



The Future Marketing of Gloucester



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1. Executive Summary

This work, commissioned by Gloucester City Council (GCC), is designed to create a new marketing framework for the City following the demise of Marketing Gloucester.

The recommendations for the future marketing of the City are based on two pieces of evidence.

First, there has been a significant consultation exercise with a range of stakeholders, among them, the Council and representatives of the cultural, tourism, heritage, retail, education and business sectors.

Second, an extensive review at how other cities market and promote themselves has been undertaken with a particular interest in how place-marketing activity has been organised - in house/separate company/contracted out etc.

The current Covid-19 crisis clearly impacts massively on this work but the assumption is made that **there will come a time when the City needs to ‘re-boot’** and be marketed assertively - and arguably taking the right approach will now be more important than ever.

The clear objective, within the allocated budget, is to create a place marketing capability and narrative for the City that fully supports its ambitious long-term growth and development plans. The emphasis of the recommendations is on being **pragmatic, collaborative and ambitious.**

A summary of the recommendations is as follows :

- Appoint a small but highly focused **‘place marketing’** team within Gloucester City Council for an initial period of at least two years
- Set up a high level **Gloucester Marketing Steering Board** to advise and work alongside the new place marketing team
- Invest in creating a **compelling brand identity** for the city with a narrative that key stakeholders, including residents, can help create and coalesce around
- Prioritise developing a much **stronger digital presence** to promote the City and its narrative
- Strengthen other aspects of the City’s **marketing collateral**
- If it goes ahead, embrace and **help to shape the ‘Visit Gloucestershire’ initiative** being championed by the GFirst LEP

- Further develop ‘**history and heritage**’ as a **key USP of the City** and ensure it is at the heart of Gloucester’s narrative
- Curate and further develop a really **strong events and festivals programme** that reflects and builds the City’s new narrative
- Start to integrate the **inward investment** challenge into the place marketing agenda
- Launch a Gloucester **Business Ambassador Scheme**

An outline budget and project plan are included later in the document alongside the detailed description of each recommendation.

There are two guiding principles of these recommendations based on the severe limitations of the budget. First, doing just a few things (rather than too many) but doing them really well. Second, creating low-cost initiatives that enable and empower a wide range of people to become advocates for Gloucester.

The most debatable recommendation is the idea that place marketing should sit within GCC. This has been proposed for three reasons :

- The limitations of the budget. It would not fund a separate DMO and would waste money on unnecessary overheads.
- There is little short-term prospect of securing additional funding from the private sector to support a new DMO. This is now exacerbated by the Covid-19 crisis.
- There would be a huge credibility issue in launching a new DMO so soon after closing Marketing Gloucester. Relationships and trust needs to be rebuilt.

These recommendations are neutral on the 2025 City of Culture bid possibility. Again, the future timing of this initiative might now be in doubt. If though the City does get the opportunity to bid, and decides to do so, then it is likely that the resource committed to place marketing would need to be reviewed again.

2. New context : Covid-19

The bulk of the work for this report, and particularly the consultation exercise, was done prior to understanding the implications of COVID 19. Like just about every other aspect of life, the virus changes everything and especially the timing of when things might happen.

In many respects, there is a current irrelevance to this piece of work **BUT** there will come a time when the **'re-booting' and promotion of the City** becomes massively important if the local economy is to revive. Some of the worst hit sectors will be tourism, leisure, culture and retail and they will need substantial support when the tap is finally turned back on.

This report and set of recommendations then is designed as an 'off the shelf' plan that can be delivered in discrete projects or simultaneously, as and when conditions allow.

A big unknown of course is what the budgetary situation will be post Covid-19. Will 'place marketing', in the context of economic regeneration, be up or down the list of financial priorities ? Given the total uncertainty on this, the existing GCC budget parameters have been assumed : that is a **one-off contingency budget of £200,000 and an annual place marketing budget of £70,000 for the next two years.**

3. Background and terms of reference

After a near 12 year existence, the City's destination management organisation (DMO), Marketing Gloucester was declared insolvent in February 2020.

A consensus view would be that the company left behind a reasonable legacy of developing events and festivals for the City but has left a disappointing legacy in terms of marketing assets and in terms of some relationships. Marketing Gloucester did not have a reputation for being a collaborative force around the city.

