

# Marketing Gloucester Ltd Strategic and operational review



December 2019

MELANIE SENSICLE  
MELANIE SENSICLE CONSULTING LTD

&

JASON FREEZER  
BRIGHT SIDE TOURISM CONSULTING

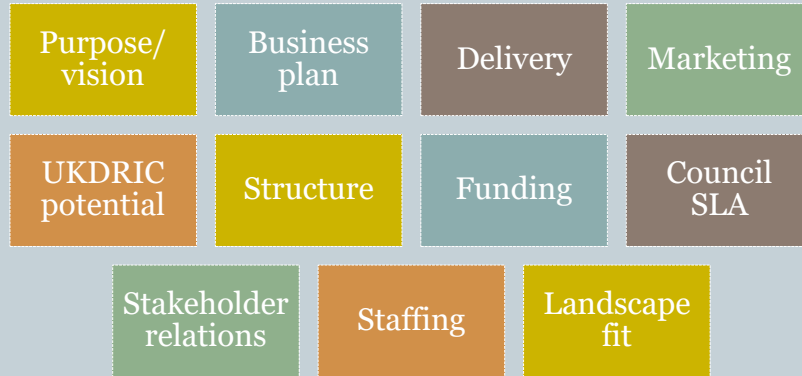
The consultants were asked to focus on 11 areas in the review brief.

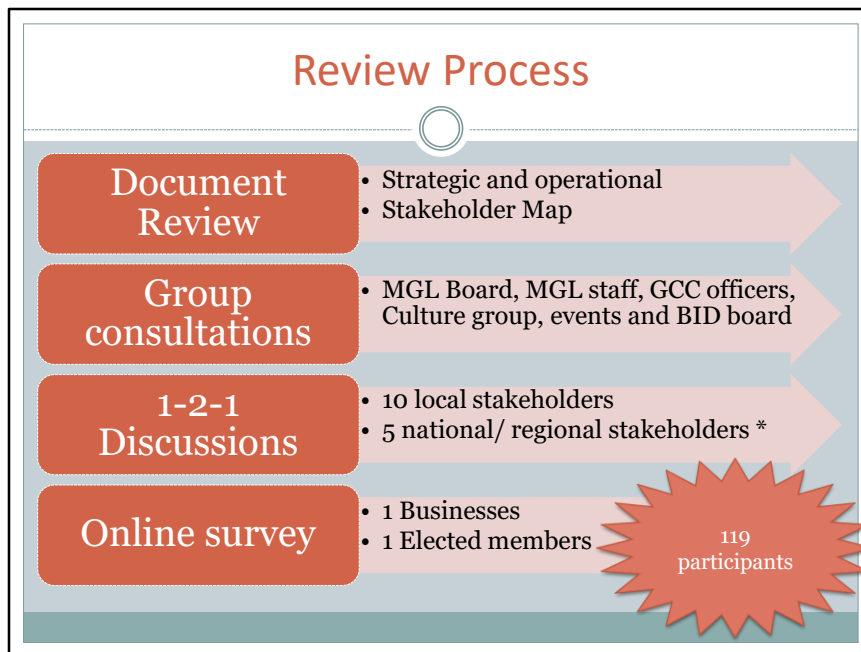
## Disclaimer



- *The information provided in this report forms part of a commission by Marketing Gloucester Limited and is to inform the review of its strategic and operational context. All information is provided in good faith, however, the authors make no representation or warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, adequacy, validity, reliability, availability or completeness of the information included.*
- *Every effort has been made to ensure the completeness of this report, however, the authors take no responsibility for the commissioning agency (Marketing Gloucester Limited) not providing contextual information, contacts or other information sources that may have informed the contents.*
- *The authors are not responsible for any errors or omissions, or for the results obtained from the use of this information. All information in this report is provided “as is”, with no guarantee of completeness, accuracy, timeliness or of the results obtained from its use.*

## Areas of Review Focus





Over 20 strategic and operational plans were reviewed including the Gloucester City Vision 2012-2022, Gloucester Cultural Strategy, Gloucester Economic Growth Strategy, Gloucester Great Place Application, Growing Gloucester's Visitor Economy, the Joint Core Strategy for Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, Gloucester City Council's Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy, the Gloucester BID business plan, the Gloucester Heritage Strategy and documents relating to the company itself including Marketing Gloucester's Business Plan, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Gloucester City Council's Contract for Services and documents relating to financial performance and the UKDRIC.

Consultees were chosen by the board of Marketing Gloucester Ltd and their participation solicited and organised by staff at Gloucester City Council, except for national and regional stakeholders.

43 responses were received to the business survey from the following sectors: 7 accommodation providers, 7 culture (events and venues), 14 retail, 9 hospitality, 6 professional or other services. In addition 10 responses were received from people connected to trusts and other non commercial organisations.

16 councillors responded to the elected members survey.

- = work done out of the scope of the contract.

