



SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 9th NOVEMBER 2022

PLACE MARKETING – LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Commission on the work of the Place Marketing Team for Leicester and Leicestershire.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The County Council's Strategic Plan and Enabling Growth Plan both highlight the importance of enhancing the profile of Leicestershire as a place to visit, live, work and do business; thus, encouraging investment and creating the right environment to attract businesses which can grow and flourish now and in the future.
3. Following a review, on 23rd November 2016 the Cabinet supported the establishment of a Company, to be jointly owned by the County Council and Leicester City Council, to lead on Place Marketing, Inward Investment and Strategic Tourism across Leicester and Leicestershire.
4. Due to unforeseen delays in establishing the Company, the Cabinet agreed in February 2019 to revise their decision to create a Company and instead to extend the interim joint working arrangements which had been established which included a staff team hosted by the City Council and based at City Hall in Leicester (the Place Marketing Team). It was felt at that time that due to good progress against the agreed business plan with strong private sector engagement through the current arrangement a company model was no longer required.

Background

5. The Place Marketing Team was established in 2017 to deliver Place Marketing, Inward Investment and Strategic Tourism (including business tourism) across Leicester and Leicestershire. The key aim of the Place Marketing Team is to promote the city and county as a place to visit, live and invest. It is a collaboration with Leicester City Council who host the Place Marketing Team. The County Council provides a cash contribution of circa £60,000 a year as well as two seconded members of staff. For details of Governance Chart and Organisational Chart, please refer to Appendix A
6. The service is delivered across Leicester and Leicestershire and is broken down into the following:

- Visit Leicester – Showcasing leading visitor attractions, enticing visitors, encouraging overnight stays, and providing a fragmented sector with cohesion to achieve sustainable growth by promoting Leicester and Leicestershire as a united destination.
 - Meet Leicester – Maximising business tourism opportunities, promoting city and county wide conference venues to attract business meetings and events to the region
 - Invest Leicester – Support service for businesses (foreign and domestic) looking to expand or relocate within Leicester and Leicestershire and for developers and investors looking to bring sites and properties to the market.
7. The service also includes an overarching ‘place’ based offer, which highlights why Leicester and Leicestershire is a fantastic place to ‘live’. Known as ‘Live Leicester’, the offer is currently under development and will promote the absolute best that Leicestershire has to offer, from an array of green spaces, housing mix, a plethora of high achieving schools and universities and outstanding connectivity. The core aim is to encourage people to make Leicester and Leicestershire their home.

Inward Investment

8. Inward investment delivers extensive benefits to Leicestershire, improving economic competitiveness and enabling improvements in productivity for both new and existing companies. It makes a positive contribution to the County’s economic growth, for example, by generating employment, increasing tax revenue, knowledge creation / retention, and securing external resources such as capital, technology, and managerial intelligence that can aid productivity, innovation, and economic growth.
9. As a key outcome, companies can invest back into Leicestershire and create better living standards, higher wages, improved skill levels, stronger supply chains, and more sustainable communities for the future. Inward investment is widely recognised as a positive type of investment activity and identified as a key priority within the emerging Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2021-2030.

Inward Investment Enquiries and Successes

10. During 2021/22 the Invest team received 257 new enquiries. This compared to 191 enquiries received in 2020/21. The team supported 23 companies to set up or relocate into Leicester (11 companies) and Leicestershire (12 companies), up from 18 in 2020/21. This created or retained 2,536 jobs (2,340 were in Leicestershire), which comprised several large projects reported by the Department for International Trade (DIT). Successes include:
- JD Worldwide – opened a new warehouse in Lutterworth, total of 90 jobs created
 - REE Auto – autonomous vehicles manufacturer who opened their first UK base at MIRA Technology Park taking their headcount to 30 employees, with a view to employing 100 employees in the future (in partnership with DIT).
 - Roca – Spanish company specialising in distributing bathroom products located in Bardonia, creating 6 new jobs.
 - Buy It Direct Group – expanded into Leicestershire, acquiring a 525,000 sq. ft. distribution unit at East Midlands Distribution Centre creating 250 jobs.

- DPD – opened Europe's largest parcel handling facility in Hinckley, which in total created around 750 jobs (DIT project).
- VF Corporation – large American retail company have opened their new distribution site in Bardon, creating a total of 250 jobs (DIT project).
- AIMMO – South Korean data analytics company opened their global HQ in MIRA Technology Park, creating a total of 40 new jobs (DIT project).
- Beauparc – acquired a 100,000 sq. ft site in Cotesbach, Harborough creating a centre of excellence for the conversion of waste plastics into new saleable products with 50 new jobs (DIT project).
- JM Wholesale – lifestyle products company, supplying products to companies across the UK relocated from Leicester to Whetstone resulting in 40 new jobs.

