

# DOVER PLACE PLAN 24-26



## Executive Summary

Dover Town Council began the first phase of public consultation for the Dover Place Plan on 23rd June 2023, engaging over 560 participants through sessions and organisational meetings. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with strong support for a cohesive plan that preserves Dover's unique heritage, which participants identified as the town's defining characteristic.

Key priorities emerging from the consultations include:

- Heritage: Establishing it as Dover's unique selling point in future development plans.
- Community and a sense of belonging: the need for central places and venues to meet, celebrate and perform;
- Green and Open Spaces: Improving and increasing green and open spaces in and around the town centre.
- Strategic Planning: Preparing projects now for future funding bids, ensuring future public projects reflect what local people actually want and need.

Participants highlighted the need for better traffic management, cultural attractions, and a cohesive presentation of projects, including cost estimates. The plan aims to transform Dover into a town of pride for residents and visitors, focusing on well-designed spaces, heritage preservation, and innovative attractions.

More things that matter to people in Dover (June 2023 – June 2024):

- Housing: Improve quality, housing security, tenancy options, and a variety of accommodation options.
- Health: Expand healthcare provision in Dover to provide clinics and low level services without having to go to Canterbury, Ashford or Margate etc; support improvements in mental health, addiction, and healthy living – especially with regard to obesity and active lifestyles.
- Happenings; murals and public art; performances and events especially festivals.
- Youth Engagement: Safe places to go, increase the variety of activities and sports available, provide support, facilities and mentoring.
- Infrastructure and Transport: Upgrade public transport especially bus services, make Dover more pedestrian friendly public transport and create a clean safe beautiful town that is economical to maintain.

Opportunities for Growth:

- Tourism Development: Improve key visitor sites and landmarks;
- Transport Improvements: Modernise public transport for better sustainability and better access.
- Collaborative Programmes: Partner with other organisations to achieve more.

Dover Town Council acknowledges that it may not be able to achieve everything outlined. However, the place plan serves as a framework to help secure additional funding, engage with other organisations, monitor progress, and further develop initiatives. The aim is to influence, participate in, and, where possible, deliver well-informed project outcomes that align with the needs and priorities of residents, visitors, workers and families.



**Communication:** Use noticeboards and digital platforms to inform the community about events and keep informed about volunteer opportunities.

## **Creatives and Volunteers:**

- Provide spaces for creatives, volunteers, and the organisations they support.
- Practical initiatives like clothes swaps, writing, music, and crafts for all ages.
- Volunteer training, support, recognition events, social opportunities and volunteer co-ordinators.

**Community Clubs:** Community Clubs: Spaces to meet people. Modernise community centres through local partnerships for better use.

## **Public Spaces:**

- Reclaim our shared spaces, cleaner streets and building maintenance
- Improve safety - Stop Drunks, Antisocial behaviour & Drug users.
- Better Parks: Pencester + Connaught - exciting wheeled sports area, make them engaging and beautiful.
- Regular events in Market Square and turn off piped music.



### Youth Activity & Recreation Hubs:

- Create safe, welcoming spaces for young people to use in the evenings with regular, consistent opening hours.
- Develop larger, improved “BMX/skateparks”
- Better outdoor opportunities like fishing clubs, paddle-boarding activities, and climbing walls.
- Virtual Reality (VR) zones for gaming and coding activities.
- More recreational options such as music and rehearsal studios for young people.



### Creative Community & Educational:

- Better access to local mental health services.
- Sexual health clinics specifically for young people in Dover.
- Hub for carers or spaces for those with specific interests, such as writing or media and communication.
- Outdoor learning or encourage connection with nature.
- Establish performance spaces for arts, theatre, and music
- Coding clubs and digital skills workshops to improve tech literacy among youth.



## Housing Locations, Standards and Choices:

- Housing meets high standards for construction, sustainability, and comfort.
- Rented housing options, including shared ownership and secure tenancies.
- Adaptable homes designed for long-term needs, such as "Homes for Life," long term accommodation.
- Varied housing options, including studio flats and mixed-size units.
- Buildings repurposed to preserve heritage and architecture while providing modern living spaces.
- New builds at Farthingloe and Western Heights with consideration for the local environment and heritage
- Shelters and transitional housing to help the homeless.
- Studio flats with shared gardens and communal spaces, offering affordable, community-based living.
- Co-housing options with shared facilities and communal gardens for affordable, collaborative living.



