

Case Study: Walton on the Naze, Essex

Background:

In the 1950s and 60s Walton on the Naze was in a prime location, being just 75 minutes away from London, having the longest beach in Essex and the second longest pier in the UK, it attracted many day trippers from East London by train.

Why Walton on the Naze needs to rebrand?

- The area has an ageing population, making it one of the most population pyramid 'top heavy' towns in the UK. Many of these live on state pensions and don't have a lot of money spare for luxuries.
- Many have a shortage of basic and advanced qualifications. For example 43% of people have no qualifications, with the national average being 29%
- Although there is a relatively large amount of affordable housing there still isn't enough, with it being below the national average
- Many people are unemployed for a large amount of time and many claim incapacity benefits. For example 9% claim these compared to the national average of 6%
- Many of the jobs are in wholesale, construction, social work, trade and repairs. For example 11% work in construction compared to 7% nationally, and only 9% work in real estate compared to 13% nationally.

How Walton on the Naze could rebrand?

There are a number of methods that Walton on the Naze could use in order to rebrand, some of these are:

1. *New Commuter Housing* - Expand the town and renovate properties – As housing in Essex is a lot cheaper than in London and is only 75 minutes away it means that it would attract young professional people to the town, which would also boost spending here
2. *Gentrification* - rebranding to attract a new socio-economic group – rebranding so that it appeals to London's middle class. This would be done with smart restaurants and hotels. Towns in Suffolk have done this and have benefited from 'London money'
3. *Sunshine Coast* - upgrade the image of the town in order to attract more tourists – Building on the existing plan it has, it could use the fact it is the 2nd sunniest coast that most parts of the UK, attracting more tourists.
4. *Environmental Value* - rebranding on the basis of environmental quality – the spit coastal spit surrounding it is already a SSSI, with the river estuary to the north teeming with bird
5. *Flagship Development* - attract the casino market and make it a gambling hotspot – Gambling is a huge growth industry offering both jobs and further expansion. Casinos may also offer conference facilities attracting other businesses to the area
6. *Retirement Centre* - focus on the over 60s for the core of the population – rebrand it as the 'retirement capital' upgrading the facilities for the age group e.g. secure housing and shopping units for entertainment focused on the older age.
7. *Festival Town* - attract festival conference market, with special events throughout the year – conference market is huge with a lot of spending power. The Walton on the Naze festival is already established in September, and there are a number of different festivals in the summer.

