

Recent Achievements and Current Activities: Place Marketing and Strategic Tourism**Tourism Campaigns****Uncover the Story**

The Uncover the Story tourism marketing campaign, launched in 2021, remains an important way to create a strong, distinctive identity for Leicester and Leicestershire as a visitor destination and bring cohesion to the visitor offer.

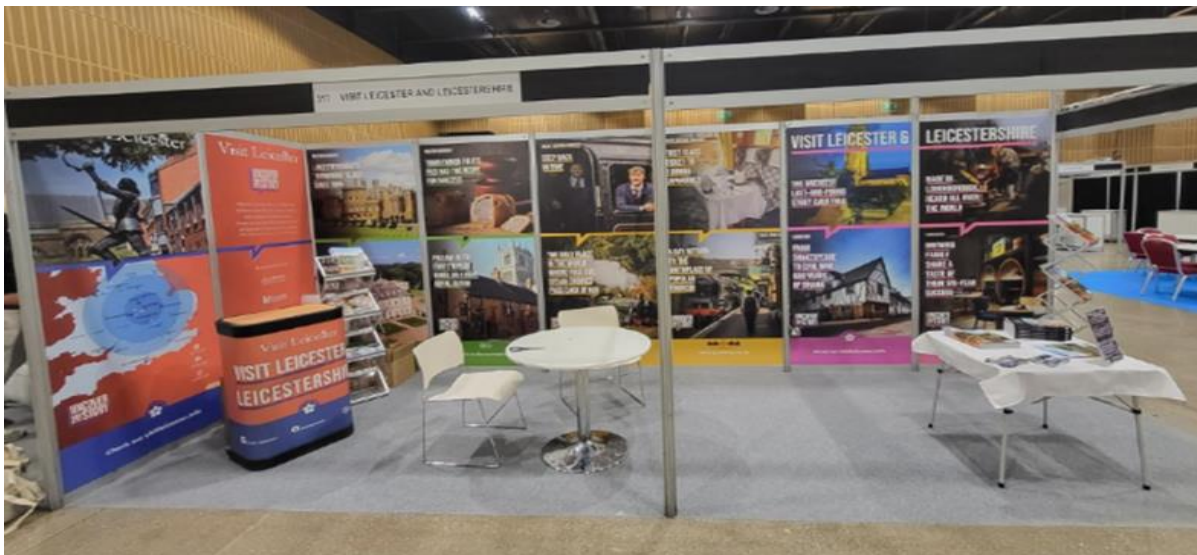
To support the campaign, a series of six county walking and driving trails were created, funded through the LLEP (Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership) Accelerator Fund. The trails are designed to encourage exploration of the wider area, celebrate lesser-known attractions, and increase visitor dwell time in the city and county. Themes include:

- Uncover Leicestershire's Historic Towns and Villages
- Uncover Leicestershire's Industrial Past
- Uncover Royal Melton
- Uncover Our Beautiful Gardens and Landscapes
- Uncover Historic Leicestershire
- Uncover Fun Family Days Out

The trails were featured in The Telegraph and Yahoo in August in articles on affordable things to do in Britain over the summer. Following a paid social media campaign, almost 900 trails were downloaded from the website in the first three months. The themed trails promote over 70 different local attractions, including hospitality businesses. Find out more at www.visitleicester.info/ideas-and-inspiration/trails.

Uncover the Story is still regularly featured on social media, newsletters and the branding was used on the group travel trade show stand and Riverside Leisure Maps that were completed from Watermead north of the city to Everards Meadows south of the city. www.visitleicester.info/ideas-and-inspiration/trails/riverside





Taste the Place

In March 2023, the Taste the Place campaign was launched (www.visitleicester.info/taste-the-place) The campaign was designed to highlight the area's food and drink reputation by highlighting food and drink to consume, buy, see in production, and experience through events and activities.