# Findings

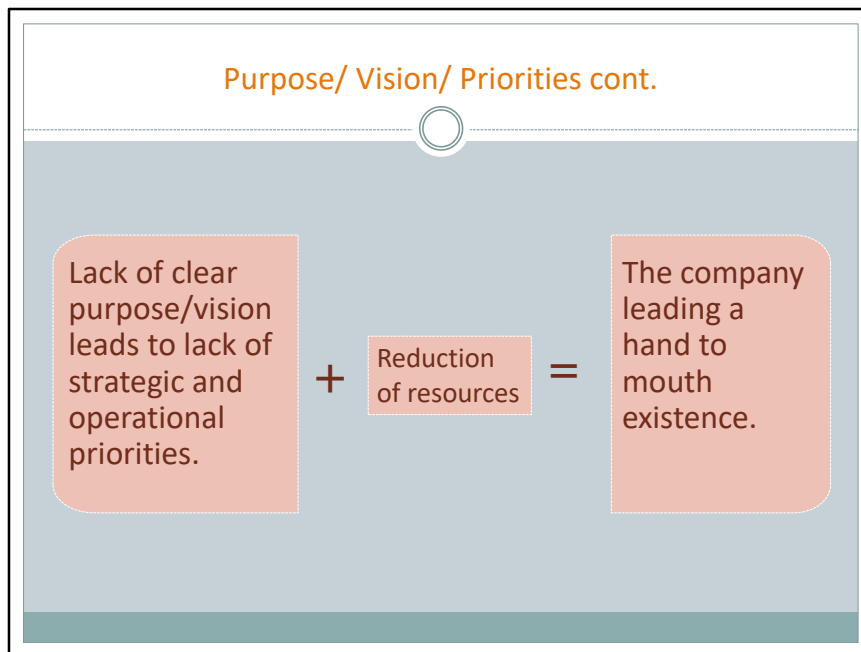


### Q. Purpose, vision, strategic and operational business priorities – are they clear and appropriate?

- Overall lack of clarity on all four, among all stakeholders. MGL business plan describes MGL as a Place Marketing and a Destination Management Organisation.
- Many interpretations among stakeholders on what Marketing and Management mean in relation to MGL.
- Most common view is that MGL's purpose is to market the city and deliver events.
- In reality MGL is an events delivery company that manages a selection of projects, some of which involve marketing.

### Purpose, vision, strategic and operational business priorities – are they clear and appropriate?

- Lack of clarity was apparent among the board and all stakeholders to some extent. The staff group defined their purpose as a DMO.
- Many stakeholders quoted the acronym DMO to describe Marketing Gloucester but this meant different things to different people. Some thought the M stood for Marketing and others for Management.
- The MGL business plan describes MGL as a destination management company and a place marketing company however the plan is not clear about how it goes about delivering these two different but related functions.
- The review concluded that the focus on the company is event management and delivery with an ad hoc set of additional projects that it delivers some of which involve marketing e.g. UK DRIC, GL card, involvement with US connections.
- There is no stated vision for the organisation in the business plan and no one articulated one through the course of the consultation.
- Visitor economy doesn't feature strongly with staff, board or stakeholders.



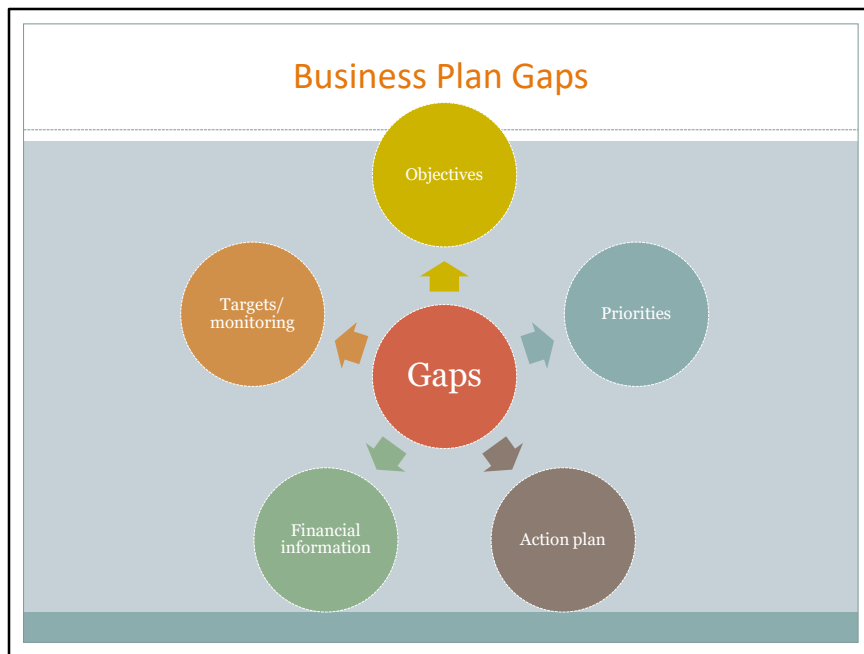
Because purpose and vision are lacking it is difficult to identify strategic and operational priorities for MGL. The reduction of grant from Gloucester City Council is significant, almost halving the core budget. This would normally prompt a revision of strategic and operational priorities and a proportionate scaling down of activity. It is not apparent that this took place, or was able to take place in relation to the expectations of GCC and other stakeholders. The situation required MGL to look for other sources of income to survive. The company is leading a hand to mouth existence as evidenced by the need to secure a loan to continue operating.

### Q. Business plan – quality and appropriateness?

- 5-year plan approved by MGL Board and GCC Cabinet
- Hasn't been monitored or refreshed since 2017.
- Over half of the document is annual report material or appendices.
- Describes MGL as doing Destination Management **AND** Place Marketing but doesn't clearly reflect the two functions.

#### Business plan - quality and appropriateness

- Five-year plan approved by MGL Board and GCC Cabinet but see further comments on quality of plan.
- No evidence that the plan has been monitored or refreshed since 2017.
- Absence of an annual action plan that relates to the business plan.
- Describes the company as a Destination Management and Place Marketing Organisation which matches the broad range of responsibilities in the Council SLA. The document doesn't reflect these two functions clearly or articulate which activities relate to each.
- Many areas of the plan are light on detail, for example the statement, 'continue to potential investors in the City of Gloucester' isn't backed up with any detail on how the company will go about this or what kinds of investors are being targeted.
- More than half of the document is material that would be suitable for an annual report material or are appended to the documents as lists of achievements.



Business plan doesn't contain some of the contents that are usually present in a business plan for example: objectives, targets, financial information, time-based planning, how it will be monitored.