Active Inward Investment Enquiries

- Confidential client seeking a 70,000 - 80,000 sq. ft industrial unit (B8) within the Midlands. Existing pharmaceutical company looking for larger premises of around 7-8,000sq ft. Currently employ 14 staff, expecting to grow to 30 with new premises.
- Consultants acting on behalf of a large energy company tasked with finding a property that will allow them to remain in Leicestershire. Looking for c40,000 sq. ft Industrial unit and would consider an old office block.
- Leicestershire based healthcare company require a manufacturing facility (30,000 - 42,000 sq. ft) to manufacture their new diabetes product. Charnwood Campus is a shortlisted site. Require capital funding support. Looking to be operational by end of 2023. 120 high skill FTE jobs.
- Consultant acting on behalf of a multinational, UK HQ large packaging and manufacturing business. Their client is looking for a site to accommodate a 500,000 sq. ft industrial unit employing up to 250 highly skilled people. Shortlisted 7 sites in England - one of which is G-Park, Ashby.
- Loughborough based advanced engineering company looking to move into larger premises to service their anticipated growth. They need a min of 10,000 sq. ft industrial / warehouse premises as soon as possible with 50,000 sq. ft additional space required within 5 years.
- A combined energy business requires a minimum of 30 acres (12ha) for an energy plant, research facility and will offer around 780 highly skilled jobs over two phases with breaking ground for phase one expected in early 2023 and phase two by 2027.

Inward Investment Collateral

11. The early stages of the pandemic negatively affected Leicester and Leicestershire's image. To support economic recovery, the team focused on raising the positive profile of the sub-region's investment strengths and opportunities in key sectors with the creation of a suite of fresh marketing collateral. This included:

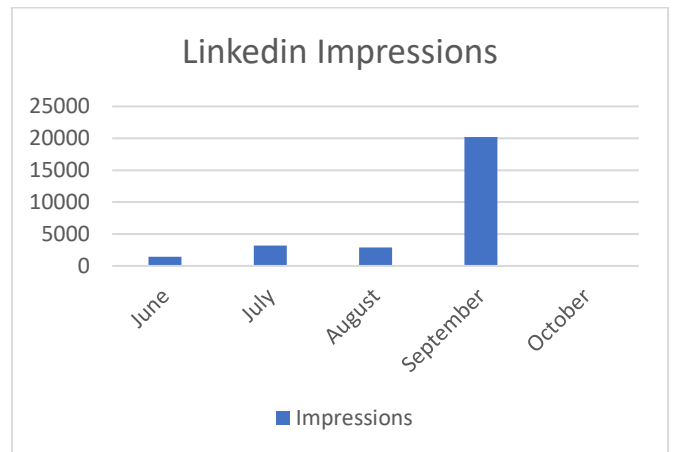
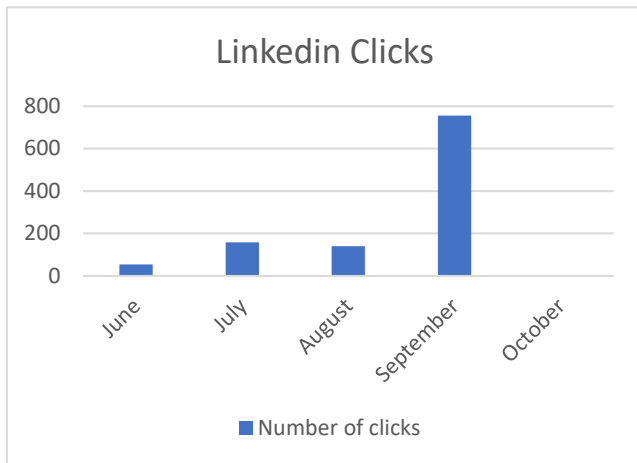
- A new inward investment website www.investinleicester.com – new content, imagery and site/property search integration reflecting the diverse offer across Leicester and Leicestershire. The site also includes a joint 'Welcome' from the Leader of Leicestershire County Council and the Leicester City Mayor and highlights ambitions in the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan.
- New inward investment brochure, highlighting Leicester and Leicestershire's location and sectoral strengths and opportunities .

- Strategic sites map highlighting 41 key development and investment opportunities across Leicester and Leicestershire.
 - New photographic images and video and written business / investment / asset case studies, including Kindeva, Access Group, Amazon, Everards, Charnwood Molecular, East Midlands Airport, and East Midlands Gateway / Rail Freight Terminal.
12. The inward investment element of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) Accelerator programme has enabled the development of a suite of promotional videos and digital assets for key growth sectors. Eight videos were created for:
- Space technologies
 - Professional and Financial Services
 - Life Sciences
 - Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering
 - Advanced Logistics
 - Food and drink manufacturing
 - Creative and Digital
 - Low carbon
 - Compilation
13. The videos will be used at future events, conferences, and online marketing to raise the profile of the sub region's investment strengths and USP's in key growth sectors. The videos can be viewed in each sector here <https://www.visitleicester.info/invest/sectors>. They are also available for use by district council colleagues.

Inward Investment Social Media

14. Significant improvement in social media engagement has been achieved since a dedicated member of the team has worked in it. Since July there has been a focus on improving the presence on LinkedIn. To date page views are up 283%, followers up 236% (922 followers) and engagement rate up to 6.39%. As a benchmark LinkedIn indicates an engagement rate of 2 as good.
15. The Invest in Leicester LinkedIn platform has seen an increase in the number of followers, clicks, impressions and engagement rate.

	Page views	Unique visitors	New followers	Impressions	Clicks	Engagement rate
June	70	30	23	1440	54	3.51
July	94	30	23	3197	158	6.465
August	53	23	25	2898	140	5.625
Sept	203	72	84	20,193	756	6.39



The focus now is on connecting with key individuals in property and development to further increase the number of followers and engagement using positive stories about Leicestershire.