The campaign is divided into four themes:

- A Taste of England: Explores traditional food and drink from the county, including pies, cheese, ales, and ciders, as well as pubs and venues for afternoon tea.
- Food for Thought: Explores fighting climate change from the kitchen by looking at environmentally sustainable food consumption that reduces food miles and promotes a farm-to-fork approach.
- The Home of Veganism: Looks at the origins of veganism in Leicester and the founding of the Vegan Society in the city.
- The World on a Plate: Explores Leicester and Leicestershire's world food offer and the communities that make it.

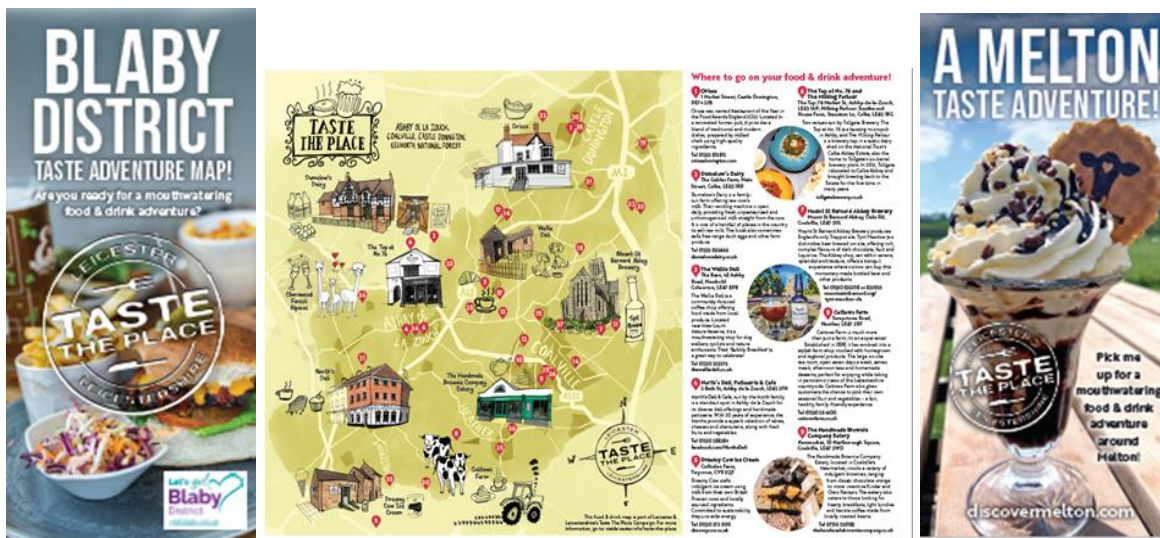


The Taste the Place campaign was promoted through a paid social media campaign and a series of 5 campaign videos in April and May, reaching over 1.6 million people and generating about 20,000 engagements with the campaign website.

Five social media influencers also worked with Visit Leicester during National Afternoon Tea Week (7-11 Aug) which led to wider media coverage.

District councils aligned with the campaign and allocated around £45,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund money to support its marketing and associated product creation, amounting to 75% of the total campaign budget. This funding was used to create Taste Adventure maps for six districts, and eight district-specific campaign videos. Funding was also allocated to extend the paid social media campaign, highlighting the food and drink offer in each district in the lead-up to Christmas and Easter.

Events have been held in Melton, Harborough, and North West Leicestershire to raise campaign awareness and highlight businesses taking part in it. To date, an additional 150 independent food and drink businesses have been featured in district campaigns and are included on the Visit Leicester website.



The Taste the Place campaign is an excellent example of the Place Marketing Team working with delivery partners to create a cohesive, partner-funded marketing campaign for the area that celebrates distinctive district and city identities, aligned to a wider sub-regional campaign for maximum national impact. Just 17% of the total budget was met from core revenue budgets, with the rest coming from LLEP Accelerator funding or campaign partners.

Fitcation

In May 2023 a social media takeover was organised and all businesses that are part of the Fitcation campaign were encouraged to share posts on the same day to promote their involvement with Fitcation. The takeover saw 200 views on the day and 150 views the day after – the districts engaged and shared content. Walking and cycling trails were featured in the newsletter the same week and got plenty of clicks.

