inclusive and accessible.
- Distinctly Hastings Castle.
- Heritage inspired; arts / events enabled.
- Partnership and Co Creation.
- Ambition and Quality.
- Technologically advanced and innovative.

## 6.3 Principles for Audience Development

### 6.3.1 Inclusive and Accessible

Wider engagement for Hastings Castle will not be achieved without embedding the widest accessibility possible, so that the asset is open to everyone regardless of background or ability. Whether that's providing dedicated viewing; sufficiently wide entry and exit points; accessible facilities for wheelchair users and those with mobility issues, or an inability to stand for long periods of time; BSL interpretation, audio-captioning, captioning, tactile approaches for those with visual or hearing impairments; appropriate lighting and sound; dedicated staff and volunteers to support people with disabilities; designated autism-friendly sessions; a dementia-friendly approach or any other specific consideration or adaptation. All activities and events should be designed to be accessible and include everyone. Hastings Borough Council will also consider transport and connectivity issues that currently face the Castle, hence considering those that feel geographically isolated or face issues in attending. Addressing the barriers identified earlier in this document, will ensure that everyone engaging with the Castle feels included, welcomed, and valued as part of the project.

### 6.3.2 Distinctly Hastings Castle

To compete successfully with other visitor attractions nearby like Smugglers Adventure and further beyond Hastings, the Castle must leverage its unique tangible and intangible assets. The Castle has a rich tapestry of heritage and stories upon which to draw many of these are currently largely invisible. As part of the Interpretation Plan for this project, a package has been developed to shout about these stories.

### 6.3.3 Heritage inspired; arts / events enabled

Comparators have proven that by using arts and events activities, be that firework, archery, ghost tours, or knight tournaments, story-telling, or light shows, it is a powerful way to capture hearts and minds as well as boosting engagement with the facilities. The best example of this in the UK is Edinburgh Castle and the extra activities it hosts throughout the year. Going forward Hastings Borough Council should seek inspiration from the Castle's history and heritage and bring that to life so that residents and visitors can create, attend, and participate.

### 6.3.4 Partnership and Co Creation

In order to have Hastings Castle established and considered a focal point of the town and major placemaking piece it will be vital to develop strong partnership outside of the current vacuum. This will include partners across the public and voluntary sector, as well as private sector businesses. All partnership working will be driven by the shared goal of benefiting Hastings's

community. Whilst partners organisations will be a vital conduit to engaging with audiences, they are only one part of the puzzle. Target audiences will also become key partners in shaping the stories and activities that engage and inspire them at the Castle. Their voices will be heard and prioritised in every decision and action designed to impact upon them and resonate.

### 6.3.5 Ambition and Quality

The Hastings community should have access to the highest quality heritage interpretation, events / activities, and facilities through this project. Ambitious and inspiring restorations should not be exclusive preserve of people living in big cities such as nearby London. Hastings Borough Council and its partners will work towards embedding ambition and investment in the Castle, commissioning the highest quality practitioners possible and delivering best practice in audience engagement. This won't happen straight away during the development phase but will take time to develop and establish. However, Hastings Borough Council must commit to delivering a Castle that excites, entertains, and inspires every generation in the Borough.

### 6.3.6 Technologically advanced and innovative

Elsewhere the use of technology at heritage assets has brought key locations to life, enabling history to be told as. Hastings Castle in particular needs the ability to re-tell the Castles story using all the available technology of today and implement the infrastructure to improve the visitor experience of the Castle ensuring prosperity, sustainability, and growth.