## Q. Delivery focus of the organisation

- Event delivery is a primary focus
  - Tall Ships (signature event) and local/regional events for City Council and BID. Other signature events not as strongly supported by MGL e.g. Three Choirs Festival, History Festival.
- BID contract is a primary focus
  - MGL deliver BID management, business engagement and events, regarded as successful by many levy payers but has drawn resource away from place marketing role. MGL plays a role in place making as part of this contract.
- UK DRIC is a primary focus
- Local marketing is a primary focus
- Visitor economy is a secondary focus
  - Visitor economy plan has not been updated since 2015, no evidence that it is monitored. MGL contributes to growth eg RWC, Tall Ships, hotel investment.
- Investment leverage, has helped to fund events in particular, plus UK DRIC

### Delivery focus of the organisation in relation to the city and its potential

- Delivery focus is managing events, delivering the BID contract (events and business engagement), local marketing and developing the UK-DRIC.
- MGL has lots of ideas, some of them good, e.g. working with US Connections to make the most of the city's US connections, working to adjust the city's profile on trip advisor.
- BID contract involves place making activity eg city safety, local vibrancy, support for businesses eg Gloucester Antiques Centre
- UK DRIC is yet to attract significant tenants from outside the city to help fulfil its strategic purpose
- Main projects often not central to the success of the city but are important to the success of a particular stakeholder (e.g. BID events) or are part of a contract (e.g. UK DRIC).
- The Visitor economy not really managed, the visitor economy plan is out of date and not monitored. Visitor economy networks not in evidence eg accommodation association, visitor attractions group and relationships with neighbouring DMOs/national tourism board is weak.
- Data and intel quoted in MGL documents is high level and generic. Very little

evidence of target audiences.

## Q. Delivery focus – appropriate for city and city's potential?

- **Events**
  - *Events can help with raising profile and delivering footfall. No clear rationale for which events MGL develops/delivers/promotes and how they connect to image/ reputation/ positioning.*
- **Some ideas progressed regardless of fit for city/stakeholders**
  - *E.g. Great Places funded totems, not in original plan and 1 out of 8 delivered*
- **Focused more on internal audiences**
  - *Delivering principally for residents, e.g. events, BID, local marketing*
- **Little audience data and intel beyond city to provide focus**

### Delivery focus of the organisation in relation to the city and its potential

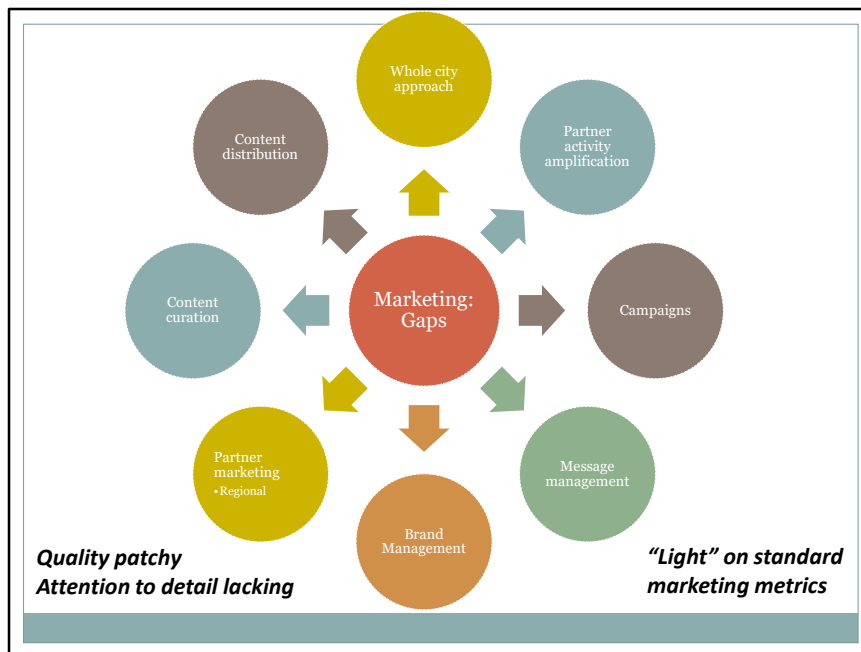
- Events are a mix of signature (Tall Ships) and local (Fireworks) events leading to a lack of audience focus for MGL. Many place marketing organisations have a clear audience focus and the majority focus on those events that help to raise the profile outside the destination e.g. Lincoln Christmas Market, Manchester International Festival, Newcastle Great North Run, Brighton International Festival. MGL are less involved with other Gloucester signature events, e.g. History Festival and other regional events which are high profile e.g. Three Choirs Festival.
- MGL ideas and projects not always appropriate to the city or the funding stream that pays for them e.g. Great Places destination development funding made available for improving the city's online presence but instead the investment has been used to develop in-destination advertising totems, e.g. the Festivals and Events International evaluation of what is and isn't working not acted upon. Conclusion that MGL isn't always in tune with what the rest of the city is doing.
- Ideas and projects aren't always followed through e.g. only one out of 8 totems have been delivered. Lots of activity, that is important to the stakeholders, isn't prioritised by MGL e.g. Cultural campaign as part of the cultural strategy in

- 2018, regeneration prospectus, city brand.  
Data and intel quoted in MGL documents is high level and generic. Very little evidence of target audiences.



**Inputs, outputs, outcomes in relation to marketing the city - quality and effectiveness of, plus comparisons with others elsewhere**

- Good at social media management for local audiences
- Extensive list of PR achievements in business plan, majority of coverage generated locally – exceptions Tall Ships and Rugby World Cup in 2015. Doesn't include reach figures therefore not clear on actual impact and much of it not recent. GL card and associated campaign viewed as positive
- Some examples of strategic marketing approach e.g. links from VisitEngland.com, managing the Gloucester Trip advisor profile, developing Tall Ships as a signature event, US Connections collaboration
- Independent review of online presence reveals that the visitor facing site is adequate within the constraints of the destination management system that it is built on.



Stakeholder view of MGL is that it doesn't deliver on some of the key responsibilities expected of a city marketing agency. Specifics mentioned: amplification of partner activity, campaigns, message management, brand management, collaborating with region on marketing, city online presence

Little connectivity to the surrounding area or examples of partner marketing (US connections an exception)

Light on standard marketing metrics e.g ROI, campaign conversion, performance of website, PR reach, therefore difficult to see the impact that the company is having.