The scope of this work does **not** include any proposals for the future of the UK DRIC. This is likely to be determined from discussions between GCC and GFirst LEP.

The demise of the company has led to a series of basic questions that need to be answered :

- Should the marketing responsibilities of the DMO be replaced and, if so, how ?
- How can any activity going forward reflect the aspirations of key stakeholders in the city ?

- What lessons can be learnt from other DMOs and other cities ?

From these questions, 4 options emerge as possible ways forward :

1. Do nothing and leave the marketing of the City to other organisations
2. Set up a new DMO with a new plan and set of priorities
3. Take back place marketing responsibility into the Council
4. Contract out specific marketing services to the private sector

With these questions and options in mind, the methodology for developing a forward plan and set of recommendations was based on two pieces of work :

- Consulting with a wide range of stakeholders across the City
- Researching how places, similar to Gloucester, organise their place marketing activity

The recommendations therefore are a balance between the views and aspirations of the stakeholders with the practical assessment of what has been achieved elsewhere.

4. Stakeholder consultation

Over 60 stakeholders were consulted - a full list of people and organisations can be found in appendix 1. Clearly, there are some absentees from this exercise (notably Gloucester College and some of the leaders of large Gloucester based companies) but enough people have been spoken to for some clear themes to emerge and for the inevitable differences of opinion to be recognised.

On many issues, there was a **high degree of consensus** and this can be summarised as follows :

- Nobody stated that the “do nothing” option was a preferred way forward.
- By definition then, virtually **every stakeholder believes that the marketing of the city is important and deserves continued resource.**
- A substantial number of stakeholders believe that **the City has a weak brand identity and lacks a coherent narrative.** The lack of professional marketing material was highlighted as a symptom of that problem.
- Echoing the Melanie Sensicle review, there is a belief that the City has concentrated too much on events and festivals to the neglect of other aspects of marketing the City.
- There is a lot of advocacy for ‘history and heritage’ to be seen as the City’s USP.

- A significant number of stakeholders advised strongly that Gloucester’s residents should not be neglected in any place marketing push and that work is needed to engage better with the local population - “marketing Gloucester to Gloucester folk”, as one person put it.
- Just about everyone agreed that the ‘Marketing Gloucester’ brand is dead and should not be revived.
- A significant number of stakeholders talked about **the need to rebuild trust around the city and to improve collaboration**, a negative legacy of Marketing Gloucester. As a consequence of this, very few people suggested that there were any private revenue streams that could be easily tapped into for any future place marketing organisation.
- Though quite a small sample, representatives of the business community talked of how disconnected they felt from the City. One prominent business leader, with customers in over 100 countries, enthusiastically talked of his potential to talk up the city - if only he was given the tools to do the job. There seems to be a **huge opportunity for the Council to engage better with local businesses** and to use their firepower.
- Not surprisingly, there were representatives of some organisations - Gloucester Rugby Club, the University, the Cathedral - who talked of their need to engage with more regional and national marketing initiatives, given their ‘footprint’.

Where there was much less consensus was around the issue of how city place marketing capability should be organised. A number of stakeholders feel quite strongly that it should **not be a responsibility of the Council** and that a newly formed DMO should be the delivery mechanism. Digging into this, it appears that this viewpoint is based more on principled rather than practical considerations and the belief, from some people, that a Council led place marketing team would lack the creativity, versatility and vision necessary for the task ahead.

A couple of stakeholders advocated contracting out various marketing services but this seems to be a minority view.

This lack of consensus on exactly **who should deliver place marketing** for Gloucester therefore emerges as the key issue and became the focus of what can be learnt from other cities.

5. Review of other places and DMOs

The place marketing efforts of a whole range of cities and large towns have been reviewed but with a focus on places of a similar size and with similar demographics to Gloucester. Cities such as Manchester (Marketing Manchester),

Newcastle (Newcastle Gateshead Initiative) and Birmingham (West Midlands Growth Company) have mature, well regarded DMOs but offer little relevance to Gloucester because of their scale and significant public funding input.