In July Leicester Riders basketball player Conner Mountain agreed to visit Leicester Outdoor Pursuits Centre for some PR activity to raise awareness of the Fitcation campaign. Posts were shared on social media and a blog was included in the newsletter. Fitcation was promoted on the Visit Leicester stand at the Riverside festival in June and generated a lot of interest in the trails and riverside walks.



Meet Leicester

Meet Leicester, a business tourism initiative, has attracted 739 delegates to the area through 32 events, generating a conference spend of £62,000 and an overall economic impact of £221,000. The service is now managed within existing resources on a reduced scale with no dedicated staffing resource. However, this year, in partnership with the NHS, Meet Leicester secured a 400-delegate, two-day Clinical Research Foundation Network Annual Conference for July 2024, with a direct value of over £100,000 to local venues and hotels and an estimated economic impact of £59,000. An additional 90 delegates have been secured in 2023 from two additional events.

Travel Trade

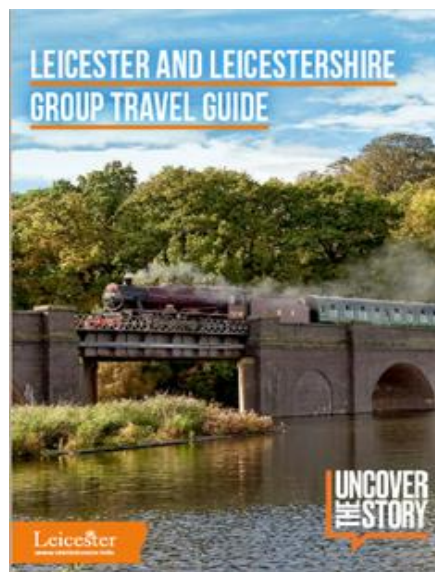
The 2023 Group Travel Guide for Leicester and Leicestershire features over 50 unique bookable group experiences, from factory tours to pie making experiences, with recommendations of 10 accommodation providers willing to accommodate large group bookings. Of these, 35 bookable experiences are in the county.

The Guide was promoted in 2023 at the British Tourism and Travel Show in Birmingham and the Group Leisure & Travel Show in Milton Keynes. Both shows have helped to build a database of over 280 Group Travel Organisers that are sent quarterly newsletters. Costs for attending shows have been significantly reduced this year through partnerships with other district councils and private sector attractions, with partners now covering 60% of all trade show expenses.

The lead-in time for inclusion in trade itineraries is 12-18 months, but Leicestershire itineraries are already starting to appear in group travel brochures, including the 2023 Moving People Coach Holidays (a 5-day Leicestershire break), 2023 Swift Valley Coach Travel (Melton Mowbray), Chalkwell Coaches, Door2Door Coach Holidays (Leicester), and Just Go Holidays. Leicestershire was also a finalist in the category Best UK Destination in the Group Leisure & Travel Awards 2023.

Bookings made following the trade shows will be used as an indicator of Return on Investment. Following the Group Leisure and Travel Show King Richard III Visitor Centre reported taking £600 in bookings and Great Central Railway have an enquiry for 45 people from a masonic group for their dining train service.