Inward Investment Comms, Marketing, PR

16. The team has developed an Inward Investment marketing and communications plan which outlines marketing and communications activity to raise the profile of Leicestershire and grow the business community by attracting new employers of the future.
17. There have been two paid advertorial features with Insider Magazine – in the September issue for Space Park Leicester and office space in the City and in the October issue a North West Leicestershire Investment Opportunities focus. See articles in Appendix B.

Promotional Events

18. In March 2022, the City and County Council sent four delegates to MIPIM, the world's largest property conference. Leicester and Leicestershire promoted sites on a global stage to increase investment into capital projects within the region and raise the profile of the region as an investment location. It also enabled the strengthening of the Leicester and Leicestershire brand proposition for internationalisation – creating interest around trade, investment, tourism, and higher education.
19. Invest in Leicester provided sponsorship to Team Leicester for MIPIM 2022, which contributed towards networking events for over 100 delegates. The events highlighted development and investment opportunities across Leicester and Leicestershire, whilst also enabling professionals to build beneficial, long-standing relationships with each other and other local authorities. It should be noted that comments were made about local authorities who were noticeable by their absence. Team Nottingham was a particular example discussed on several occasions. Given that MIPIM is the world's number one property conference, those authorities who should be seeking inward investment and showcasing their own developments - their absence was remarked upon.

20. Invest in Leicester successfully submitted two bids to fDi Intelligence's European Cities and Regions of the Future 2022/23. fDi Intelligence, a product of the Financial Times, recognised that Leicester and Leicestershire were a top 5 region for FDI Strategy and a top 10 region for Human Capital and Lifestyle. The team collected the awards at the MIPIM Awards Ceremony, which celebrated the most successful locations in Europe for investment attraction.
21. The UK Government funded a UK Pavilion at MIPIM and hosted a 3-day programme of keynotes and panel sessions that showcased the UK as a platform for growth and investment. Relevant 'take-aways' for Leicester and Leicestershire included:
- Understanding the investment opportunities within the UK residential market including Private Rented Sector, Affordable Housing and Retirement Living, and what Homes England's investment strategy is. Local authorities were encouraged to engage in dialogue with Homes England – the Strategic Property Services team are actively engaging.
 - Understanding what is driving the growth within the UK's life sciences industry and what are the challenges and opportunities. Connections made with panelists Olivia Drew, UBS; James Sheppard, Head of UK & Ireland, Kadans Science Park; and Chris Walters, Head of UK Life Sciences, JLL. Further discussions took place with these panelists regarding how they can support growing Leicester and Leicestershire's life sciences sector including referrals to Charnwood Campus.
22. Additionally, quality conversations took place at MIPIM with:
- The Head of Regional Investment from the Department for International Trade regarding grant funding for the highways and associated infrastructure for Lutterworth East. This is being followed up with meetings arranged to continue discussions. As well wider discussions about investment in the county, specific conversations were had with master developers and housing (both market and affordable) providers for Lutterworth East. The scheme, which is nearing the issue of planning permission, is still well known and tracked in the property market and interest remains strong in being the County Council's delivery partner for the scheme.
 - Property and FDI consultants GIS Planning, Co-Star and Wavteq to help shape the team's approach to property/FDI/business data insight and assessment. Implementing this knowledge will enable the team to respond quickly and consistently to investment enquiries, as well as creating business cases to target investors.
 - BuildingMinds – a Berlin based software company who may be able to assist the CAIF by helping the Strategic Property Services team to tackle the difficulties in calculating the embedded carbon in development options thus assisting the team to achieve the County Council's decarbonisation goals using a real estate data platform. On a related note, discussions were had regarding timber framed construction and a meeting held with the chairman of the Confederation of Timber Industries.
 - The Editor of fDi Intelligence magazine to understand what their future articles will cover and whether there are synergies with Leicester and Leicestershire.
 - International commercial agents including Savills, JLL, Cushman & Wakefield, CBRE, Avison Young to connect with their site selection teams. Subsequently, the team organised for the Savills Science team to visit Charnwood Campus and

Loughborough University Science and Enterprise Park in July 2022 to make introductions with key individuals and to discuss our combined offer and pitch our respective services.

- Construction, property, and institutional investment Business Development Directors including Lone Star Funds, a global private equity funder looking to invest in residential developments, to promote Leicester and Leicestershire's development opportunities
- Built Environment Network – complementary pass secured to the Built Environment Network's UK Real Estate Investment & Infrastructure Forum (UKREiif); a 3-day event bringing together the public sector alongside Government, investors, funders, developers, housebuilders and more
- International cities and regions to 'peer review' how they promote their areas, specifically focusing on the European Cities and Regions of the Future award winners. This included a discussion with the Riga Freeport team
- UK competitors to 'peer review' how they promote their areas including Invest Coventry & Warwickshire, Invest Newcastle, Invest Liverpool, and Make It Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire

23. The City and County Councils hosted a 'Place Showcase' and 'Meet the Investor' events at the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiif) conference in Leeds in May 2022. The conference provided local areas the opportunity to highlight the scale of their development progress and profile future investment opportunities to investors, developers and occupiers from around the globe.
24. UKREiif attracted over 5,000 attendees, over 300 high-level speakers and 80 exhibitors with attendees ranging from senior public and private sector employees including Government ministers and senior officers from multiple local authority areas, investors, developers, and occupiers. Leicester and Leicestershire events attracted 50 people, highlighting ambitious growth plans focusing on urban regeneration, addressing high street and transport challenges, providing future housing and employment space, and achieving Net Zero ambitions. Subsequently, post-UKREiif relationships have been forged with Caddick Developments, Cole Waterhouse, MODA Living, Harworth Group and St Modwen Homes, who are all looking to acquire sites across the City and County or collaborate on council led schemes such as Lutterworth East or Ashton Green.
25. In September 2022, Invest in Leicester attended Site Match 2022, which is a 'speed-dating' style event for the public and private sector in London. The event allowed the team to promote development and investment opportunities to a broad range of organisations, creating relevant connections through focused one-to-one meetings with developers and investors.
26. Invest in Leicester recently sponsored and hosted a table of private sector developers at the Business Insider East Midlands Property Awards in September 2022. The event was a fantastic celebration of the region's abundance of enterprise, skill and innovation within the property sector and provided an excellent platform to highlight the service. The team also presented an award for "Regeneration and Restoration Project of the Year".

East Midlands Freeport

27. In terms of Inward Investment in the County, the Freeport represents the biggest opportunity. As such, the team are actively engaged with the Freeport Team.
28. The Place Marketing Team is passporting all enquiries to the Freeport Team who, in turn will communicate these expressions of interest to the individual landowners, where appropriate.
29. The Place Marketing Team will also make use of the marketing materials produced by the Freeport team in all promotional activity. In addition, the Place Marketing Team has committed to working with their counterparts in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire to ensure a consistency in promotion but also consistency in how enquiries are managed.

Inward Investment Strategy

30. As a response to economic recovery and to ensure that Leicestershire continues to be an attractive and competitive proposition for businesses and investment, a new Inward Investment Strategy Framework for Leicester and Leicestershire will be developed that will target support against investments with greatest potential to maximise growth and value for investors. This will support growth, drive productivity, create jobs, respond to the climate emergency, and deliver economic benefits across the whole of Leicester and Leicestershire.
31. As part of the strategy, the Place Marketing Team will work with local partners to systematically identify emerging clusters, sub-sectors, supply chain gaps or other 'High Potential Opportunities' where opportunities are not currently being exploited or market failures are leading to structural under-investment. This will enable the service to be more responsive to the needs of investors and better match investor requirements with opportunities across the County that have the capacity to drive high value growth and jobs.
32. This is a crucial piece of work that will attract the right businesses, located appropriately and in line with the Strategic Growth Plan, Economic Growth Strategy and taking account of the Councils Asset portfolio. It will also align to support the wider strategic priorities and opportunities for the area (e.g., resonating with wider local and regional infrastructure, commercial and residential development plans).
33. The inward investment team is also currently undertaking a review of the approach to engaging with Leicestershire's district councils, which will feed into its Strategy. Initial observations have identified the following:
 - Activity is happening with good working relationships at officer level
 - Service is valued by certain groups and local authorities
 - Complex set up from the outside world – need to address this
 - Clearer account management / aftercare service needed
 - Better impact reporting
 - A strategy where all parties are signed up to
 - Better engagement at district corporate level.

High Potential Opportunities Programme

34. The team was successful with two bids to the DIT High Potential Opportunities (HPO) programme Round Two (19 out of 36 were successful), covering Life Sciences – Rehabilitation, a partnership between the Place Marketing Team regional universities, Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, Charnwood Campus, Active Together and private businesses, and a joint LEP (LLEP, CWLEP, SEMLEP and Oxfordshire LEP) HPO for Connected and Automated Mobility. These two HPOs will add to the Space HPO which the team secured in Round One.
35. The programme is designed to promote niche opportunities to foreign investors to increase inward investment, retain investment and develop research and business collaborations where areas have strengths.
36. The team are now working with DIT to engage with a longlist (100-125) of companies for each HPO across key international markets that have the right characteristics to invest in the Leicester and Leicestershire opportunity.
37. The team are also working with DIT to devise a series of webinars to promote the HPOs and our area to colleagues across the DIT post network. Meetings have also been held with DIT sector leads for Latin America and Switzerland to promote the Life Sciences – Rehabilitation HPO.