Some of the operating models observed were as follows :

- **DMOs predominantly funded by Councils**

Carlisle City Council is a really good example of a Council that operates their place marketing activity in-house (discovercarlisle.co.uk). It's a similar sized city to Gloucester and has similar assets. The Council operates the tourist information centre, runs the visitor website, organises events and leads and co-ordinates a very impressive 'Carlisle Ambassadors' scheme (carlisleambassadors.co.uk) which contributes significantly to the promotion of the city. The Council also contributes £5,000 to Visit Cumbria, a specific independent tourism website for the wider Lake district area. Interestingly, the view of the Council is that the city lacks a critical mass of tourism and cultural offerings that would make a separate DMO viable. Their approach is very pragmatic.

Sunderland City Council has similarly kept things in-house and have a simple statement of what they are trying to achieve : seeitdoitsunderland.co.uk/about

Visit Hull and East Yorkshire (visithullandeastyorkshire.com) is an example of two neighbouring authorities who contribute equal but significant funding for a largely tourism based DMO. They have a detailed tourism plan with clear objectives and, of course, they have used 'culture' (Hull City of Culture 2017) to underpin ambitious regeneration plans.

Visit County Durham Ltd. (thisisdurham.com) is something of a hybrid model. It exists as a separate company but gets the bulk of its funding from the County Council (around £750k per year) and the 14 staff sit within the heart of the Council offices. It is an impressive operation and again is a reflection of a council that invests heavily in cultural activity. Durham County Council invests £1m in its bi-annual Lumiere light festival.

Similar to Durham, **Marketing Cheltenham**, (marketingcheltenham.co.uk) is a hybrid model. It operates as a department of the Council but sits in a separate building and seems to operate with a high degree of independence. The investment from the Council is somewhere between £150k and £200k and around £150k is added through a membership scheme, through providing some services for the Cheltenham BID and other commercial activity. David Jackson, who heads up Marketing Cheltenham, has been very open about their activity and it is a useful operation to learn from - and a potential good partner for Gloucester.

Exeter is another good example of a relatively small city that has kept their place marketing in house. They have also invested significantly in the brand identity of the city through their "Live Better" campaigning. In a very straightforward and

‘joined up’ way, they promote what the city has to offer for residents, students, visitors and investors : exeterlivebetter.com

Their tourism website is also very good and projects the city in a very positive way : www.visitexeter.com

Colchester is another Council that quite impressively runs the tourism marketing function in-house (visitcolchester.com) and co-ordinates a more generic marketing approach for the city through their ambassadors scheme : colchesterambassadors.co.uk. It’s a city that also presents its history and heritage really well - “Britain’s oldest City”.

- **DMOs funded predominantly through commercial activity**

Visit Northumberland (visitnorthumberland.com) is a small but highly focused, ‘not for profit’ tourism DMO, supported by Northumberland County Council. It raises the bulk of its revenue itself, largely through selling advertising in-print and online to the significant base of tourism businesses in the county.

Similar to Marketing Gloucester as was, **Visit Cambridge and Beyond** (visitcambridge.org) is a separate company spun off from Cambridge City Council. It receives little Council funding and relies upon commercial activity (primarily generating £600k per year from operating walking tours around the Cambridge University colleges) for survival. It has though made a small loss in each of the last 3 years of trading and is in a precarious position (and now at very high risk because of COVID 19). The company, at the behest of the Council, was working on a long-term destination plan. Cambridge also has a separate membership organisation focussed on the long-term economic growth of the city : cambridgeahead.co.uk

Visit Greenwich (visitgreenwich.org.uk) is a really impressive example of a private sector led DMO with a mature membership scheme and a very assertive commercial strategy. It has the advantage of working with some iconic London institutions and it serves to make the point that operating a commercially successful DMO depends on the scale and range of the cultural/tourism/business base that a place has to work with.

Make It York (incorporating Visit York) is a company owned by the City of York Council with a wide range of responsibilities : tourism, city centre management (including responsibility for running York’s daily market), culture, business support, events and festival and inward investment. It is a £5 million business and has made a small surplus in each trading year since its inception in 2014. Only 6% of the company’s revenue comes from City of York Council funding, the other 94% comes from a very wide range of commercial activity. York does though have the massive advantage of that commercial base referred to in the comments above about Greenwich. For example, the Visit York membership scheme is supported by over 900 businesses generating annual revenue of over £350k. The development

of a large-scale Christmas programme has also been prioritised, raising revenue of nearly £800k - all of it being invested back into the city.

