

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

The Uncover the Story tourism marketing campaign 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. Following a 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. The trails were 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



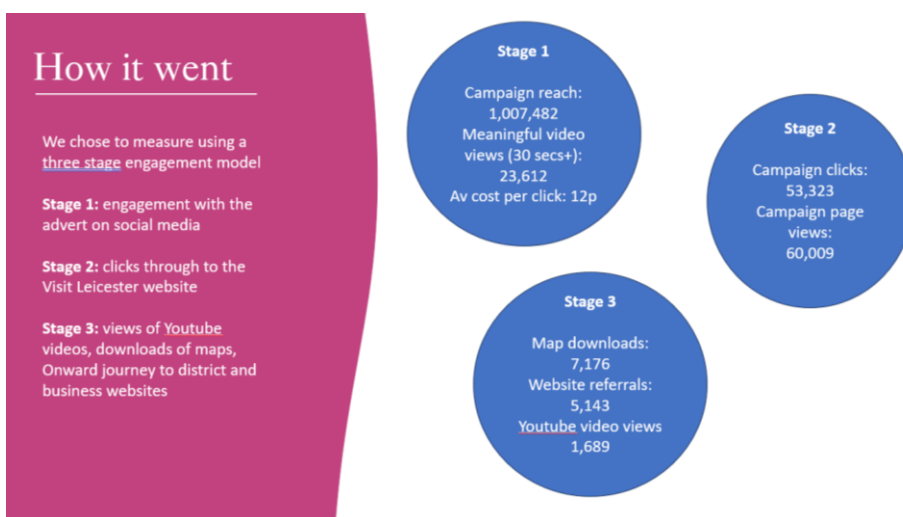
Taste the Place

The campaign launched in March 2023 was designed to promote 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:

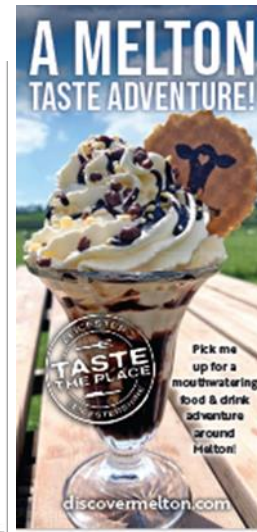
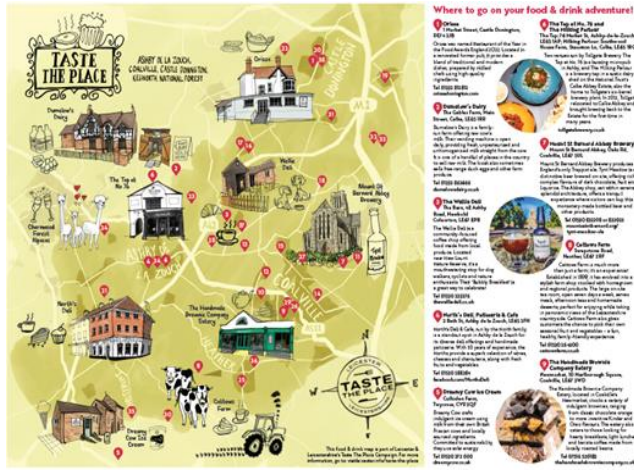
- A Taste of England: Explores traditional food and drink from the county, including pies, cheese, ales, and ciders, as well as pubs and venues for afternoon tea.
- Food for Thought: Explores fighting climate change from the kitchen by looking at environmentally sustainable food consumption that reduces 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.

As the Taste the Place campaign entered its second year, collaborations with district councils aligned with the campaign led to the allocation of £45,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to create a range of Taste Adventure maps for six districts and eight district-specific campaign videos.

Funding was allocated to extend the paid social media campaign, highlighting the food and drink offerings in the Spring. Campaigns were run in partnership with Melton District Council, Blaby District Council, and Northwest Leicestershire District Council.