## Improving Health Access

- Support groups for conditions like diabetes, autism, dementia, and mental health.
- Gentle exercise groups and health education for all ages.
- Pop-up health services for those with mobility or transport challenges.

## Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

- Resources on nutrition and cooking to promote healthier choices, info and experience.
- Improved access to walking, cycling, and watersports; addressing safety concerns like incomplete cycle lanes.
- Variety of outdoor activities, such as Nordic and nature walks.

## Addressing Health and Environmental Concerns

- Tackle respiratory issues like asthma and COPD by addressing traffic pollution.
- Promote healthy food access to help combat obesity.
- Access to local sexual health clinics, substance abuse support, and user led practical help.



**Improving Local Transport:** Work with bus companies to improve bus services with later running times, more frequent buses, real-time displays. support community-run minibuses.



### **Supporting Green Initiatives :**

- Faster electric vehicle charging points - EV charging stations in more areas to encourage eco-friendly travel.
- EV car purchase schemes that are modern and efficient
- Promote walking and cycling - partner with local walking or cycling groups, activities to encourage healthier transport options.

### **Enhancing Public Spaces:**

- Make streets cleaner, calmer and safer to encourage walking and cycling for short trips.
- Improve public transport access by maintaining areas around bus stops and transport hubs.
- Add secure bike racks and drop kerbs to make cycling and mobility access easier, use speed displays for traffic calming.



## Enhancing Outdoor Spaces, Seafront and Riverside:

- Greening Dover Make It Bloom
- Watersports, more outdoor facilities, paddlesports, better planting, picnic tables, mini-golf, possibly provide a climbing wall or aquapark
- Introduce mental health swims, nature walks, trail exploration.

## Pencester Park:

- Amphitheatre, picnic benches, upgraded skatepark, outdoor exercise equipment.
- Regular litter picks, more family-friendly spaces + events.



## Connaught Park:

- Refurbish tennis courts/provide padel, add a dog park, improve the planting.
- Include a large varied wheeled sports park, better access, parking, more amenities like a kiosk, toilets, gathering places.

## Outdoor Recreational Spaces:

- Expand walking, cycling, orienteering trails around the Downs + Connaught.
- Consider facilities for padel, basketball, water activities like paddlesports, sailing, sea swimming.





### Heritage Sites

- Open the Grand Shaft and Drop Redoubt to the public, adding visitor amenities, tours, and digital tools like augmented reality.
- Modernise museums with interactive exhibits and link them with other attractions Highlight local historical figures.
- Create a modern tourist and archaeology centre at the Roman Painted House.

### Cultural Spaces for Arts and Performance

- Provide a theatre venue for local and professional performances, offering affordable access, moving away from using churches or schools.
- Open up the independent cinema with affordable prices, offering film festivals and diverse programmes to compete with commercial options.
- Develop an art gallery or exhibition space for local artists to showcase their work.

### Creative and Multi-Craft Spaces

- Create a craft space for ceramics, with workshops for pottery and sculpture to engage the community.
- Provide cheap and accessible studio spaces that meet the needs of local artists.
- Keep the library open as a vital community resource, offering public computers and expanded digital services to support education and creativity.

## Promoting Public Art and Mural and performance:

- Liven up the street scene with murals.
- Locally relevant art projects
- Public art/exhibitions or creative surface improvements to enhance public spaces
- Pencester Park open air amphitheatre, event space with awnings
- Seafront - community events, festivals and outdoor performances