- **Other DMO models**

Marketing Cheshire (marketingcheshire.co.uk) is an interesting example of a DMO working essentially under the auspices of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. The LEP effectively commissions Marketing Cheshire to provide marketing services and that in turn helps to fund their impressive tourism effort through Visit Cheshire and Beyond (visitcheshire.com). They have also developed a successful partnership scheme with more than 200 contributors and are commercially active. The Deputy Chief Executive of the LEP also serves as the Chief executive of the DMO, emphasising the integrated nature of the approach. It is an excellent example of joining things up but it clearly helps that the geographic footprint of Marketing Cheshire and the LEP are aligned.

Ipswich (“East Anglia’s waterfront town”) seems to share many of the characteristics of Gloucester. Their tourism marketing (allaboutipswich.com) is delivered by the Ipswich BID, **Ipswich Central**, (ipswichcentral.com) and is almost the reverse model of what Marketing Gloucester was trying to do i.e. the DMO delivering services for the BID. The ‘shop front’ place marketing looks good. BIDs though work in 5 year cycles and are subject to the agreement of a defined group of businesses that don’t always match the footprint of their town or city.

Chelmsford is another example of where the BID (onechelmsford.co.uk) has been given responsibility for the tourism marketing of the city via the brand Chelmsford For You : chelmsfordforyou.co.uk

The Shrewsbury BID also plays a significant role in the place marketing of their town : originalshrewsbury.co.uk

Destination Plymouth is a really good example of a true public/private sector partnership. It receives funding from the Council, the BID and the Plymouth Waterfront Partnership as well as generating commercial revenue. The Council also invested significantly in developing a strong brand identity for the city : “Britain’s Ocean City”. The work was undertaken by an agency called Smith and Jones who also did the branding work for Exeter. The emphasis on branding is reflected in the city’s very stylish website : visitplymouth.co.uk

One Worcestershire (oneworcestershire.com) is another example of a public/private sector partnership but with an emphasis on inward investment.

Visit Hertfordshire (visitherts.co.uk/about-us/) is a rare example of tourism marketing being contracted out to a third party. In 2015, following an open competitive tender process, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership awarded Go To Places an initial two-year contract to

develop a destination management service to strengthen the county's inbound tourism and highlight Hertfordshire's attractions. Go To Places (gotoplaces.co.uk) is a 'not for profit' DMO consultancy service specialising in tourism. They also run Visit Kent : visitkent.co.uk

Switch On To Swindon (switchontoswindon.com) is not a DMO as such but it is an excellent example of a place that has galvanised the business community to help promote the city. It runs on a very tight budget, with very limited funding from the Council, but relies on the goodwill of over 600 business ambassadors from 400 Swindon companies. It is a very collaborative model and in the words of the Chair of the organisation they are trying to establish "a tone of voice" for Swindon.

Experience Oxfordshire is a Charitable Trust that runs the DMO through a trading subsidiary : experienceoxfordshire.org/partner/. It has traditionally received a grant from Oxford City Council amounting to about 20% of its revenue but this will, as things stand, reduce to zero from April 2021. There is some useful information here : <https://bit.ly/3dvZJQf>

It is worth mentioning the impressive efforts of **Derby**. They have a good looking tourism operation operated through the City Council (visitderby.co.uk) but there is also a separate organisation focussing exclusively on inward investment, Marketing Derby (marketingderby.co.uk , funded primarily via a bondholder scheme.

What lessons can be learnt to help for the future marketing of Gloucester ?

- **First, there is no 'blueprint'** - there is a wide range of operating models, DMOs come in all shapes and sizes.
- **Second, irregardless of the operating model, all the people spoken to complained of a shortage of funding and budget pressures.** Place marketing has clearly taken a severe hit from the prolonged reduction in public funding and DMOs have had to be very resourceful to survive. Those DMOs relying upon membership models will, following Covid-19, find it very hard to survive without replacement public funding.
- **Third, it is very easy to see that the place marketing digital output of many towns and cities - the 'shop front' - is significantly more professional and wide-ranging than from Gloucester.** This obvious weakness can be a quick win for the city and a relatively quick fix.
- **Fourth, there is no pattern to the success of a DMO operation in terms of its ownership.** Carlisle, Exeter and Sunderland City Councils seem to run very competent services in-house. York and Greenwich have very commercial DMOs operating as separate companies. Plymouth have progressed with a really strong public/private partnership. **The best place marketing models reflect the realism of the resources at their disposal.**

- Fifth, in doing this review, **there are lots of initiatives that would seem very relevant to Gloucester** and could be quickly picked up. These are reflected in the recommendations.