- No clear rationale which events are integral to city marketing/positioning (exception Tall Ships) and therefore received marketing support eg Three Choirs Festival and History Festival do not receive similar level of support as Tall Ships
- MGLs website has significant gaps in content e.g. filming, inwards investment. Wider review of Gloucester content across a range of national and international sites reveals that imagery is limited and doesn't showcase the city's assets to a great extent (US connections excepted).
- VE hold few images of Gloucester for use in national marketing.

- Stakeholder view that MGL principally promotes activity that it leads but could be partly explained by its struggle to survive and operate effectively.
- Examples provided re attention to detail – promoting activity to consumers that has finished.

### Q. Staffing arrangements – appropriateness and sustainability, structure, numbers, skills, capabilities

- Weighted towards events
- Roughly comparable to other historic city teams but comparison difficult due to variety of roles and remits
- Strategic thinking/decision making doesn't generally involve staff or board
- Passion and commitment of staff recognised across the city
- Good skills
  - Event management and delivery BUT with support from others
  - Social media, tactical marketing, PR
  - Business engagement/ support (via BID work)

Appropriateness depends on agreed role and remit.

### **Appropriateness and sustainability of staffing arrangements – structure, numbers, skills, capabilities**

Limited information from which to draw conclusions. Not clear how many FTEs are in the team.

Staff team are passionate and committed and this is recognised across the city's stakeholders.

#### Sustainability structure, numbers

- Largest team is events which is unusual for a place marketing and destination management organisation
- Marketing team on the small side. Other historic city marketing teams range from 0 to 4 people.
- Business engagement team mainly work on the BID contract.

#### Skills and capabilities

- Some good social media and PR skills apparent e.g. involvement in US Connections project, social media channels well managed generally
- Good business engagement skills e.g. BID are happy with the delivery of their

contract

- Events management, some managed and delivered well but stakeholders cite issues of capacity and quality e.g. Tall Ships
- Strategic thinking/decision making isn't undertaken with the board and staff e.g. no one aware of MGL taking on the UK DRIC project until it was a fact.

Skills Gaps	
Place Marketing Agency	General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign development and management</li> <li>• Marketing planning</li> <li>• Content creation and distribution</li> <li>• Web development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitor economy management</li> <li>• Strategic partnerships</li> <li>• Stakeholder communications</li> <li>• Relationship management</li> <li>• Business planning</li> <li>• Commercial development</li> <li>• Performance monitoring</li> <li>• Financial management</li> </ul>

#### Gaps

- Commercial skills/business development knowledge lacking e.g. UK DRIC, challenges of establishing and maintaining income streams
- strategic marketing, integrated campaigns, branding, all necessary for a place marketing organisation
- stakeholder communications and relationship management.
- business planning, monitoring, reporting
- financial management

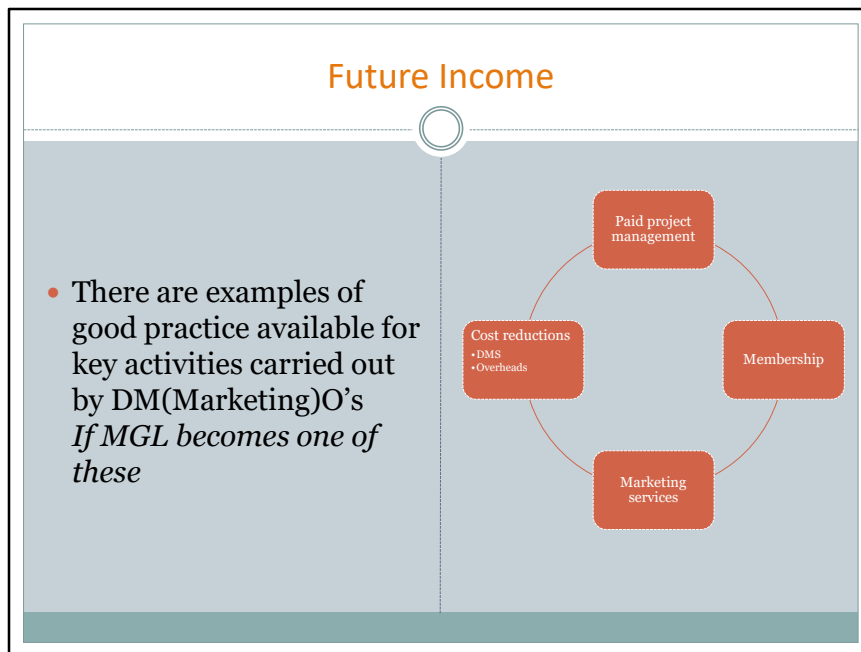
Q. Historic income and future potential for MGL Ltd	
Historic	Future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited financial information</li> <li>• Funding leveraged through relationships (not-competitive)</li> <li>• Tends to follow revenue opportunities without strategic purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Few clear and sustainable sources of income beyond grant</li> <li>• Income generation possible from a position of strength - NOT where MGL is currently</li> </ul>

### Historic income and future income potential – what is needed to explore these

Limited information to go on. Not clear about sources of income except Council grant, due to lack of or limited information re business plans, monitoring, board reporting, activity reporting.

- MGL have leveraged funding (mainly capital) through existing relationships acting as volunteers to deliver projects where money is already available e.g. Tall Ships, DEF and UK DRIC.
- If a strategic marketing agency then ability to earn will be limited, if a delivery agency then income potential more positive.
- Significant reduction in council grant, at relatively short notice, has necessitated looking elsewhere for funds
- Income challenging and only likely to be successful if initiated from a position of strength, MGL not in this position currently
- Membership – a particular challenge because of involvement with the BID and competing membership schemes in the region e.g. Cheltenham and Cotswolds Tourism, but potentially some opportunities to work collaboratively
- UKDRIC could generate income in the future depending on agreement of the

LEP.



Some clear examples of good practice available for key activities that are commonly part of a DM(Marketing)O e.g. York for publications, York for events, Visit County Durham for paid project management, numerous DMOs re membership  
Best practice examples will be provided after decisions are taken on future direction of MGL

## Q. Potential of the UKDRIC – for city and MGL

Position Gloucester and Gloucestershire at the forefront of digital research and innovation, with particular application to retail

- UKDRIC not regarded as fulfilling a strategic or income generating role currently
- A reputational risk for MGL, GCC and LEP.
- Has income generational potential.