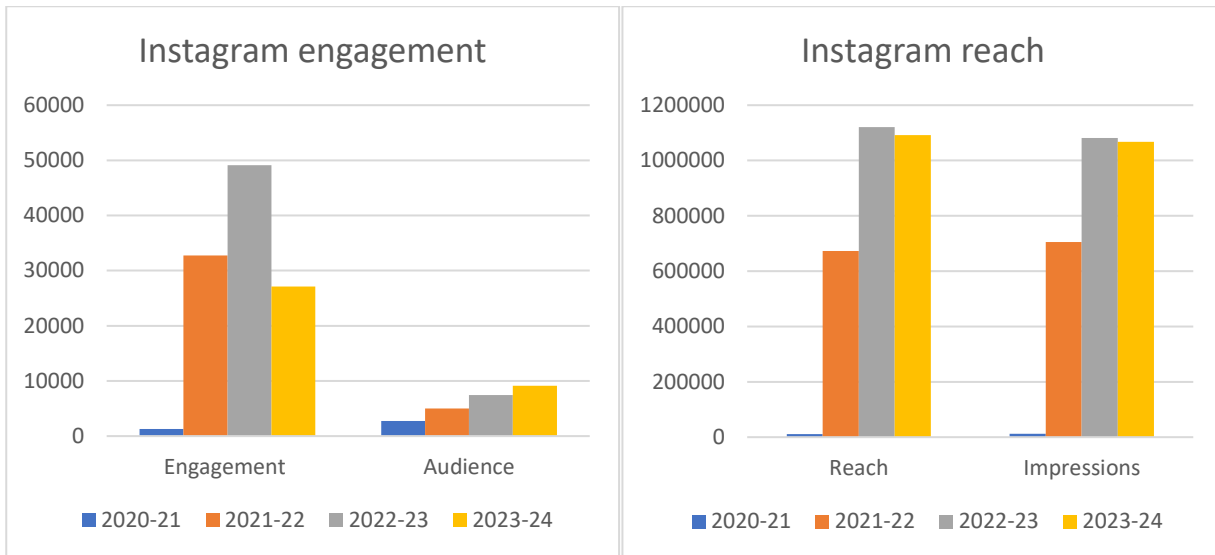
The area has also been promoted in trade media with destination features including the annual Groups Planning Guide 2024 with a 5-page Discover the Destination profile (83% partner-funded), Group Travel World (64% partner-funded) and Coach Tours magazine.



Social media statistics (covering 16 October 2022-16 October 2023)

Delivery of Visit Leicester promotions are digital, so social media channels are vital in ensuring that the Place Marketing Team reaches the widest possible audience. 11% of the web traffic to the Visit Leicester website comes via Visit Leicester social media channels (this figure is very conservative and likely to be much higher, but figures can only be used via Google where there is 100% certainty the link is via Visit Leicester social media), so continued promotion and growth of these is key to achieving goals.

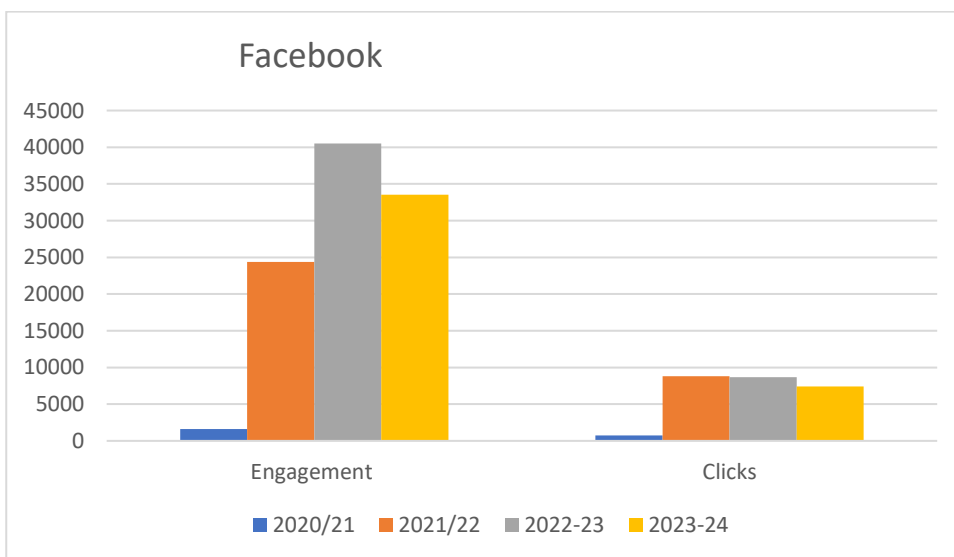
Instagram followers have grown by 52% to 9,255, with a reach of 1.8 million users. Post engagement has increased by 36.7%. The stats have undergone a year-on-year increase, with reach and post impressions reaching last year's figures just 6 months into the reporting year.