6. Details of the recommendations

6.1 : Appoint a small but highly focused ‘place marketing’ team within Gloucester City Council for an initial period of at least two years.

This recommendation reflects the reality of the current budget and recognises there is not the wide base of tourism and cultural businesses that would, for example, enable a membership model to work. It also acknowledges that, following the demise of Marketing Gloucester, there needs to be a period of relationship rebuilding before there can be any discussions around new private/ public sector partnerships. **Developing the ‘place marketing’ function within GCC should be on the basis of it being a highly collaborative effort across the city.** Budget reality should also mean that the emphasis is on doing a few things really well rather than trying to do too much.

Contracting out the service to the BID (the Ipswich model) has been discounted on the basis that the BID itself is going through a period of review and reinvention - the timing is not right. Contracting the service out to a third party like Go To Place (the Hertfordshire model) has been discounted on the basis that the budget is very limited and that it feels very important that the ‘re-booting’ of Gloucester’s marketing capability should come from within.

The proposed budget allocation (see next section) should allow for **a team of 3 people**. Ideally, this would be an experienced, energetic and resourceful marketer, supported by 2 ‘all rounder’ marketing assistants who should be skilled in digital and social media marketing, writing and photography. Brief, outline job descriptions can be found in appendix 2.

Ex Marketing Gloucester staff, currently on secondment should be given every opportunity to apply for the roles but the appointments should be opened out and selection made on the basis of the best skills and experience. **Strategy > Structure > People** should be the order of events.

The team could be joined by the transfer of another role. Currently, there is one person who is responsible for the booking of events space in the city. This could be become bigger and more important when the King’s Square development is available as a performance space. This role would be self-funding from the revenue that is generated and has not been included in the budget.

The team should sit within Cultural Services, working collaboratively with the events, visitor experience and museums teams. If not more importantly, **the brief of the new team should be to consistently engage with and work with other events, culture and tourism organisations in and around the city.**

Without being privy to the detail, there is the possibility of further re-organisation within the Cultural Services department at GCC to make the new 'place marketing' team more effective. For example, it seems that some people at GCC have a bit of their time devoted to managing other websites separate to Visit Gloucester (e.g. The Museum of Gloucester). There is potential scope to further bring together all the digital resource for a more efficient and integrated way of working.

The new place marketing team should have just a few highly targeted key tasks with a mission to :

Build a highly professional marketing effort and city narrative that supports and showcases the ambitious growth and development agenda of the city

These key tasks should include :

- **Significantly raise the level of digital marketing**, particularly the redevelopment and curation of the Visit Gloucester website (see later recommendation). This to include the launch of a new weekly 'what's on' e-newsletter for residents aimed at encouraging the local population to engage with City events and festivals (and not just those commissioned by GCC)
- **Establish a new wide-ranging base line for measuring the impact of place marketing** activity (e.g. hotel occupancy, cultural participation, website traffic, attraction visits, footfall figures etc.), reporting monthly against a clear set of KPIs.
- Administer and support the **City branding/narrative** project (see later recommendation)
- Develop relationships with Gloucester businesses involved with culture, tourism, leisure and events so that **everything going on in the city is promoted consistently and effectively to both residents and tourists**. Also, build relationships with other key organisations e.g. Visit Britain
- Develop a **series of marketing campaigns** that external organisations can buy into and get involved with
- Work in a collaborative way with the GCC 'growth' team, the LEP and developers such as Peel and Reef to **integrate the inward investment narrative** into the marketing of the City

Just 6 responsibilities but carry them out really, really well.

6.2 : Set up a high level Gloucester Marketing Steering Board to advise and work alongside the new place marketing team

This could in effect be a short-term ‘task and finish’ group that helps to re-calibrate things in the light of the fragmentation and legacy left by Marketing Gloucester. It is designed to provide some comfort to those stakeholders concerned that place marketing becomes the sole responsibility of GCC.