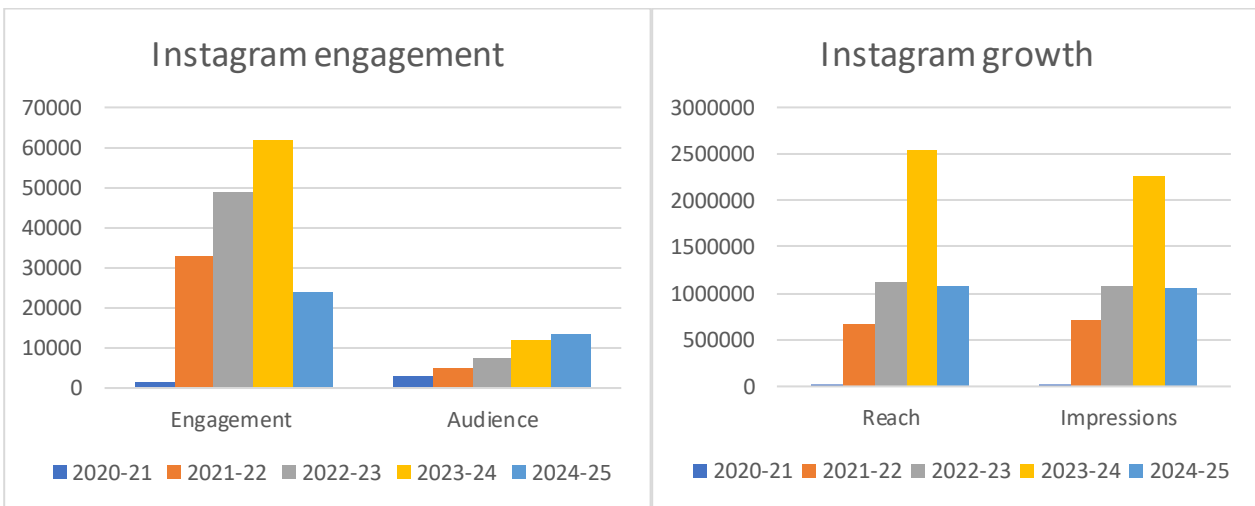
To amplify the campaign's impact, the place marketing team participated in two noteworthy events. In collaboration with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, the Place Marketing Team successfully launched the inaugural Oadby Food Festival in early September. The event attracted a substantial crowd to the Oadby high street, underscoring the campaign's affinity with the local community.



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.

Social Media

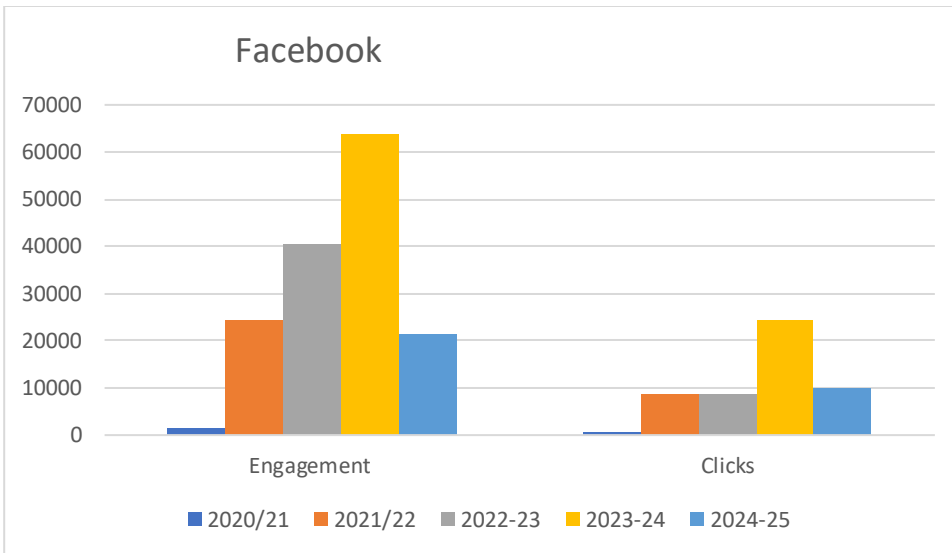
Instagram followers have grown by 43.7% to 13,640, with a reach of 2.6 million users (up from 1.8 million last year). Post engagement has increased by 1.2%.