Strategic Tourism

Destination Management Organisational (DMO) Review

38. In 2021 the DCMS published the De Bois Review; an independent review of local 'tourist boards' known as Destination Management Organisations (DMOs). The Place Marketing Team operates as a Visit England recognised DMO, known as Visit Leicester. The DMO Review is designed to bring coherence to England's DMO landscape via a tiering approach, using an accreditation process to create a national portfolio of high performing DMOs that meet certain criteria. Visit Leicester intend to become one of these accredited DMOs, to be known as Local Visitor Economy Partnerships (LVEP) once the criteria are known. The national portfolio will be split into two tiers. Tier 1 will be known as Destination Development Partnerships (DDP). The DDP will act as a "hub", liaising directly with Visit England and DCMS and cascading funding and programme initiatives down to the Tier 2 LVEP "spokes".
39. DCMS want to set up a pilot DDP to see whether the tiered approach works and invited expressions of interest from regions. A consortium of East Midlands DMOs submitted an Expression of Interest to be this national pilot including Visit Leicester (representing Leicester and Leicestershire), Marketing the Peak District and Derbyshire, Destination Lincolnshire, Visit Nottingham/Nottinghamshire, Visit Derby and Discover Rutland. The East Midlands region is considered the most effective geographic partnership arrangement for Leicestershire as it meets the DCMS criteria for a DDP consisting of coast, cities and rural areas. Conversations have been held with the West Midlands Growth Company about Visit Leicester becoming a Tier 2 partner for the West Midlands, but this has been ruled out.
40. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council have supported this East Midlands DDP pilot bid with letters from the Leader and City Mayor because it

demonstrates the ambition of the region to champion its visitor economies and raise the profile of its tourism offer nationally. Both authorities accept that whilst this is a speculative bid for a pilot scheme, supporting this EOI also demonstrates support in principle for the proposed regional collaboration moving forward. There is also recognition that failure to engage with the DMO Review process will result in relegation to a Tier 3 organisation. Without national accreditation, there will be no direct access to government funding. By working as a consortium, accredited LVEPs will also benefit from economies of scale and the opportunity to collaborate on sector challenges such as skills shortages, business events and sustainability. Each LVEP will retain its own distinctive identity and do its own place marketing.

Sector performance in 2021-22 and post-pandemic growth

41. Tourism and hospitality are important economic sectors for Leicester and Leicestershire. Before the pandemic in 2019, over 35.3m visitors helped boost the County's economy by £1.9bn and supported around 23,000 jobs. Economic outputs for 2021 remained below the level of usual economic outputs for the area due to the impact of the pandemic on businesses and consumer activity. UK domestic tourism was not able to reopen fully until July 2021 when most legal restrictions (such as social distancing) were lifted.
42. To demonstrate the post-pandemic recovery of the sector, the annual STEAM tourism economic impact report for 2021 has been benchmarked against that of 2019 to provide the following headline indicators:
- In 2021, total **visitor numbers** to Leicester and Leicestershire were **28.15 million** (20.4% below the pre-pandemic benchmark of 2019).
 - In 2021, the **economic impact** of the sector was **£1.63 billion** (17% below the 2019 benchmark). It is worth noting that after July 2021 when restrictions eased, many businesses reported challenges in job recruitment and retention which served to reduce operating capacities in some cases.
 - In 2021, **17,510 people were employed** in the sector (22.9% less than 2019).
43. However, 2021 Leicestershire recovery rates for tourism appear to be stronger than the national average. Economic impact was 8% stronger than the national average and visitor numbers were 10% stronger. This can in part be attributed to the importance of day visitors to the local visitor economy (helped by its central location) as well as the mixed city/rural county offer.
44. In 2022/23, Quarter 1 and 2 performance among the hotel sector in the County (excluding the city) looks strong with occupancy higher than in the pre-pandemic year of 2019. For further details on county hotel occupancy trends, refer to chart in Appendix C.

Month (2022)	% increase/decrease in occupancy compared to 2019
April	9.7% increase
May	8.9% increase
June (* Queens Jubilee BH)	7.7% increase
July	5.6% increase
August	6.7% increase
September	7.4% increase

45. Reported visitor numbers have been strong across both indoor and outdoor attractions, helped by the return of school visits, corporate business, and events programmes.
46. In 2022 there have been three primary areas of concern for the sector; rising costs, problems with supply chains and recruitment and skills. Recruitment and staff retention remain a serious challenge in the hospitality sector, with a national post-pandemic shortage of chefs and catering staff. To address short term skills shortages, a series of webinars were arranged in July with DWP and Job Centre Plus. Rising utility bills are a cause of significant concern for those running large buildings like theatres and visitor attractions. Some attractions have increased ticket prices twice already since January. Cafes and restaurants are struggling with the rising costs of food and supply chain issues.

Tourism Growth Plan 2020-2025 – Delivery Progress

Strategic Priority 1: Creating a Strong, Distinctive and Visible Destination Uncover the Story – Destination Marketing Campaign 2021

47. The importance of creating a strong, distinctive identity for Leicester and Leicestershire as a visitor destination was a key priority of the Tourism Growth Plan. Research revealed a lack of profile as the main barrier to sector growth. A destination marketing campaign was developed to define our visitor offer and bring cohesion to a fragmented sector, uniting an urban core with a rural shire and businesses as diverse as glamping pods to zoos. The 'Uncover the Story' destination marketing campaign was launched in July 2021 and capitalised on the fact that the area's attractions, places and heritage assets tell some of the UK's most important stories, including the greatest lost-and-found story ever told – the discovery of King Richard III beneath a car park.
48. Of the 60 stories featured in the campaign, 41 relate to the County. A full breakdown of stories by district area is given in Appendix D. To see the full campaign visit www.visitleicester.info/uncoverthestory .
49. Five promotional videos were developed to promote the campaign including one that focused on the National Forest and Ashby de la Zouch and another on Leicestershire's market towns. To see all the campaign videos, visit www.visitleicester.info/uncoverthestory/videos.
50. As the campaign was developed in partnership with businesses and districts in a bottom up rather than top-down approach, there was excellent partner engagement in promotional activities. Examples are given in Appendix D. The campaign featured on business and district websites and social media accounts.