**Needs turning around fast.**

- Conceived by LEP as a project to help position Gloucester and Gloucestershire in the digital research and innovation field in particular relation to retail and the challenge of the high street. Isn't living up to this ambition currently. Lack of high profile tenants, promised at the outset and that would have established the reputation of the UK:DRICC, haven't materialised.
- LEP regard DRIC as a priority and a reputational risk for GCC, MGL and themselves
- Short term leasing arrangements may make investment (staff/expertise) difficult to justify
- Longer term leasing arrangements could open up potential for it to fulfil its strategic and income generating opportunities.
- Needs a financially focused business plan and business development manager to turn around for both strategic purpose and an income generator.

## Q. Company structure – model for the future

DMOs vary in form, function and governance

1. a function within a local authority
2. an informal partnership or a legal entity, such as a CIC, that includes representation from both the private and public sectors
3. part of the remit of a place management/marketing organisation
4. private sector company

Model depends on agreed role and remit.

Example of 1. Marketing Cheltenham, staff employed by Cheltenham BC, back office support via Cheltenham BC

Example of 2. Visit Lincoln, Cotswolds Tourism

Example of 3. Visit York part of Make it York

Example of 4. Visit Cambridge and beyond

## Q. Company structure – model for the future

- Essentially DMOs take a lead role in the management and development of tourism in a destination.
- DMOs (Destination Management Organisations) usually:
  - Have overall responsibility for the Destination Management Plan (Gloucester doesn't have one)
  - Represent tourism and the visitor economy
  - Look after the quality of the visitor experience – standards
  - Are responsible for evidence gathering / monitoring – visitor/business surveys
  - Lead on destination branding and marketing
  - Lead on visitor information and orientation

Model depends on agreed role and remit.

Destination Management is a process of leading, influencing and coordinating the management of all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment.

A Destination Management Plan (DMP) is a shared statement of intent to manage a destination over a stated period of time, articulating the roles of the different stakeholders and identifying clear actions that they will take and the apportionment of resources.

In these definitions, 'manage' and 'management' are taken in their widest sense. Crucially, destination management includes the planning, development and

marketing of a destination as well as how it is managed physically, financially, operationally and in other ways.

Various terms have been used for the process of planning and managing tourism or visitors in a destination. It is important not to get confused by different jargon which can sometimes mean the same thing, but also to be aware of where some terms which sound quite similar actually have slightly or significantly different meanings.

## Q. Company structure – model for the future

- MGL commonly referred to as a DMO but doesn't really fit the accepted definition.
- Place Marketing a better description of MGL.

*The application of marketing and branding strategies and tactics to destinations in order to attract investment and income. This latter may arise from attracting new business, tourists, residential expansion and other development and activity.*

Model depends on agreed role and remit.

Recommendation based on the consensus among stakeholders on what is required of MGL and the stated purpose in the business plan – Place Marketing.

## Q. Company structure – model for the future

- **Common characteristics of both DMOs and Place Marketing organisations**
  - Chair usually independent, even where organisation is “owned” or integrated into council
  - Public/ Private partnership standard model
  - Independent authority
  - Knowledge and experienced of board based on strategic development need rather than to represent a stakeholder group
  - Trading arm often separate with distinct purpose and services to sell

Model depends on agreed role and remit.

## Q. Fit into city organisational landscape

- **Overlap and duplications**
  - Event planning, business groups/ networks, audience focus
- **Lack of co-ordination**
  - Visitor information
  - Film unit
  - Event delivery
- **Gaps that others expect MGL to fill**
  - Non-MGL events, Regeneration marketing, visitor economy, strategic marketing
- **Active resistance to working with some partners and strategies**
- **Partnerships outside city non-existent/ actively negative**
  - With one exception – US Connections

### **Fit into the city with regard to LEP, Culture Trust, BID and City council – overlaps and duplication**

Representatives from all these stakeholders took part in the review. The gaps, overlaps and duplications reflect their input.

- Gap: stakeholders looking to Marketing Gloucester to market the city, many feel they aren't fulfilling this function strategically or practically
- Gap: visitor economy not really managed, only important if core to city's future success. Last VE plan updated 2015.
- Gap: examples of MGL not delivering on initiatives they lead, relying on others for help and perception that they take the credit for work of others e.g. filming, event delivery, content for website
- Overlap: events confusion over who does what, who leads, who supports, who delivers.
- Lack of clarity: what is and isn't supported by MGL and who makes decisions particularly on events – company inconsistent in approach e.g. Strike a Light, Kings Jam.
- Lack of clarity: audience focus – mainly delivering for residents but role is place marketing which should include inward investment, visitor economy etc

- Duplication: a city wide problem in terms of network and business groups –MGL could facilitate at a strategic level but doesn't appear to
- Working mainly in isolation from wider stakeholders except the BID, because they are the BID delivery team.
- Work for BID viewed by all other stakeholders as 'pulling the company out of shape'.
- Active resistance to supporting some partners and strategies e.g. Culture Trust and the Cultural Strategy, FEI report on Festivals and Events.
- Some support for heritage partners but not on key heritage events e.g. History Festival, Three Choirs.

NB: Partnership work outside of the city non-existent (regional DMOs and national tourism board) or actively negative (regional DMOs). One exception US Connections – positive relationship down to one key staff member.