Industry benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite puts Visit Leicester’s Instagram 194% above the industry average, both on growth rate, and post engagement rate. 2024/25 figures are based on budget year reporting.

<p>Audience growth rate</p> <p>9.93% new followers ■ INDUSTRY</p> <p>47.28% 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>1.42% engagement rate ■ INDUSTRY</p> <p>4.16% ↗ 194% engagement rate ● YOU</p> <p>Nothing but gold stars for you! Your post has 2.74% more engagement than your industry. To get even more interactions, try boosting posts.</p> <p>Find posts to boost</p>
--	--

Facebook likes and reactions have increased by 38%, with traffic from posts to the Visit Leicester website increasing by 43.6% to 12,125 inbound clicks. Page engagement has increased massively, with a 120% increase on the previous year's figures. 2022/24/25 figures are based on budget year reporting.

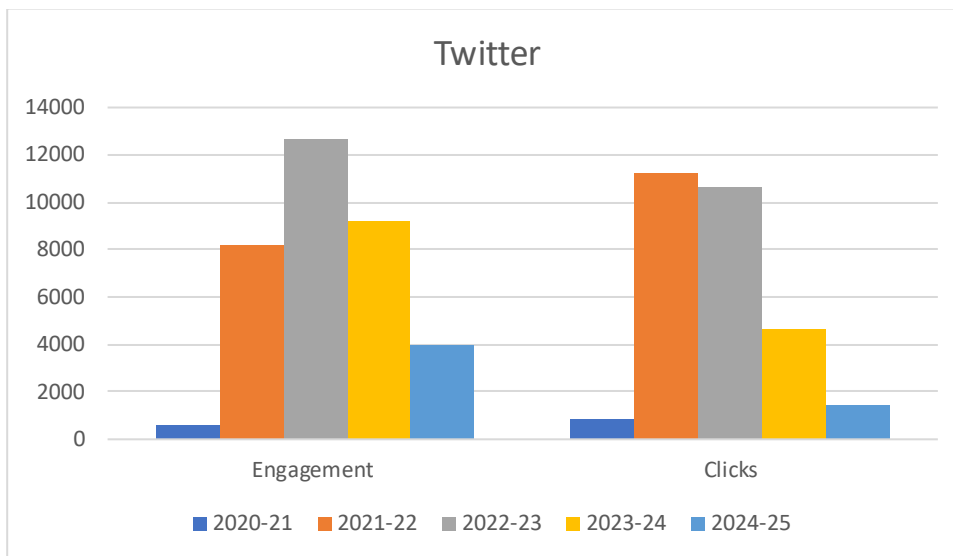


Industry benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite puts Visit Leicester's Facebook page far above the industry average, on growth rate, Page impressions and Post engagement rate.

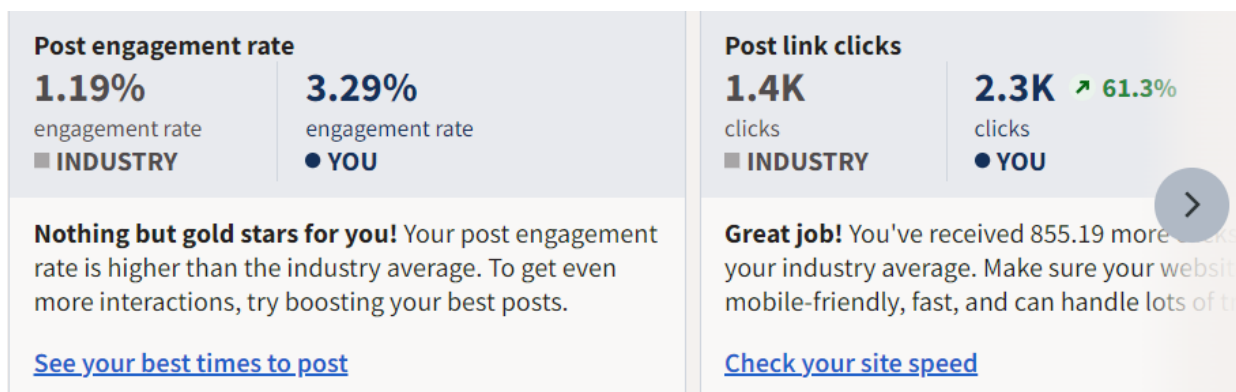
<p>Audience growth rate</p> <p>-4.83% new fans ■ INDUSTRY</p> <p>11.39% new fans ● YOU</p> <p>Way to go, rockstar! Your fan growth rate is higher than the industry average. Keep going—try a Facebook group to build an engaged community.</p>	<p>Post engagement rate</p> <p>0.83% engagement rate ■ INDUSTRY</p> <p>3% engagement rate ● YOU</p> <p>Nothing but gold stars for you! Your post rate is higher than the industry average. To get more interactions, try boosting your best posts.</p>
---	--