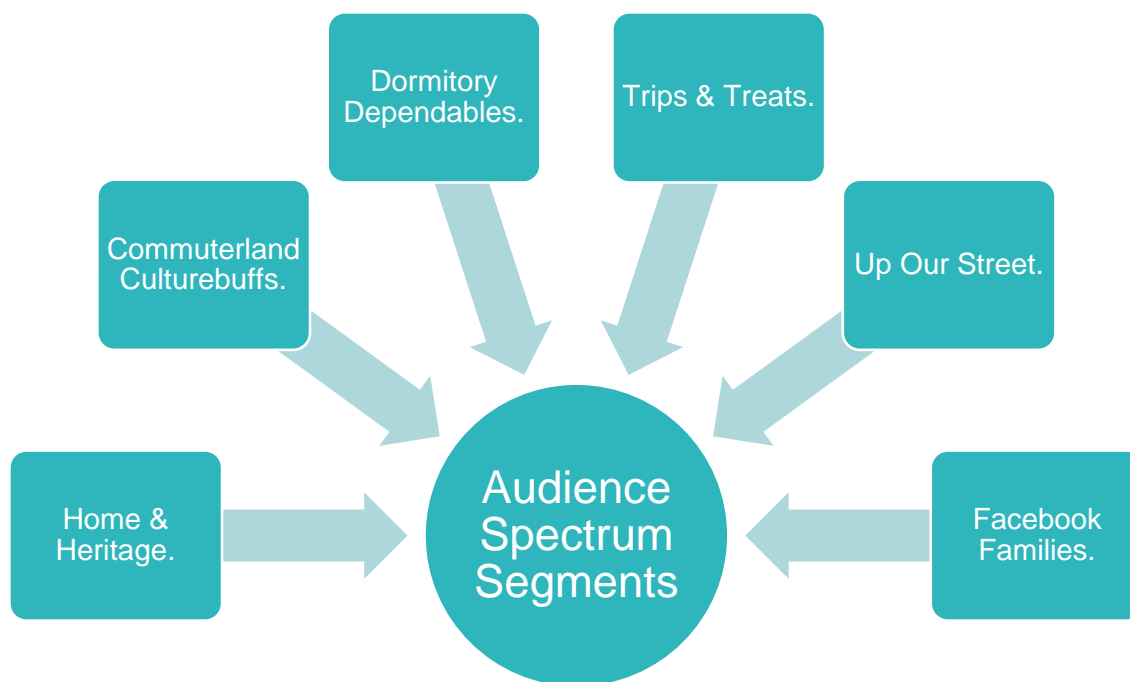


**Figure 8 - Hastings Castle (Ruins Overlooking Seafront)**

## 6.4 Target Audiences

Having examined all the audience insights available through workshops, public consultation, and desktop research, we have identified the following key audiences to engage during the development, delivery, and operational phase of the Hastings Castle project.

Figure 9 includes audience segments from the Audience Spectrum segmentation tool and some less scientific but easily identifiable target audiences based on the demographics of the local area and those most likely to benefit and / or least likely to currently engage with the Castle.



**Figure 9 - Audience Spectrum Target Audiences**

- Local low-income families.
- Local older people.
- Local schools.
- Local teenagers.
- Local people with a disability.
- Volunteers recruited from and representative of all target audiences.

The action plan in the next section of the document has been designed to specifically target and engage all these target audiences during the development, delivery and operational phase.

## 7 Next Steps & Action Plan

### 7.1 Introduction

This section sets out an action plan to develop audiences for the Hastings Castle project. This section begins with a summary of initiatives and activities that can contribute to developing audiences for the wider Hastings Castle site through the development, delivery, and operational phase of the Hastings Castle project.

It has been specifically designed to respond and reflect the strategic context that Hastings Castle is operating within, including Cultural Regeneration Strategy for the borough; the barriers we know target audiences face to engaging with the Castle; the motivations target audiences have to engage with the Castle; the vision for audience development around the site; the supporting objectives for audience development; and the guiding principles for audience development and Hastings Castle.

### 7.2 Prioritised List of Actions and Activities (Development Phase)

This sub-section sets out a prioritised list of actions that should be implemented to contribute to the development of audiences for Hastings Castle during the development phase of the project and to secure maximum impact from planned investment and interpretation interventions.

Action	Principles Met	Resource Implications	Target Audience
Website / Online Presence.	Distinctly Hastings Castle.	Staff time to manage commissions. Consultancy budget to develop any interpretation resources associated to this.	Local low-income families, local schools, local teenagers, and local people with a disability.
Social Media Strategy.	Distinctly Hastings Castle.	Staff time to manage commissions. Consultancy budget to develop any interpretation resources associated to this.	Local low-income families, local schools, local teenagers, and local people with a disability.
Information Sharing.	Partnership and Co Creation.	Staff time to design, deliver and project manage. Independent evaluation budget may be required / built into funding bids for specific projects.	Funding bodies, Council and potential audiences.