## Q. Relationships with stakeholders

Positive	Neutral/ negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goodwill for MGL name and staff to build on.</li> <li>• Staff working closely with stakeholders viewed as passionate &amp; committed.</li> <li>• Hospitality and retail sectors value MGL particularly in their BID delivery role.</li> </ul> <p><i>Stakeholder view polarised: minority in favour, majority frustrated, some relationships have broken down.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many stakeholders don't separate company from CEO.</li> <li>• CEO central to positive and negative relationships and perception and reputation of the company.</li> <li>• Board invisible as representatives of the company.</li> <li>• Staff work with partners on projects and practical delivery of activity.</li> <li>• MGL sometimes viewed as taking credit for others' work eg visitor information, filming in the city.</li> </ul>

### Resilience and effectiveness of relationships with stakeholders including Council

- There is a store of residual good will towards the company and the staff which can be built on plus a desire for it to play its part in achieving the ambitions of the city and region.
- Where staff work directly with colleagues they are well regarded, particularly for their passion and commitment to Gloucester.
- Stakeholders' view of MGL polarised – minority in favour, majority frustrated, in some instances relationships have broken down completely e.g. Culture Trust, Cathedral, Cotswolds Tourism. In some instances relationships are strong, often down to MGL's BID delivery role.
- Good relationship with BID board and regarded as doing a good job.
- Many don't separate the company from the CEO. Staff and Board not operating as company representatives in city-wide conversations. The CEO has been central to both positive and negative relationships and the perception and reputation of the company.
- Public perceptions of what MGL does, doesn't always reflect what they actually do, which damages relationships with partner organisations, MGL not acknowledging the support they receive e.g. businesses think they deliver

visitor information, filming, all events.



Q. Council requirements - are they reasonable?	
Expectation of SLA	Reality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very broad and wide-ranging role and remit that goes beyond marketing and events.</li> <li>• Business planning expected to focus MGL resource.</li> <li>• Majority of GCC grant to be spent on specific events.</li> <li>• MGL expected to make up cuts in core grant, at relatively short notice.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLA open to interpretation and has created lack of focus and clarity.</li> <li>• Business planning hasn't been undertaken to focus resource.</li> <li>• Stakeholder landscape has changed significantly in recent years eg BID, Culture Trust.</li> <li>• MGL lacks skills and assets to make up for cuts in grant.</li> </ul>
Reasonableness depends on agreed role and remit.	

### Council's requirements – are they reasonable?

- Requirements very broad and wide ranging to provide flexibility and give MGL opportunity to take advantage of opportunities
- SLA general with lots of room for interpretation/misinterpretation - 'continue to attract potential investors to the city' 'to promote the city overseas with other appropriate agencies' 'to provide business advice, support and information'. Pro is that it goes MGL scope to respond and act quickly but in reality they are tied to delivering an events programme determined by GCC.
- Potential responsibilities in summary:
  - ⇒ Image, reputation and positioning of the city for all audiences from local to global
  - ⇒ Support for city businesses (all?) on a range of subjects from skills and training to quality and marketing
  - ⇒ Investment into the city – businesses, regeneration, inward investment
  - ⇒ Business and public satisfaction with the city
  - ⇒ Provision of services to tourism and travel industry
  - ⇒ Managing the relationship between the public and the private sectors in the city
  - ⇒ Delivering all strategic and tactical marketing and the 'annual programme'

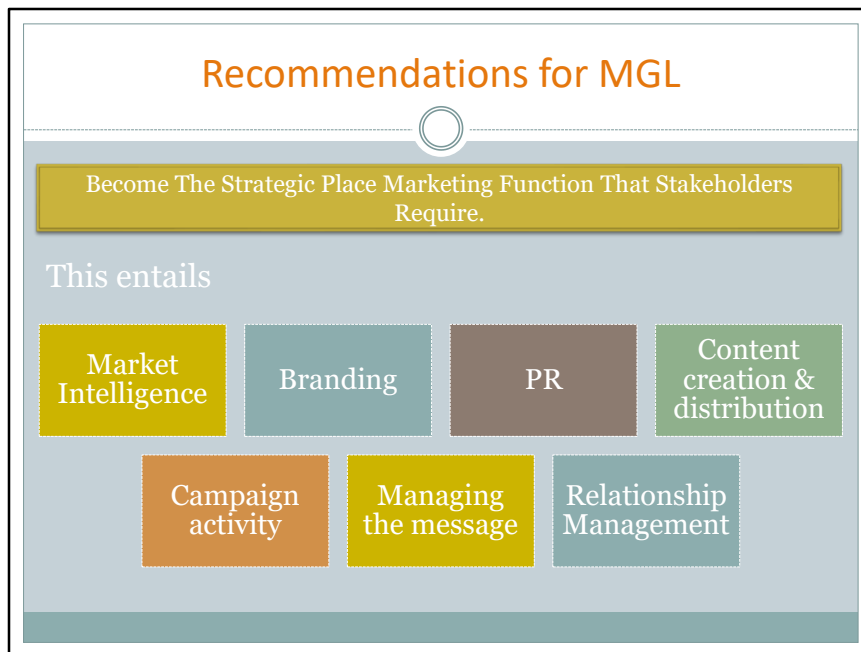
(defined each year) of events

- ⇒ Act as the city's film unit
- ⇒ Support the city council
- ⇒ AND earn a proportion of its operating budget through commercial activity

Lack of strategic and operational priorities, adjustment of priorities over time and lack of business planning means that changes in the stakeholder landscape haven't been responded to or adjustments made.

## Recommendations





### For MGL

There is a strategic marketing function that the wider city stakeholder group are looking to be undertaken. This should entail:-