Industry benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite puts Visit Leicester’s Instagram are far above the industry average, both on growth rate, and post engagement rate.

<p>Audience growth rate</p> <p>-5.81% new followers INDUSTRY</p> <p>49.81% new followers YOU</p> <p>Way to go, rockstar! Your fan growth rate is higher than the industry average. Keep going—take a course to learn more ways to grow your community.</p> <p>Take the course</p>	<p>Post engagement rate</p> <p>1.85% engagement rate INDUSTRY</p> <p>4.59% ↑ 148% engagement rate YOU</p> <p>Nothing but gold stars for you! Your posts received 2.74% more engagement than your industry average. To get even more interactions, try boosting your best posts.</p> <p>Find posts to boost</p>
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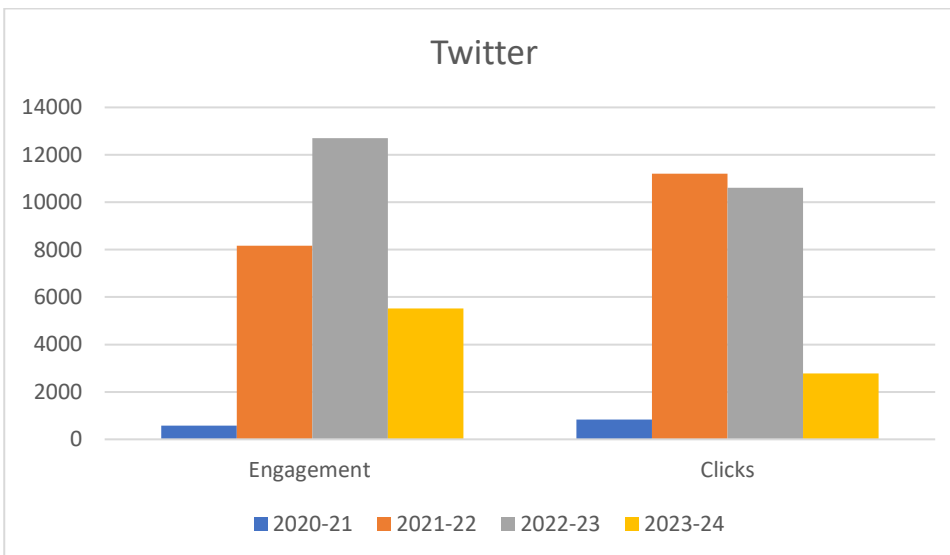
Facebook post engagement has increased by 70%, with traffic from posts to the Visit Leicester website increasing by 15.5% to 12,519 inbound clicks. Engagement and click rate have increased massively, with this year’s engagement targets almost reached after 6 months and last year’s click rate figures almost matched after just 6 months.



Industry benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite puts Visit Leicester’s Facebook page far above the industry average, both on growth rate, but particularly on post engagement rate.

<p>Audience growth rate</p> <p>-31.08% 12.87%</p> <p>new fans new fans</p> <p>■ INDUSTRY ● YOU</p> <p>Way to go, rockstar! Your fan growth rate is higher than the industry average. Keep going—try a Facebook group to build an engaged community.</p> <p>Learn how to use Facebook groups</p>	<p>Post engagement rate</p> <p>1.48% 9.34%</p> <p>engagement rate engagement rate</p> <p>■ INDUSTRY ● YOU</p> <p>Nothing but gold stars for you! Your post engagement is higher than the industry average. To get even more interactions, try boosting your best posts.</p> <p>Find posts to boost</p>
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Twitter has undergone a difficult year with changes to the algorithm and more focus on paid-for accounts under the new management affecting engagement. While it remains an important part of Visit Leicester distribution channels (with an audience over 18,000), it is decreasing in effectiveness at reaching new people. There was still an increase in engagement of 16.9%, but unfortunately click rate dropped by 45% due to the app’s new focus on ‘blue tick’ accounts, which for a business-like Visit Leicester to implement would cost £13,680 per year.