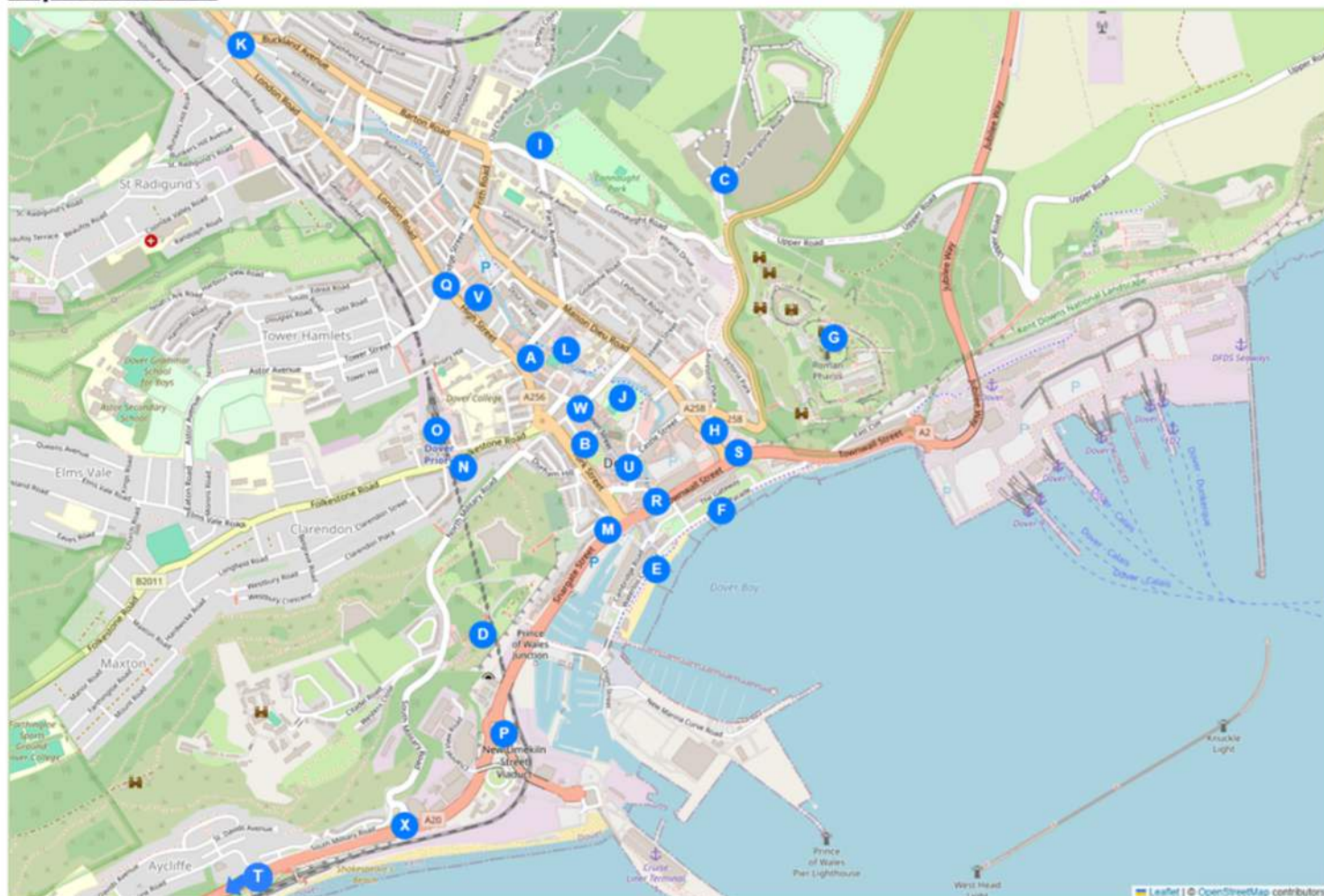


## Supporting Local Events and Festivals

- Build on popular seasonal events like the Pride Parade, Winter Light Up, Regatta.
- Improved communication for new events, music festival or children's events.
- Mixed views on funding high street winter lights, but interest in creative decorations like themed lighting or statues.
- Explore light festivals and more modern displays.