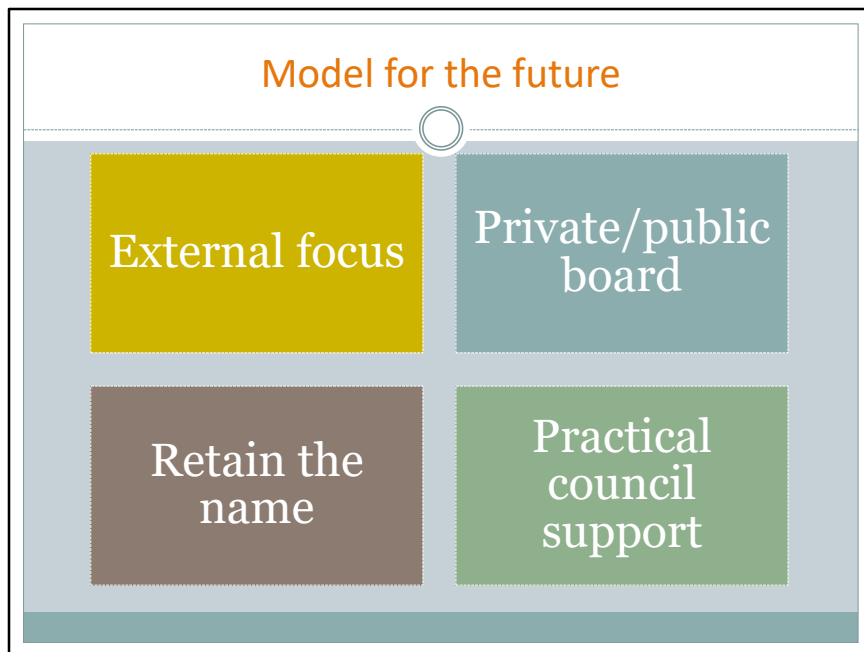
- Market intelligence (gatherers and interpreters to inform product development and promotional activity).
- Branding (proposition/ positioning for the city – more than just a logo)
- Campaign activity – awareness of the city and its offer (beyond events)
- Managing the message and supporting others to amplify it.
- Relationship management with external agencies at a national and regional level.
- MGL could fulfil this function.

Define their audience more clearly and focuses their resources on these audiences



**Define the  
audience  
for MGLs  
focus of  
activity**

- External facing
- Shape activity and apply resources to chosen audiences, including the marketing mix appropriate to each
- Product development activity related to the strategic purpose of the company & audiences it is seeking to attract eg
  - ✓ Tall Ships
  - X local fireworks

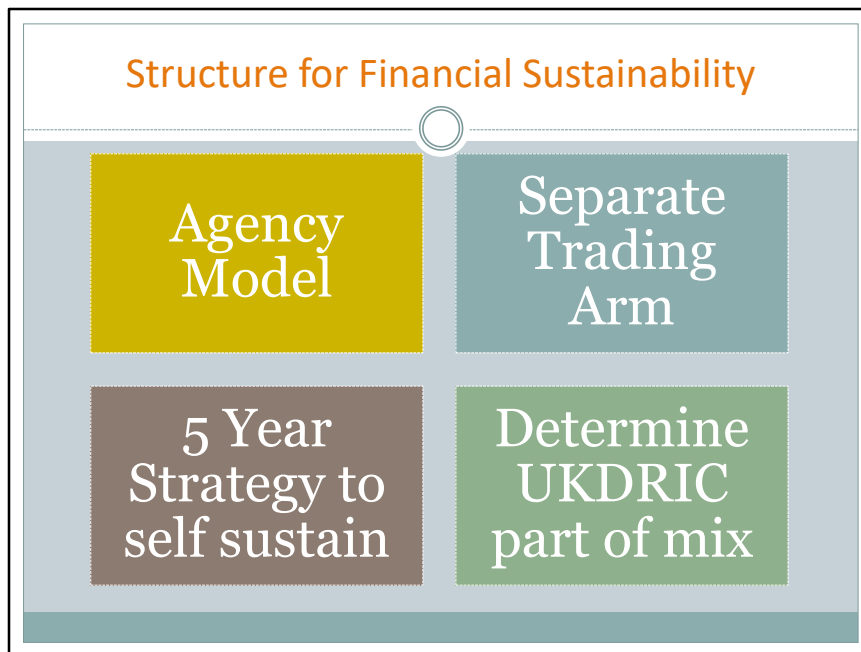


Important to focus on attracting audiences outside the city

A public/private board with the skills to lead and shape the organisation

Retain the name, it has currency and some good will

Practical council support on finance, business planning etc.



Once MGL stabilized look at agency model for future contracts e.g. BID, events  
Consider separating the strategic place marketing entity from the trading arm  
Create a 5 year plan for financial sustainability – but likely to always need public money to fulfil strategic aim  
Determine whether UK DRIC can be part of financial sustainability through dialogue with the LEP.

## Prioritise the UK DRIC

- Ensure it fulfils strategic purpose
  - Attract appropriate tenants
  - Create plan to be profitable
  - Needs business development expertise with the right contacts.
- Alternative: contract it out delivery
  - MGL as a place marketing organisation can support with promotion and PR.

## Recommendations for MGL

- Consider role in the visitor economy.
- Questions include:
  - Is the visitor economy a focus for the city?
  - Who has the strategic focus on the sector?
  - Who undertakes the visitor economy management role and what does this entail?

If MGL is the place marketing organisation...

It can embrace visitor marketing within its remit but it requires a close relationship with visitor economy management.

MGL needs to consider its role as a true DMO.

Can absorb destination marketing within its place marketing remit

Destination management is the gap, who does this?

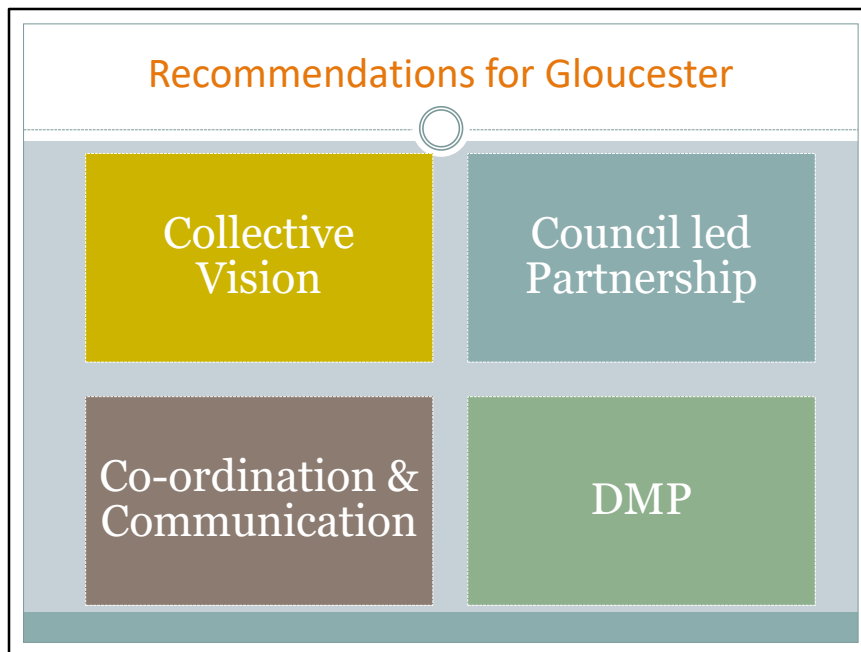
## Broad principles to consider

- Adopt a partnership approach to all that it does
- Be evidenced based
- Be customer/audience led
- Build a reputation based on good work
- Communicate well and frequently
- Amplify the success of others alongside its own successes