The Board would have very clear terms of reference based on :

- **Providing a leadership role in encouraging marketing collaboration across the city**
- ‘Signing off’ on the final proposals that come from the City branding/narrative work
- Assessing progress and performance of the new place marketing team based on clear KPIs
- Delegating a couple of Board members to help with the selection of the new leader of the place marketing team
- Providing a rapid response mechanism for collaborative funding bids
- Providing ongoing advice, support and ideas for the place marketing team

The team would ideally comprise of the most senior person possible from the following organisations :

- GCC
- Gloucester Cathedral
- Gloucester Rugby Club
- Gloucester Culture Trust
- Gloucester Heritage Forum
- The Peel Group
- The Reef Group
- The BID
- Gloucestershire University
- A leading Gloucester private company e.g. Prima Dental Group

The Board would need a Chair (someone from GCC ?).

There could potentially be a tie-up with the new programming group that has been recently formed but this might just dilute the very focused way in which this marketing group needs to operate. A separate group is the suggested option.

6.3 : Invest in creating a compelling brand identity for the city with a narrative that key stakeholders, including residents, can help create and coalesce around.

This recommendation would achieve two things. First, it directly responds to the biggest piece of feedback received from stakeholders. Second, it should rebuild and fast-track collaboration across the City - **it is a cause that everyone can get involved with.**

The proposal is to allocate up to £50,000 from the contingency budget to commission a specialist agency to lead and complete the work. There will be plenty of enthusiastic applicants including 'Smith and Jones' who did the branding work for Exeter and Plymouth and Mosaique, a Tewkesbury based branding agency : mosaique.co.uk

The brief for the agency should include :

- Extensive stakeholder collaboration (including residents) to develop the narrative
- Close liaison with the new Marketing Steering Board - who will sign off the final proposals
- Production of a defined list of marketing resources that reflects the final narrative. This would include video footage, photography, a brand design 'tool-kit' etc. that can be used by all organisations across the City
- Ideas for encouraging pride in the city from residents - **winning 'hearts and minds'**
- Possible creation of a new tagline for the city

6.4 : Prioritise developing a much stronger digital presence to promote the city and its narrative

This recommendation is to invest around £25,000 from the contingency fund to add to the £17,000 offered by the Culture Trust **to completely re-vamp the Visit Gloucester website** (which attracts currently around 17,000 unique users a month) and associated websites.

A look at some of the other city websites, liberally linked to in this document, demonstrates how far Gloucester is behind. **Fixing this issue would be a very tangible, visible sign of progress** and, again, it would allow other organisations to collaborate on the project.

There are a few key things :

- This project would need to work closely with the branding/narrative project to ensure the 'look and feel' of the new sites are aligned.
- The place marketing team would need to work particularly closely with The Culture Trust and the Heritage Forum to ensure that tourism, culture and heritage are all suitably represented
- There are a number of smaller sites than Visit Gloucester in the city (e.g. Gloucester Museum) and it would make sense to wrap them into this project

- Other organisations are currently looking at digital projects (e.g. the BID and the Reef Group) - again, it would make sense to collaborate
- Thought needs to be given to how the new GCC inward investment site integrates in to the project - 'look and feel' need to be consistent

As well as a significant upgrade of the key digital assets, other initiatives should be progressed, specifically :

- A new weekly 'what's on' e-newsletter aimed at residents based on the Visit York concept : <https://bit.ly/39bFWlW> .This would demand having much better intelligence about the calendar of events in the City.
- A city-wide social media collaboration to build networks and to run campaigns

6.5 : Strengthen other aspects of the city's marketing collateral

One of the more disappointing aspects of the demise of Marketing Gloucester is how little quality marketing collateral has been left behind. The Tourist Information team, for example, have very limited material to hand out. This weakness needs fixing over time and will naturally evolve from the branding/ narrative project.

In the meantime, and designed as a 'quick fix', it is proposed that a budget of up to £5,000 should be invested in **producing a 2021 Gloucester Visitor Guide**, a basic requirement of any city. This can be contracted out to an agency (Offstone Publishing, for example, produce a number of visitor publications across the UK : <https://bit.ly/2UytAiA> - local publishers will be interested too). Additional funding for the publication can be raised through advertising revenue and it should be possible for this core resource to be self-funding in 2022 and beyond.