## Important Sites



	Category	Location/Theme	Description
A	Heritage and Visitors	Maison Dieu	Outdoor space and better approach from Maison Dieu carpark; Community access;
B		Roman Painted House	Develop its full potential as a key visitor attraction
C		Fort Burgoyne	Increase community and leisure uses like drive-in cinemas and markets; preserve and develop the space
D		Western Heights	Restore and open the Drop Redoubt and the Grand Shaft; Develop area as a country park with walks, wildflowers and visitor facilities
E	Green and Open Spaces	Motes Bulwark	Preserve and improve
F		Seafront	More to do - mini golf, picnic areas, climbing wall, watersports for all, shade etc
G		Dover Castle & Fortifications	Links to town need improving
H		St James Tidy Ruins	Increase access and look at potential to develop it into a sympathetic contemporary indoor space
I	Green and Open Spaces	Connaught Park	Improve and develop outdoor facilities - skate/cycle/wheeled sports park, running/walking trails, padel/tennis. Toilets and kiosk to make longer stays possible
J		Pencester Gardens	Improve and create a town centre family space - play, access to river, events, amphitheatre etc
K		River Dour Hub	Increase usage
L		Riverside Gardens and Greenway	Improve space and add activities to reduce anti-social behaviour
M	Transport/Infrastructure	Town Trees	Plan for tree planting along streets and in green spaces, including tree preservation policies.
N		Folkestone Road	Ban HGVs, clean it up and make it greener
O		Bus/Train Interchange	Multi storey parking at Railway station; bus interchange to move to single carriageway York St
P		Cruise Terminal Walkways	Accessible paths linking cruise terminals to town
Q	Urban	Cycling and Bus Lanes	Find ways to make cycling and walking in the town centre easier and safer
R		Creative Centres	Need to be accessible and in line with practitioners needs; exhibition space; more focus on craft rather than just fine and digital arts
R		Archaeology Hub	The science behind our historical assets; career and vocational opportunities; bring university departments to Dover
S		Leisure Centre Site	Needs appropriate development because of location near ruin and castle
T	Urban	TAP	Build a roundabout at Sapphire Hoe to hold TAP back from Aycliffe
U		Market Square	Need for regular cleaning and maintenance to improve appeal for visitors.
V		Charlton Centre	Redevelopment for mixed use; creative hub
W		High Street	Improve buildings; murals; festivals
X		A20	Surface crossing not just an underpass with less than 15 years life left in it.



## Research and Context

As of the 2021 Census, Dover Town had a population of approximately 31,973, marking a 3.07% increase since 2011 (The Deal Society, 2021). The town's demographic profile reveals an ageing population, with a median age of 46 years—significantly higher than the national average of 40 years (ONS, 2021). Ethnically, Dover remains predominantly White (94.9%), with smaller Asian (2.1%) and Black (0.7%) communities contributing to its diversity (CityPopulation, n.d.).

## Socio-Economic Challenges

Dover faces several socio-economic challenges:

- **Education:** Nearly a quarter (24.33%) of residents have no formal qualifications, compared to a national average of 18.08% (ILiveHere, n.d.).
- **Health:** The proportion of residents reporting 'bad' or 'very bad' health exceeds national averages, indicating significant health inequalities (CityPopulation, n.d.).
- **Poverty and Housing:** Poverty levels remain high in parts of the town, exacerbated by limited access to opportunities and ageing infrastructure. Housing affordability and overcrowding are persistent concerns, with rising costs compounding the issue (Dover District Council, 2021).
- **Low income:** Dover workers earn on average 5.1% less per week than the rest of the county. A large gender pay-gap still exists where women are paid 21.2% less than men (Kent Analytics, 2024)

## Local Economy

Dover's economy is deeply influenced by its port, one of Europe's busiest, which serves as a critical hub for trade and employment. However, reliance on port-related industries exposes the town to external vulnerabilities, such as productivity declines and global economic shifts (Dover District Council, 2021).

To counterbalance these challenges, efforts are being made to:

- Diversify the economy, with some efforts towards green energy and tourism.
- Develop entrepreneurship by drawing inspiration from successful initiatives in other areas of Kent (Dover District Council, 2021).

## Environmental and Cultural Considerations

Dover's natural and cultural assets are integral to its identity:

- **White Cliffs:** A globally recognised symbol of the town and a key tourism driver. However, the cliffs face long-term threats from coastal erosion, underscoring the need for sustainable development strategies (National Trust, n.d.).

- **Cultural Heritage:** Landmarks such as Dover Castle cement the town's role as a historical hub. Community cohesion is strengthened through events and festivals that celebrate its maritime legacy (Dover District Council, 2021).

## Barriers to Growth

Despite its strengths, Dover faces significant barriers:

- **Economic Inequality:** Persistent disparities limit growth and social mobility.
- **Education and Skills Gaps:** Addressing low educational attainment is critical for improving employability and long-term economic stability.
- **Healthcare Access:** Services are unevenly distributed, with the ageing population particularly affected.
- **Infrastructure Deficits:** Ageing infrastructure poses challenges for transport, housing, and service delivery.