Additional Funding Opportunities.	Ambition and Quality.	Staff time to develop funding bids and manage project / activities where awarded.	All targets.
Volunteer Recruitment & Training.	Inclusive and Accessible.	Staff time to develop and manage volunteers. Potential budget requirement for software around management of volunteers etc.	Local teenagers.
Community Champions.	Inclusive and accessible.	Staff time to develop and facilitate. Expenses budget for community champions to travel to meetings etc. Potential project budgets from activities arising from the community champions.	All targets.
Capacity Building & Mentoring.	Ambition and Quality.	The Museum and Art Gallery Manage time to develop and deliver programme. Along with staff and other organisation attendance and various training and mentoring sessions.	Organisation Staff and volunteers.
Annual Events Programme.	Heritage inspired, arts and events enabled.	Budget to commission, staff time to project manage.	All targets.
Creation of a 1066 Pass.	Partnership and Co Creation.	Staff time to drive forward and develop. This is likely to be resource hungry and	All targets.

		may require additional resource. Potential support area from NLHF / other stakeholders.	
Development of a Marketing Strategy.	Distinctly Hastings Castle.	Staff time to project manage. Consultancy budget for marketing specialists. Budget to produce collateral as appropriate. Potential ongoing marketing budget.	All targets.

**Table 6 - Development Phase Actions for Audience Development**

### 7.3 Prioritised List of Actions and Activities (Delivery and Operational Phase)

This sub-section sets out a prioritised list of actions that should be implemented to contribute to the development of audiences for Hastings Castle during the delivery / operation of the project and to secure maximum impact from planned investment and interpretation interventions.

Action	Principles Met	Resource Implications	Target Audience
Creative & Interactive Workshop.	Technologically advanced and innovative.	Staff time to set up, then attend sessions. Potential training budget to facilitate sets or consultant facilitator.	Potential private sector partners.
Volunteer Development Programme.	Inclusive and accessible.	Staff time to develop and manage volunteers. Potential budget requirement for software around management of volunteers etc.	Local teenagers and local older people.
Signature Event.	Heritage inspired, arts and events enabled.	Budget to commission, staff time to project manage.	All targets.

Educational Resources.	Inclusive and accessible.	Staff time to drive forward and develop. This is likely to be resource hungry and may require additional resource. Potential support area from NLHF / other stakeholders.	Local schools and local teenagers.
Marketing Campaign.	Ambition and Quality.	Staff time to project manage. Consultancy budget for marketing specialists. Budget to produce collateral as appropriate. Potential ongoing marketing budget.	All targets.
School Holiday Club	Inclusive and accessible.	Staff and volunteer time to develop and manage. Budget to pay for or subsidise practitioner fees - may be delivered by partners as part of existing Council budgets.	Families, teenagers and older people.
Staff and Volunteer Training of Disability.	Inclusive and accessible.	Staff and volunteer time to attend. All staff and volunteers involved with design and delivery of Castle activities. Training budget also required.	People with a disability.
Family Picnic.	Inclusive and accessible.	Staff and volunteer time to organise. Budget to deliver including marketing, commissioning suppliers etc.	All families.
Action Learning with Comparator Projects.	Ambition and Quality.	Staff time to set up, then attend sessions. Potential training	All targets.

budget to facilitate  
sets or consultant  
facilitator.

**Table 7 - Delivery and Operational Phase Actions for Audience Development**

## 7.4 Approach to Delivery (Development Phase)

### 7.4.1 Website / social media Presence

A bespoke Hastings Castle website would promote increased attendance and act as a central information point. This is proposed to include linkages to other sites in the local area, and interpretative outputs. Alongside this social media strategy should be developed and implemented to connect to the existing story and wider resident community, whilst also promoting the events and activities on offer at the Castle. Hastings Borough Council staff to receive training in social media engagement to increase the impacts of content.

### 7.4.2 Information Sharing

Our research included engagement with other heritage organisations to understand how data is used as a key part of their business. This included dialogue around what organisations captured and their priorities for the future. The creation of a more robust approach to the collation and analysis of data would assist in creating a comprehensive and informed baseline to support the development of audiences for Hastings Castle. This would also provide a baseline from which progress could be measured and could also be used as a planning tool to inform and support business and project planning. This would also allow for benchmarking against other leading visitor attractions, thus helping areas of improved operational performance.

### 7.4.3 Additional Funding Opportunities

Opportunities exist to apply for Arts Council project funding particularly related to developing a portfolio of events and activities for the Castle project. The interpretative framework developed for this project connects well with the Arts Councils themes and can provide opportunities to further embed or extend the impact of the proposed concept.

### 7.4.4 Volunteer Recruitment & Training

Hastings Borough Council could look to adopt a similar approach to guided tour experiences as taken forward in Moray (Scotland) for their heritage assets. Targeting young guides would provide an inclusive and accessible approach whereby they could take guided tour experiences and talk about specific interests to them – such as ghost tours. Recruitment, training and development of volunteers could be a key element of the Castle training programme.