Industry benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite reflects these challenges but puts it into the wider context that others are struggling far more with the platform. Visit Leicester has still achieved massively above average growth and an engagement rate that is twice the industry standard.

<p>Audience growth rate</p> <p>-50.41% 7.58%</p> <p>new followers new followers</p> <p>■ INDUSTRY ● YOU</p> <p>Way to go, rockstar! Your fan growth rate is higher than the industry average. Keep going—take a course to learn more ways to grow your community.</p> <p>Take the course</p>	<p>Post engagement rate</p> <p>1.17% 3.28%</p> <p>engagement rate engagement rate</p> <p>■ INDUSTRY ● YOU</p> <p>Nothing but gold stars for you! Your post engagement is higher than the industry average. To get even more interactions, try boosting your best posts.</p> <p>See your best times to post</p>
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Event support

Visit Leicester continue to support large scale events in the city and county which allow the team to benefit from the shared ambitions and focus as a result. The **BBC Radio 2 in the Park** concert was an opportunity to showcase the region, having a huge impact on the teams social marketing figures.

Support for county events have been ongoing throughout the year with specific focus on large events and festivals including Comedy Festival in the county, partnership with North West Leicestershire on the Download Festival, promotion of the Cosby Yarn Bomb, attendance at and promotion of The Victory Show, ongoing advertising for the Timber Festival, Glastonbudget, Piefest, Artisan Cheese Fair, East Midlands Food Festival, National Forest Walking Festival, and events at Belvoir Castle, including the lights trail in February.

Social media engagement with influencers

The Place Marketing Team is working in partnership with a range of influencers on Instagram, particularly using the "partner posts" feature, which displays posts on both the Visit Leicester and the influencer's feed. This brings additional people to the Visit Leicester Instagram page, as they "discover" the page through the influencer's Instagram. 25% of recent posts on the Visit Leicester timeline have been posted by "partners."

During Afternoon Tea Week, the team collaborated with food influencers to highlight Taste the Place businesses, reaching a wider audience on Instagram and supporting local businesses. Five influencers participated in a week of activity in August, reaching a combined audience of 100,000.

Since partnering with food bloggers, the Visit Leicester Instagram has seen a marked increase in both engagement rate and new followers, demonstrating a "long tail" effect that benefits its Instagram presence. The team should continue to engage new influencers and partners to benefit organic social reach and engagement.

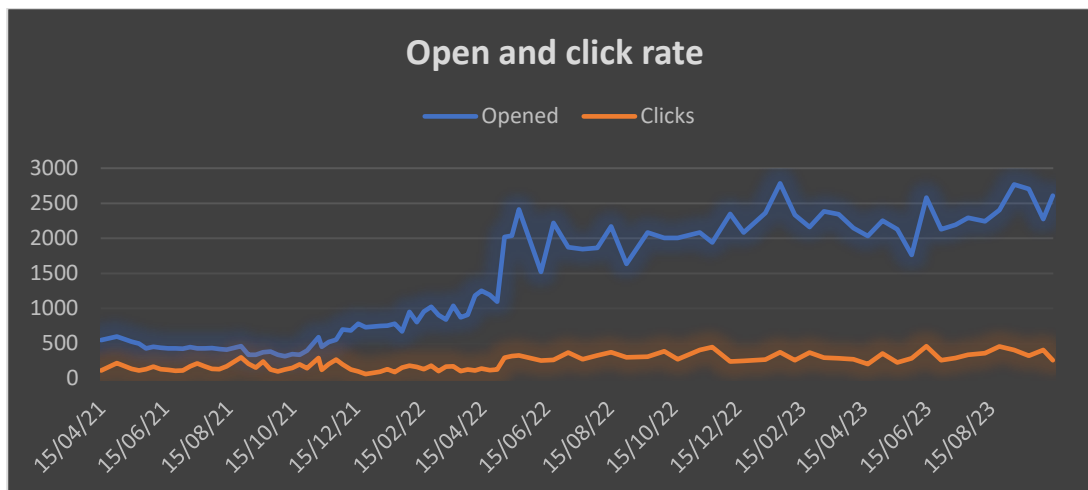
Other activity involving influencers has been achieved by working with national travel providers including East Midlands Trains ([curlyvoyagefam](#)) and National Express ([jumpintothemap](#)). So far visits have been limited to the city. However, work completed on familiarisation trips with national travel writers have seen visits across the county and write ups in printed and Online publications.