'Uncover the Story' Editorial

51. The campaign has been used to highlight the area in national publications including an 11-page spread in Britain Magazine (a top national and international consumer travel magazine). Refer to Appendix D. The campaign was also featured as a best practice case study at the 2021 City, Nation, Place international place marketing conference in London, presented by the Strategic Tourism Manager. A Leicester

Business Festival Event to increase local engagement with the campaign was supported by Visit England in 2021. The campaign was funded through the LLEP Accelerator project.

52. Website Key campaign highlights for 'Uncover the Story' include:

- 1.1m potential customers have viewed the campaign on social media
- Over 570,000 views to 'Uncover the Story' attractions and landing pages
- 24,000 click-throughs from our website to attraction websites
- Over 80% of visitors to 'Uncover the Story' pages are from outside Leicestershire. Highest ranked cities include London, Nottingham, Birmingham, Manchester and Derby.
- 1,563 You Tube views and 38,240 social media views of the 'Uncover the Story' videos.

Paid campaigns for Uncover the Story

53. More detail on this is given in Appendix H. In summary:

- Social media Summer 2021: 1,500% increase on our organic reach on social media. 18,378 clicks to the 'Uncover the Story' website with 7,485 onward clicks to attraction websites - £1.34 per conversion. Stoney Cove and Belvoir Castle the two most popular attractions in the campaign
- Britain magazine Winter 2021: alongside coverage in the magazine, we gained 1,582 newsletter subscribers, £1.90 per conversion. See Appendix D.
- Social media Spring 2022: 1,208 newsletter sign ups to access future tourism information and campaigns. Cost per conversion £8.28.

Strategic Priority 2: Improve Productivity

Business Tourism Service

54. A business tourism service, Meet Leicester, was set up in 2020 to realise the full economic potential of the business tourism sector to fill hotels and meeting venues, address seasonality and better utilise visitor attractions for the corporate market. Since its establishment, Meet Leicester has recruited over 60 member venues (35 situated in the County), all of whom are featured on the new business tourism website www.meetleicester.co.uk. A sales and marketing plan was developed to promote the service to a target market of national conference and meetings buyers. Between January 2021 and July 2022, key activity has included:

- Exhibitions and trade shows – regional and national trade shows have been used to highlight member venues reaching conference buyers from the UK, Europe and the US including: CHS Birmingham October 2021 and 2022, GB Virtual in 2021 and 2022, Midlands Business Network Expo at Coventry Arena March 2022, CHS Leeds May 2022, The Meetings Show at Excel London September 2021 and June 2022. This was accompanied by pre and post show promotional activity. Many quality contacts were made during these events that will help with sales activity.
- Micebook Influencer visit – a two-day national influencer visit was staged in partnership with Meet England and Micebook. The result was [Event planners' guide to...Leicester - micebook](#). A video of the visit was promoted on social media.
- Business Tourism promotional video has been produced [Meet Leicester - YouTube](#)

- PR - Positive PR was generated in Business Network Magazine, Conference News, Business Desk East Midlands.
- E-Newsletters - Meet Leicester branded e-newsletters have gone out to all trade contacts and to a purchased Association database of over 1000 named contacts.
- Advertising - paid advertising has been used to boost exhibition attendance with Northern Hospitality magazine, Business Network magazine and Delegate Wranglers.
- Memberships - East Midlands Chamber of Commerce, MIA (Meetings Industry Association), Delegate Wranglers (a network of 20,000 conference and meetings buyers)
- Lead generation for association conferences and business events. A piece of research has been commissioned to match key industry sector strengths in the area with European association conferences so that targeted business generation activity can be undertaken with industry and academics.

55. Business Event Enquiry Levels 2021 business enquiry levels were affected by the pandemic with restrictions on social distancing not lifted until July 2021. The industry has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and it could be 2024 before it does. It has also been impacted by a move to hybrid working. Conversion rate from enquiry to booking is 25%

Results from January 2021 to 30th September 2022:

New website users	16,711
General Enquiries*	153
Proposals*	69
Bookings	17
Value of bookings	£30,000
Conversion rate	25%

*General enquiries are those from clients/conference buyers met at exhibitions and events or that come onto the website. Proposals are specific business event enquiries regarding rates and availability for specific dates.

Promoting to New Markets – Travel Trade

56. As well as targeting consumers through tourism marketing campaigns, 2022 has seen a focus on promoting the area's tourism offer to the national and international travel trade (travel and coach operators, group organisers, travel agents etc). A Guide has been produced for 2022 with over 40 bookable visitor experiences and 10 accommodation venues willing to work with the trade. The Guide was launched at EXPLORE GB in March 2022, a Visit Britain international trade event. As part of the marketing plan, the Guide is being promoted at national trade shows including the Group Leisure and Travel Show in October 2022 which targeted group organisers and coach operators (75 contacts were generated). This activity is being undertaken in partnership with Visit Harborough and Discover Melton which have developed group travel offers. Sponsored features, articles, competitions, and advertisements have also been secured in trade magazines such as Coaching Venues and Excursions and Group Leisure and Travel Magazine. Appendix E gives a breakdown of participating businesses by district.