### 7.4.5 Community Champions

A mechanism is required to build and retain momentum of the Hastings Castle project once the Town Deal has been confirmed and Castle activities in the long-term. Elsewhere a Community Champions initiative has been helpful in raising awareness of heritage sites within communities or interest or geography, supporting inclusive of interpretive themes and activities in other projects and generally ensuring updated heritage remains front and centre in communities.



A range of Community Champions could be recruited to support the Hastings Castle project and the wider delivery of activities and events. These Champions could be recruited from several places / parts of society and could include:

- Young people from communities across Hastings.
- Community members.
- Teachers representing primary and secondary schools in Hastings.
- People with disabilities.
- Business community representatives.

These Community Champions could become a sounding board or working group for the Castle project, to test ideas and to act as a route to the wider community. These champions may already be involved in heritage in Hastings such as the archaeologists that volunteer their time or supporters of Hastings Castle. The key aim for this initiative would be to create a role that could be performed in communities that would connect to an audience development approach.

#### 7.4.6 Capacity Building & Mentoring

The interpretative framework provided by Design Map in the instance of Hastings Castle provides the catalyst to empower the new Hastings Castle organisation to embrace and pursue new opportunities. It is our view that training, wider capacity building and on-going mentoring and support will be required to encourage the organisation and partners to identify, prioritise and pursue the many opportunities that the interpretive framework can facilitate. This will be especially true for the Hastings Castle organisation as it will be reliant on volunteer input.

We recommend that the existing Museum and Art Gallery Manager given experience takes ownership of the framework in the interim, to build organisational capacity and to support the embedding of a new approach to operation. Support would be required in three specific areas – that being training, mentoring, evaluation, and forward planning.

##### 7.4.6.1 Training

The Museum and Art Gallery Manager has the capability to deliver training sessions around themes such as how to benefit from interpretive materials, communications, effective use of social media, partnership working and joint programming and approaches to user and visitor research. They would develop resources and tools to support the delivery of training which could then also be the resources that are used to implement change for the Castle. The output of the training sessions would be an organisation that is prepared to pursue the opportunities afforded by the interpretative framework.

##### 7.4.6.2 Mentoring

In order for the training and skills to be embedded it is our view there is a need for ongoing mentoring and support. Members of the organisation are expected to leave the sessions with ideas on how they improve the Castle project and enhance the activities, however it is likely that further support will be required to turn ideas into deliverable and impactful actions. We recommended that the Museum and Art Gallery Manager has a mentoring role, encouraging especially those at the top of the structure to implement the learning from the training and commenting and advising on the implementation of ideas that come from various sessions.

##### 7.4.6.3 Evaluation and Forward Planning

This is proposed to be an ongoing monitoring and mentoring role providing necessary support on areas that the organisation may be struggling with. After a year, an evaluation report and

forward plan could be developed by the Museum and Art Gallery Manager that summarises the successes and otherwise resulting from the delivering of training and mentoring whilst also highlighting future priorities.

#### **7.4.7 Annual Events Programme**

Established of a plan separate to the Activity Plan for Hastings Castle which will include the potential for attractions and entertainment within the Castle grounds and at Ladies Parlour, including the potential for a launch event, outdoor theatre, music, film and fitness classes and weddings.

#### **7.4.8 Creation of a 1066 Pass**

Explore the creation of a 1066 pass which would permit entry to a number of the heritage assets around Hastings such as Battle Abbey, the Museum as examples. This pass would be designed to increase engagement with Hastings Castle and draw audience from more popular attractions, offering a money saving for visitors compared to buying separate tickets.

#### **7.4.9 Development of a Marketing Strategy**

Development of marketing strategy during the development phase, extending on target audiences identified in this Audience Development Plan and specific approach for how to attract. This is proposed to include the cooperation with local heritage sties including Battle, Rye, Pevensey along with other more general visitor attractions.

### **7.5 Approach to Delivery (Delivery and Operational Phase)**

#### **7.5.1 Creative & Interactive Workshop**

Develop a creative and interactive workshop format consultative event aimed at introducing partnership working and introducing the private sector to the Hastings Castle scheme. The private sector will be particularly useful in identifying and capitalising on thematic, technology and storyline opportunities, using stories to support product development and activity. This would be led by the design team appointed to deliver the next phase of development work. Businesses could be appointed to support pilot opportunities during the development of the Hastings Castle project.