Contact	Feature
Yasemen Kaner-White press visit (7-8 Nov) at 2hrs 38mins	https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p0dymzcr
Sarah Baxter How a vegetarian is reviving Britain's pork pie capital	How a vegetarian is reviving Britain's pork pie capital (telegraph.co.uk)

Visit Leicester Newsletter

The Visit Leicester newsletter remains a valuable tool for engaging with and communicating to a long-term interested audience. To maintain a high engagement rate, changes have been implemented that have resulted in excellent open and click rates, above the industry standard of 20% and 2%, respectively.

Over the past 18 weeks, the average open rate has been 23.3% and the average click rate has been 3.5%, with a consistent audience in the region of 10,000 subscribers, despite natural drop-off as permissions expire.



Visit Leicester Website

The Visit Leicester website has continued to expand, with a focus on adding new content, as well as optimising existing content to improve search engine performance. Over the past year, the site was visited by 690,691 and viewed by 1,672,335. Over 75% of the Visit Leicester website users are on mobile or tablet devices. This ever-increasing figure has meant that new campaigns and webpages have been optimised for these devices, such as reduction of image size, formatting alterations and regular testing of pages on those devices.

Due to changes in tracking and privacy settings, it is becoming increasingly difficult to track the location of users, and most captured user data has no information on where they are from. However, some indicative data from late 2022 suggests the top locations are:

- London (13.71%)
- Leicester (12.04%)
- Edinburgh (7.41%)
- Birmingham (3.67%)
- Loughborough (1.60%)
- Sheffield (1.20%)
- Nottingham (1.07%)
- Leeds (0.93%)

Visit Leicester Website - Campaign Performance

Each campaign on the Visit Leicester website has several landing pages which display campaign content such as videos, introductory text, and links to discover more. The rest of the campaign content on the website comprises of venue listing pages, with information, copy and imagery specific to each business involved in the campaign.

Over the past year (Sept 1, 2022- Sept 30, 2023), views to the campaign pages are as follows:

- Uncover the Story - 182,625 views
- Taste the Place - 87,487 views
- Fitcation - 27,368 views

Visit Leicester Website – Book ability

In March 2023, the ability to search availability, view prices, and book through Visit Leicester was added. The service is in partnership with TXGB, the Visit Britain approved partner for providing online book ability. Attraction businesses were contacted about selling their tickets through Visit

Leicester for a small commission (5.5% to Visit Leicester, 2.5% to TXGB). However, it was soon identified that many attraction businesses do not use ticket platforms that are yet compatible with TXGB and are unwilling to set up additional ticketing inventories in order to work with Visit Leicester.

The focus moved to accommodation which was much easier to implement as major booking platforms are already well established and used by many accommodation providers.

Simpleview (place marketing website provider) set up an accommodation booking option through which Place Marketing receive a small commission on confirmed bookings at no additional cost to the customer or accommodation venue. The number of accommodation providers on the website has been expanded. Users finalise their bookings using well-known third-party websites Booking.com and Expedia, and place marketing get a small share of the booking commission.

To increase accommodation bookings, Visit Leicester contacted businesses and expanded the accommodation listings on its website. Over 66 accommodation providers are now listed, with 46 offering direct booking. Two new managed accommodation service providers have been identified, and their portfolios are being added to Visit Leicester. Both providers have agreed to list bookings with a link to Booking.com or Expedia, which means that Visit Leicester has a small commission potential on any confirmed bookings.