Strategic Priority 3: Strategic Product Development

Tourism Marketing Campaign: 'Fitcation' – Active Escapes in Leicestershire

57. The tourism marketing campaign developed for 2022 was 'Fitcation' – Active Escapes in Leicester and Leicestershire (visit www.visitleicester.info/fitcation). Launched in June with the support of Visit England to tie in with the Commonwealth Games, it features over 45 different thrill-seeking challenges, opportunities to learn a new sport or active family fun activities from across the sub-region. Thirty-eight of those activities are based in the County. A breakdown of each activity by district is shown in Appendix F. Each listed activity includes a link to nearby accommodation to encourage overnight stays. The campaign also features five packaged holidays and short breaks.
58. In this campaign the accessibility of each activity has been highlighted with many being adapted for users with disabilities including wheelchair abseil ramps, adapted kayak sessions with hoists, autism-friendly inflatable park sessions, wheelchair roller rink sessions and adapted archery. These activities were promoted as part of the national "Purple Tuesday" on 1st November which promotes accessible tourism attractions.
59. As with 'Uncover the Story', the marketing campaign has been well supported by businesses, County Council, city and district councils and helps visitors to visualise the area as a single, integrated visitor destination with a strong, distinctive tourism offer. A series of four promotional videos has been created to promote the campaign on social media platforms, see them here: [Fitcation - YouTube](#) playlist.
60. The campaign was promoted in Birmingham during the Commonwealth Games through Metro Mail and on billboards as well as through a paid social media campaign. It was also promoted to residents at Fosse Park retail park and the Women's International Gliding Championships.
61. The 'Fitcation' webpages including activities have been viewed over 45,000 times - at least 3% of visitors to activity pages have then gone on to visit to a provider's website. On average, these users are spending more time on each page, and browsing through more pages during their session (compared to site average). This is a strong indication that users are very engaged with the information provided. A significant portion of visitors have come from outside the area, including regions such as Burnley, Edinburgh, Watford and Birmingham.
62. Paid social media campaigns for 'Fitcation website' are listed in Appendix H. The first campaign geo-targeted visitors to the Commonwealth Games venues, and generated 217 competition entries and newsletter leads at a cost of £2.63 per conversion. The second campaign was much broader and covered a range of cities and areas around the UK and was targeted at driving visits to the website. It generated 346 web visits, at a cost of £1.65 per conversion.

Tourism Advisory Board Activity

63. The Tourism Advisory Board (TAB), a public/private sector partnership of key stakeholders from across the tourism and hospitality industry, has been established for 5 years to champion issues of importance to the visitor economy. Since its establishment, it has overseen the development of a 5-Year Tourism Growth Plan, helped establish a Business Tourism Service, supported a destination marketing campaign and provided sector leadership and lobbied government during the pandemic.
64. The Board agreed five key priorities from 2021 to ensure the collective experience and expertise of its membership was put to best use in growing, and continuing to champion, the tourism and hospitality sectors. These included:
- articulating and supporting the best destination management solution for Leicester and Leicestershire (links to DMO Review above points 37 -39),
 - agreeing and prioritising future destination marketing campaigns
 - finding solutions to the current crisis in tourism and hospitality skills shortages and skill retention,
 - taking advantage of any new funding streams available to support growth
 - articulating how Leicester and Leicestershire can become a more sustainable/green tourism destination.

Progress against these priorities includes:

- Development of a draft **Visitor Economy Work and Skills Charter** to develop a longer-term solution to recruitment and skill retention challenges in the sector.
 - Support to develop two **UKSPF visitor economy interventions** for the sub-region, one with a focus on sustainable tourism (see below point 66).
65. Membership of the Board has remained consistent throughout the past five years however six new appointments have recently been made to reflect organisational changes. For full list of Board Members refer to Appendix G. Following the resignation of Dr Redrobe, CEO of Twycross Zoo, after 5 years as Board Chair, an interim Chair, Chas Bishop, Chief Executive of the National Space Centre has been appointed for the remainder of the year.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Visitor Economy Interventions

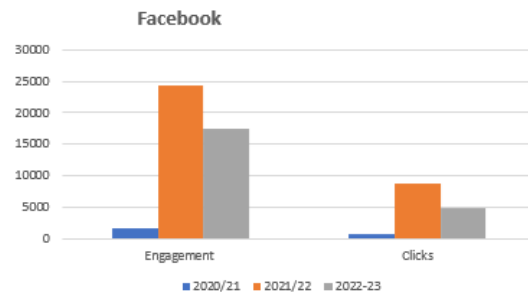
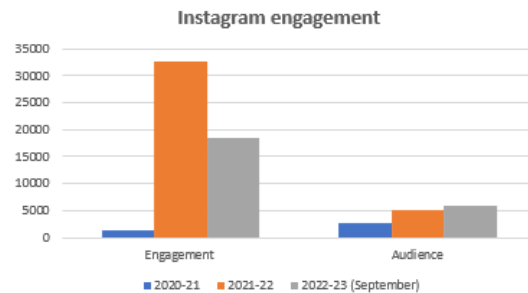
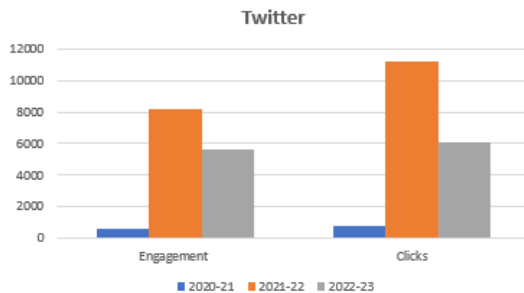
66. Two sub-regional wide visitor economy interventions have been proposed for the UKSPF. One focuses on a Leicester and Leicestershire food and drink marketing campaign called “Taste the Place” to highlight how our food is made, where it can be bought and consumed as well as experienced through activities and events. The other promotes sustainable tourism and supports efforts to make the City and County carbon neutral. Both proposals have been well-received by city and district councils and given consideration in the majority of Investment Plans.