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## References

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## Consultation Process

The consultation process for Dover Town Council was conducted in two key phases across a 12 month period, engaging a wide spectrum of the community. This methodology was designed to capture diverse perspectives and generate actionable insights for project development and community-life improvements.

### Initial Meetings

The consultation began June 2023 with a series of structured meetings, bringing together stakeholders and community members to discuss a place based, capital project map of the town.



### The Talking Shop Initiative

Building on the outcomes of the initial meetings, a second round of consultations was launched under the innovative "Talking Shop" initiative. Designed to break away from traditional, formal engagement settings, Talking Shop sessions were held in contemporary, accessible locations along the high street. This ensured that participants felt comfortable sharing their views without the constraints of stuffy office environments or lengthy questionnaires.



### Engagement Strategies

To reach a broad and varied audience, sessions were scheduled on different days and at flexible times. This approach aimed to accommodate diverse demographics, including working professionals, retirees, and young adults. The informal and approachable settings encouraged open dialogue and genuine participation.



## **Data Collection**

Participants were asked to grade the importance of key topics related to improving an individuals' life in Dover, focusing on areas with a direct impact on socio-economic conditions and quality of life. This structured exercise allowed us to quantify priorities and trends effectively. Following this, attendees had the opportunity to provide detailed qualitative feedback on targeted questions, uncovering new ideas and highlighting actionable avenues for project development.

## **Outcome**

The combination of structured ranking and open-ended feedback revealed a wealth of insights. The approach successfully surfaced the community's most pressing concerns and aspirations, paving the way for cohesive, well-informed project outcomes that align with residents' needs and priorities.

**DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**Population by Town/Parish**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Population</b> Census 2001-04-29	<b>Population</b> Census 2011-03-27	<b>Percentage</b> <b>Increase 2001</b> <b>to 2011</b>	<b>Population</b> Census 2021-03-21	<b>Percentage</b> <b>Increase 2011</b> <b>to 2021</b>
<b>Dover</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>104,566</b>	<b>111,674</b>	<b>+6.80%</b>	<b>116,410</b>	<b>+4.24%</b>
<a href="#">Alkham</a>	Parish	691	688	-0.43%	708	+2.90%
<a href="#">Ash</a>	Parish	2,767	3,365	+21.61%	3,340	-0.74%
<a href="#">Aylesham</a>	Parish	3,884	3,999	+2.96%	6,411	<b>+60.32%</b>
<a href="#">Capel-le-Ferne</a>	Parish	1,659	1,884	+13.56%	1,959	+3.99%
<a href="#">Deal</a>	Parish	20,355	20,823	+2.30%	20,347	-2.29%
<a href="#">Denton with Wootton</a>	Parish	317	372	+17.35%	378	+1.61%
<a href="#">Dover</a>	Parish	28,156	31,022	+10.18%	31,973	+3.07%
<a href="#">Eastry</a>	Parish	2,168	2,492	+14.93%	2,384	-4.33%
<a href="#">Eythorne</a>	Parish	2,493	2,594	+4.05%	2,563	-1.20%
<a href="#">Goodnestone</a>	Parish	363	378	+4.13%	392	+3.70%
<a href="#">Great Mongeham</a>	Parish	747	762	+2.01%	740	-2.89%
<a href="#">Guston</a>	Parish	1,881	1,740	-7.50%	1,683	-3.28%
<a href="#">Hougham Without</a>	Parish	481	463	-3.74%	499	+7.78%
<a href="#">Langdon</a>	Parish	558	558	0	613	+10.86%
<a href="#">Lydden</a>	Parish	684	673	-1.61%	687	+2.08%
<a href="#">Nonington</a>	Parish	847	906	+6.97%	920	+1.55%
<a href="#">Northbourne</a>	Parish	793	772	-2.65%	724	-6.22%
<a href="#">Preston (Preston-next-Wingham)</a>	Parish	713	674	-5.47%	921	<b>+36.65%</b>
<a href="#">Ringwould with Kingsdown</a>	Parish	1,964	2,030	+3.36%	1,965	-3.20%
<a href="#">Ripple</a>	Parish	351	372	+5.99%	350	-5.91%
<a href="#">River</a>	Parish	3,775	3,876	+2.68%	3,817	-1.52%
<a href="#">Sandwich</a>	Parish	4,753	4,985	+4.65%	4,851	-2.69%
<a href="#">Shepherdswell with Coldred</a>	Parish	1,761	1,849	+5.00%	1,841	-0.43%
<a href="#">Sholden</a>	Parish	985	1,084	+10.05%	2,268	<b>+109.23%</b>
<a href="#">Staple</a>	Parish	521	551	+5.76%	549	-0.36%
<a href="#">St. Margaret's at Cliffe</a>	Parish	2,378	2,499	+5.01%	2,627	+5.12%
<a href="#">Stourmouth</a>	Parish	262	268	+2.29%	291	+8.58%
<a href="#">Sutton</a>	Parish	777	772	-0.64%	744	-3.63%
<a href="#">Temple Ewell</a>	Parish	1,696	1,669	-1.59%	1,766	+5.81%
<a href="#">Tilmanstone</a>	Parish	365	401	+9.86%	369	-7.98%
<a href="#">Walmer</a>	Parish	7,428	8,178	+10.10%	7,842	-4.11%
<a href="#">Whitfield</a>	Parish	4,440	5,142	+15.81%	5,896	+14.66%
<a href="#">Wingham</a>	Parish	1,618	1,775	+9.70%	1,754	-1.18%
<a href="#">Woodnesborough</a>	Parish	997	1,066	+6.92%	1,239	+17.35%
<a href="#">Worth</a>	Parish	935	992	+6.10%	1,006	+1.41%
<b>South-East England</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>8,000,645</b>	<b>8,634,750</b>	<b>+7.93%</b>	<b>9,278,065</b>	<b>+7.45%</b>