#### **7.5.2 Volunteer Development Programme**

Capacity of the Hastings Castle organisation will rely on addressing the requirement for volunteers. This activity would focus on onboarding volunteers and volunteer capacity which could be used at the Castle, or to deliver interpretation, connecting the needs of the organisation with the skills and time available of each volunteer.

By generating volunteer capacity, it is likely that the Castle will be able to extend opening hours, extend programming and activities delivered to increase engagement with the local Hastings community. In addition to the above, it is suggested that Hastings Borough Council consider developing a guiding programme for young people, recruiting, training and supporting young people to be active participants in the delivery of Castle activities.

#### **7.5.3 Signature Event**

A signature event whether held within the Castle grounds or at Ladies Parlour would be advantageous to deliver as part of existing / wider programme or as standalone activity. This could either be a programme and coordinated event, led by the Hastings Castle organisation, or

delivered in conjunction with heritage partners across the Borough. The idea behind hosting a signature event would be to re-enforce the inter-connected nature of heritage across Hastings from an interpretation perspective, whilst acting as a key part of the events programme / and marketing strategy for the Castle.

#### **7.5.4 Educational Resources**

Hastings Castle can have greater reach where it connects to, and is effectively integrated into, a range of non-Castle related activities. Social prescribing within the health care system and using the Castle narratives to deliver cross curricular themes within schools are examples. Exploratory or pilot projects should be undertaken to consider how Hastings Castle can be better used to support education and wider health and wellbeing. By achieving integration of the Castle across other sectors, enhanced and increase use of interpretation themes can be secured which will lead to enhanced sense of, and connection to the Castle.

#### **7.5.5 Marketing Campaign**

The consultation completed to date indicated that marketing and promotion remained a barrier to increasing engagement with Hastings Castle. A marketing campaign that targets the local community, the business community and tourists, centred around the idea of revived stories and interpretation that the Castle has to offer should be developed. This would deliver on the Marketing Strategy established during the development phase of the project.

#### **7.5.6 School Holiday Club**

A school holiday club of Castle based projects targeting teenagers is suggested. Where possible embed intergenerational activities and ensure all projects connect local young people to the Castle, firing their imaginations and making them feel proud of themselves and where they come from with Hastings.

#### **7.5.7 Staff and Volunteer Training**

To ensure accessibility and inclusivity is embedded throughout all audience development actions invest in robust training space a range of disability, from physical disabilities to learning disabilities and diversity, including all protected characteristics, ethnicity and groups.

#### **7.5.8 Family Picnic**

Research conducted by Mott MacDonald's Project Team suggests there is the potential to host a monthly 'family picnic' at the Castle which could act as an effective way to engage local families with taster activities and events in a fun and relaxed setting.

#### **7.5.9 Action Learning from Comparable Projects**

Hastings Borough Council should identify projects with similar goals and audiences at different points of the journey relevant to Hastings Castle. A good starting point may be those sites that recently received funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. They should consider formalising relationships by inviting officers on these projects to be part of an Action Learning Set whereby project leads, and Councils can learn from each other and share new perspectives on heritage and Castle related challenges.

### **7.6 Measuring Success**

The following provides some headline evaluation indicator tools which will provide a litmus test for the ongoing success of this Audience Development Plan:

- Feedback from Hastings Castle staff.
- Social media measurement tools and analysis and back end digital metrics for website (e.g., Google analytics).
- Media clippings – advertising equivalent, sentiment analysis and messaging delivered as well as stature / reach of media publication.
- E-newsletter list growth and engagement (e.g., opens, click throughs etc.)
- Audience feedback / reviews of interventions / events and activities.
- Numbers of audiences / attendees.
- Diversity of audiences / attendees.
- Number of schools engaged.
- Teacher's feedback of the school offer.
- Numbers and calibre of stakeholders and partners involved.
- Stakeholder and partner feedback.
- Additional external funding invested into Hastings Borough.
- Number and profile / diversity of volunteers.
- Volunteer feedback.
- Business feedback and confidence.
- Increased investment in culture from Hastings Borough Council.

Monitoring and collating the above data at minimum will enable Hastings Borough Council to evidence how the Castle has been a catalyst delivering on the long term aims of the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the various conditions attached.

## 8 Appendix A – Public Survey

Included as a sperate, confidential Appendix.

## **9 Appendix B – Audience Agency EAPR**

Included as a separate, confidential Appendix.