Twitter continues to decrease in importance as changes to the algorithm and a focus on paid-for accounts under the new management affect engagement and click rate. 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. Engagement fell by 36%,

and click rate fell by 40% due to the app's new focus on 'blue tick' accounts, which for a business like Visit Leicester would mean a prohibitive cost.



It is important to note that the marketing industry is struggling with the changes to the X (formally Twitter) platform, which is reflected in benchmarking on key metrics (using Travel/Hospitality/Leisure) on Hootsuite. Visit Leicester has a much high engagement rate and link click rate than the industry standard.



Social media engagement with influencers

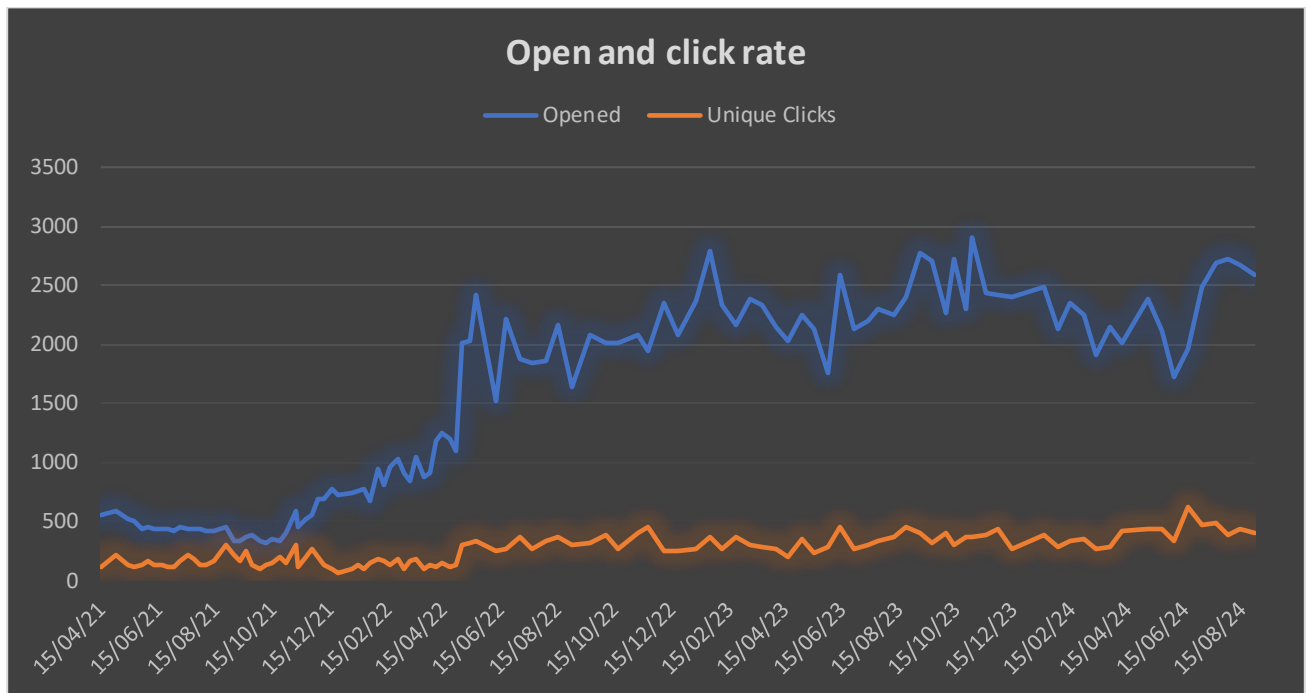
The Place Marketing Team works in partnership with a range of influencers on Instagram, particularly using the "partner posts" feature, which displays posts on both the Visit Leicester and the influencer's feed. This brings additional people to the Visit Leicester Instagram page, as they "discover" the page through the influencer's Instagram.