Source: UK Office for National Statistics (web).

Explanation: Parishes as at May 2022. All population and corresponding area figures of parishes are based on assigning output areas by using population-weighted centroids. Thus, slight discrepancies are possible compared to the actual parish boundaries that are depicted in the map. No population figures (and the actual area) are provided for parishes smaller than output areas.

## Further information about the population structure:

Gender (C 2021)		
<a href="#">Males</a>	56,801	48.8%
<a href="#">Females</a>	59,609	51.2%

Age Groups (C 2021)		
<a href="#">0-14 years</a>	18,940	16.3%
<a href="#">15-64 years</a>	69,562	59.7%
<a href="#">65+ years</a>	27,898	24.0%

Age Distribution (C 2021)		
<a href="#">0-9 years</a>	12,163	10.4%
<a href="#">10-19 years</a>	12,745	10.9%
<a href="#">20-29 years</a>	11,953	10.3%
<a href="#">30-39 years</a>	13,509	11.6%
<a href="#">40-49 years</a>	13,060	11.2%
<a href="#">50-59 years</a>	16,950	14.6%
<a href="#">60-69 years</a>	15,504	13.3%
<a href="#">70-79 years</a>	13,343	11.5%
<a href="#">80+ years</a>	7,173	6.2%

Country of Birth (C 2021)		
<a href="#">UK</a>	106,575	91.6%
<a href="#">EU</a>	4,969	4.3%
<a href="#">Europe (other)</a>	412	0.4%
<a href="#">Middle East &amp; Asia</a>	2,259	1.9%
<a href="#">Africa</a>	1,100	0.9%
<a href="#">Other country</a>	1,095	0.9%

Ethnic Group (C 2021)		
<a href="#">White</a>	110,419	94.9%
<a href="#">Asian</a>	2,402	2.1%
<a href="#">Black</a>	837	0.7%
<a href="#">Arab</a>	136	0.1%
<a href="#">Mixed/multiple</a>	1,754	1.5%
<a href="#">Other ethnic group</a>	863	0.7%

Religion (C 2021)		
<a href="#">Christian</a>	57,768	49.6%
<a href="#">Muslim</a>	734	0.6%
<a href="#">Hindu</a>	723	0.6%
<a href="#">Sikh</a>	73	0.06%
<a href="#">Buddhist</a>	591	0.5%
<a href="#">Jewish</a>	113	0.09%
<a href="#">Other religion</a>	649	5.6%
<a href="#">No religion</a>	49,302	42.4%