### **Broad principles for MGL include:**

- Need to be part of key city-wide conversations bringing their strategic perspective on -marketing/positioning/new initiatives/audience development/city performance stats etc
- They should work on behalf of the city as a whole not just for events that they are responsible for.
- There must be accountability and reporting for its work. Ensuring that all partners who need to know, understand what is working well or not.
- The board need to be accountable for the organisation and its actions.
- A close relationship with the LA is important but a degree of separation is required; this means financial autonomy and decision making to deliver against agreed objectives. An independent chair would help facilitate this.

More specific recommendations divided into short, medium and long-term actions.  
NB: short and medium term will overlap and some activity can run concurrently.



#### **For Gloucester**

- City needs a clearer vision that is bought into across the city – bringing together the existing strategies and plans to describe where it wants to be in 10 years' time, plus a clear delivery plan identifying who is leading and on what.
- It should not exclusively be the responsibility for the city council, but it would have support of stakeholders as the lead as long as others are involved.
- Co-ordination and communication are lacking and is must for Gloucester as a place to build on its successes and realise its full potential. MGL should not be the lead organisation but can help the co-ordination of the partnership and be responsible for the strategic marketing plan for the city, therefore helping to deliver the collective vision.
- A destination management plan, with the associated processes to develop one would be a useful mechanism to help Gloucester realise its potential, particularly as a visitor destination.



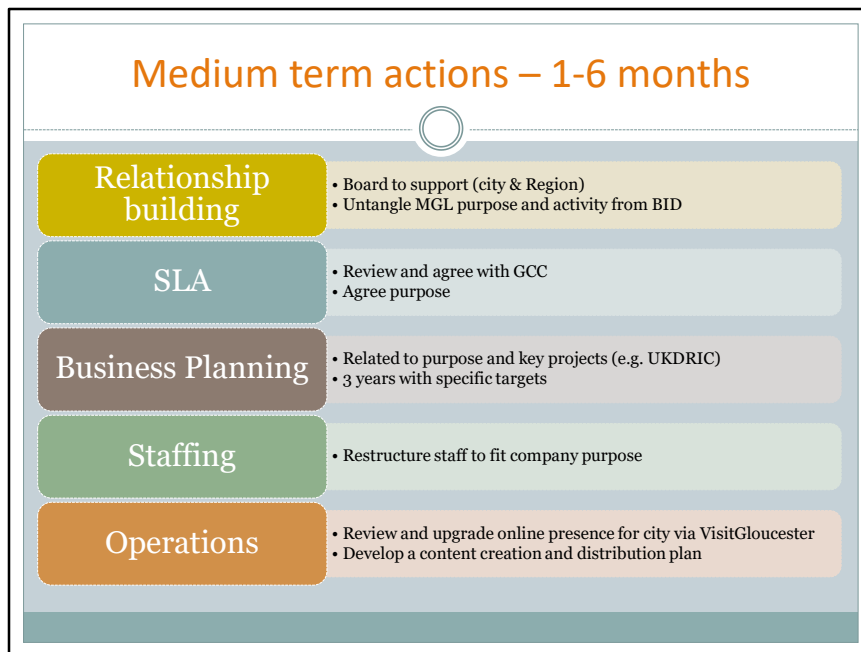
### Suggested action plan for discussion

#### Short term – one to three months

- Put all F&Es out to tender perhaps for a 2 -year term to give MGL breathing space.
- Return events lead to council to manage events contracts.
- Put in a business development manager for UK DRIC to ensure it fulfils its strategic purpose and to negotiate long term arrangements with the LEP and produce a separate business plan towards it becoming an income stream for MGL.
- Audit current activity and prioritise based on risk, to MGL and GCC, allocate staff to leads on different areas/projects with clear objectives and targets.
- Install an interim chair, ideally independent but if not then senior council officer, to manage changes to the board (see Governance review).
- Contract or secure via GCC some support on financial processes and procedures (see Financial review).
- Review operating/overhead costs and reduce where possible eg: office rent, DMS costs
- Use a mechanism to help MGL to carve a clear and distinct role *with* the city

stakeholders - assumption should be around strategic marketing and possibly visitor economy, perhaps use a DMP.

- Conduct a skills audit of existing staff to identify who fits where in new role



### **Suggested action plan for discussion**

#### **Medium term – one to six months**

- Appoint an independent chair for min. three years, who can work with the leadership team on relationships (city and region), business planning (related to company purpose) and key projects e.g. DRIC
- Appoint an interim MD
- Agree a new SLA with GCC that reflects the redefined purpose of the company
- Develop a three -year business plan for MGL
- Untangle MGL from Business Improvement District Company and either second existing staff to BID or retain for MGL business liaison.
- Start to rationalise networks and liaison groups to reduce duplication and overlap as a prelude to city-wide initiatives (see below)



### **Suggested action plan for discussion**

#### **Longer term – six to 12 months**

- Restructure the company to fit with agreed purpose, potentially a strategic marketing agency with a trading arm.
- Begin to bid for profitable project work in city and beyond.
- Begin at least one new key piece of strategic work e.g. branding or Destination Management Plan, that will help MGL to fulfil its purpose and demonstrate its purpose to stakeholders and partners.