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.

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 last year, the average open rate has been 23.6% and the average click rate has been 3.8%, with a consistent audience in the region of 1,000 subscribers, despite natural drop-off as permissions expire.



Visit Leicester Website

The Visit Leicester website has continued to expand, with a focus on adding updated content, as well as optimising existing content to improve search engine performance. Over the past year, the site was visited by 852,716 users and viewed 2,251,824 times. 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, there are indicators of which city regions some of the users originate. Excluding Leicester & Leicestershire, the top 10 comprises of:

- London
- Birmingham
- Loughborough
- Wolverhampton
- Milton Keynes
- Norwich
- Plymouth
- Edinburgh

- Cardiff
- Sheffield

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, views to the campaign pages are as follows:

- Uncover the Story – 172,361 views
- Taste the Place – 256,217 views
- Fitcation - 28,498 views

Visit Leicester Website – Book ability

In early 2023, the ability to search availability, view prices, and book through Visit Leicester was added. This links in with major booking platforms who 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 has continued to contact businesses and expand the accommodation listings on its website. Over 80 accommodation providers are now listed, with 60 offering direct booking. Over the past reporting period, this has generated £13,125.80 worth of confirmed bookings with Leicester & Leicestershire accommodation providers. Visit Leicester has received a small proportion of this as commission.

Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) status

As part of the new portfolio of nationally supported, strategic, and high-performing LVEPs, Visit Leicester has agreed an Action Plan with Visit England to build a shared ambition for growth in Leicester and Leicestershire.

To ensure well-informed decision making, a robust governance will oversee the LVEP including the Tourism Advisory Board which will assume accountability for the LVEP and the agreed actions in the plan. The Place Marketing Coordination Group (PMCG) includes senior representatives from upper tier local authorities, district council representation, Business Skills Partnership and TAB Chair. The structure will prioritise the inclusion of diverse viewpoints, fostering a comprehensive understanding of the local tourism landscape. Quarterly meetings take place with the PMCG and TAB to track LVEP progress towards achieving its agreed objectives.

The overarching priorities for 2024/5 are the following:

- To continue delivering the Tourism Growth Plan 2020 – 25, including the continuation and delivery of the three key destination campaigns: Uncover the Story, Fitcation and Taste the Place.
- Commence engagement on the Destination Management Plan (2026 –2030) to launch in January 2026
- To leverage annual tourism data and insights to refine priorities within the plans
- Implement county wide sustainable tourism initiatives in preparation for a dedicated section for both sustainability and accessibility on the website, highlighting innovation and best practice amongst local tourism businesses
- Implement an accessible online business support directory and skills information hub for tourism businesses
- Establish and deliver a commercial strategy, providing paid consultancy services to tourism businesses
- Bid for tourism funding in partnership with district tourism leads, exploring opportunities linked to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Sustainable Tourism

As a key priority area, a sustainable tourism action plan will be developed with a focus on business support and a recognition of best practice locally. Businesses will be encouraged to participate in a sustainable tourism accreditation programme and case studies will be featured on the Visit Leicester site. By highlighting businesses that are leading the way in sustainable practices, a dedicated website feature will inspire visitors to make environmentally conscious choices during their visits. It will also be a way of recognising and celebrating local businesses that are championing sustainability within the tourism industry.

Working in partnership with district colleagues and utilising UKSPF funds Visit Leicester are developing a campaign which highlights some of the key attractions and tells their sustainability stories, while also aiming to build new leads and help other attractions develop their sustainability aims.

There is both a Business to Consumer and a Business-to-Business focus in the campaign, and messaging will be aimed at both. In building awareness and storytelling Visit Leicester hope to encourage more businesses around the region to gain accreditation and become part of the wider campaign.



This page is intentionally left blank