Place Marketing Team

67. Place Marketing Team improvements

- Real engagement across Visit Leicester social media channels has increased massively, with huge increases seen across the board.
- From 2020/21 to 2021/22 Instagram engagement increased by 2,467%, Facebook engagement up by 1,398%, and Twitter up by 1,309%

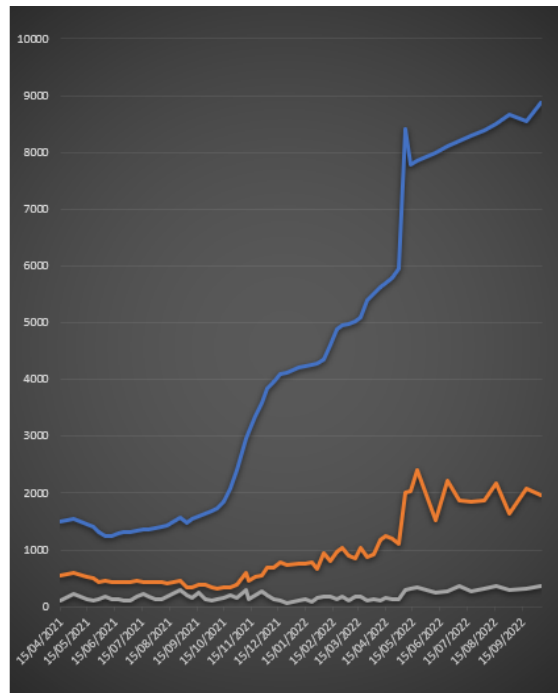
Social media statistics



68. These graphs show the growth over time, driven by the addition to the team of a Marketing and Communications officer dedicated to social media and digital content. 2020/21 figures are here to show the impact that dedicated provision can have. Engagement with Visit Leicester across all social media and clicks to the website (signifying clear interest in our product) have grown by many orders of magnitude and have continued to grow in 2022, at the 6 month point (which is what is shown here) we are on course to outstrip all of last year's figures.
69. The Visit Leicester Newsletter is a key tool in gaining and retaining long term customer leads. It is currently at 9,022 subscribers, up 493% since April 2021. With an open rate of 24.4% and a click rate of 4%, we are well above the industry average of 20.5%/2.4% (source: [Mailchimp email statistic and benchmarking](#))
70. Since 1 April 2022, there has been over 965,000 views to the Visit Leicester website, with over 370,000 unique users.

Visit Leicester Newsletter

- Graph shows growth since April 2021
- **493% increase in subscribers!**
- Key tool in gaining and retaining long term customer leads
- Our open rate average 24.44%
- Our click rate average 3.99%
- Better than industry standard (20.5%/2.4%)



71. With support through the LLEP Accelerator programme we have worked with Sandstar Communications on tourism PR. This initially started with support for the 'Uncover the Story' campaign but has subsequently expanded to all areas of tourism, business tourism and now inward investment. The PR that has been produced with pick up statistics which can be viewed in the spreadsheet in Appendix I.

Resource Implications

72. Leicestershire County Council provides a financial contribution to the Place Marketing Team via the Economic Growth Team budget. Support is given for two Grade 13 Manager roles and funding towards project delivery. The total cost is £195,000 per annum.

Timetable for Decisions

73. There are no decisions required arising from this report.

Recommendations

74. The views of the Commission are sought on the report together with the presentation provided by Mike Denby, Director of Inward Investment and Place Marketing.

Background Papers

Leicester and Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan <https://bit.ly/3sud58v>

Strategic Growth Plan, Leicester and Leicestershire <https://bit.ly/3N69yXs>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

75. None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

76. There are no equality or human rights implications arising from this report.

Other Relevant Impact Assessments

77. This is an update report for noting so no further impact assessments required.

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Appendices

Appendix A - PMT Governance Chart and Organisational Chart
Appendix B - Insider Magazine paid advertorial features
Appendix C - Hotel Occupancy Rates in Leicestershire
Appendix D - District Engagement in "Uncover the Story"
Appendix E - District Engagement with Travel Trade/Group Travel Activity
Appendix F - District Engagement with Fitcation
Appendix G - Tourism Advisory Board Membership 2022
Appendix H - Paid social media campaign results
Appendix I - Media coverage