6.6 : If it goes ahead, embrace and help to shape the 'Visit Gloucestershire' initiative being championed by the LEP

An unexploited opportunity for the region is to get the tourism/place marketing teams across Gloucestershire working more closely together. Any over-night leisure visitor to the county has to navigate 7 very different tourism websites of varying quality. Gloucestershire does not make it easy to plan trips that embrace the different experiences of Gloucester, The Cotswolds and Cheltenham, to name just 3.

Gfirst LEP are looking to address this and are trying to assemble funding to make it happen. It is stressed that this initiative is **to add to not to replace current City and District initiatives** and that the funding would be additional and not a reallocation.

There is nothing to lose for Gloucester to support this. **It stands to benefit from more overtly attracting tourists from elsewhere in the County** and it

particularly helps out some of the city's major stakeholders - the Cathedral, the Rugby Club and the University.

It is recommended that Gloucester gets fully involved with this, if it happens, helping to shape it as much as possible for the City's advantage.

6.7 : Further develop 'history and heritage' as a key 'USP' of the city and ensure it is at the heart of the city's narrative

Without pre-judging the outcome of the proposed branding/narrative work, it is obvious from stakeholders that the history and heritage of the city is considered to be a key asset and one that is undersold. To illustrate that, it's significant that **Gloucester wasn't involved with a substantial Visit Britain campaign** through the Discover England Fund. The campaign was called 'History and Heritage for Millenials' and involved 16 cities from around England including Worcester, Truro and Lincoln. This feels like just the sort of thing that Gloucester should have been engaged with. More information here : heritagecities.com

The Gloucester History Festival, the Gloucestershire Archives at the Heritage Hub and, of course, The Cathedral are just **three examples of world class 'content'** and it enables the city to play on a bigger stage. It also provides a focus for scarce marketing resource and it should act as a foundation from which other events and experiences, for both residents and visitors, can be built.

Stakeholders also declared their pride in Gloucester's industrial heritage, the history of the rugby club, the docks and the city's military history - 'history and heritage' just feels like the right thing to lead on in promoting and marketing the city.

This shouldn't be done in the context of Gloucester trading on its past rather than its future. Many cities are using their **history as a backdrop** for emphasising their **contemporary digital and creative skills**. The Gloucester Culture Trust does this very well already. A quick look at their website illustrates how 'ancient and modern' can work really well together.

6.8 : Curate and further develop a really strong events and festivals programme that reflects and builds the city's new narrative

Again, once the proposed branding/narrative work is done, the events and festivals programme should be used to reinforce the 'story'. Decisions on new content for the city, and which things to develop, should be judged on whether they fit the narrative.

The events and festivals programme feels really important for the city. People in and around Gloucester have a lot of choice for the use of their time (Cheltenham, Bath, the Cotswolds etc.) so **continuing to animate the city with rich, fresh,**

creative content is an intrinsic element of the city's place marketing development.

Gloucester also has some great event spaces (The Quays, King's Square, The Gates) that other small cities just do not have. It's an asset that should be exploited to the full.

6.9 : Start to integrate the inward investment challenge into the place marketing agenda

There need not be any physical integration of staff working in the 'place marketing' team with staff whose focus is on inward investment. However, it is important that there is close working and that 'everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet.'

Some basics would include :

- Ensuring that inward investment is included as part of the branding/narrative brief
- Ensuring that digital activity is joined up and that all promotional websites (tourism, culture, inward investment etc.) have the same 'tone of voice' about the city
- Ensuring that all printed marketing materials are aligned and 'on message'

6.10 : Launch a Gloucester Business Ambassadors Scheme

Compared to other cities, there is a lack of business networks in Gloucester (Marketing Gloucester seemed to be running what was the Chamber of Commerce) and that **the relationships between the Council and key businesses could be stronger**. Some business stakeholders expressed a strong interest in getting more involved in the promotion of the city.

Carlisle, Swindon, Colchester and York, to name just 4 places, run successful business ambassador schemes and it is proposed that one is set up in Gloucester. The concept is simple and easy to deliver :

- Top business leaders in the city are identified and personally invited to join the scheme
- They are given a briefing and '**tool kit**' of marketing information (which should come out of the proposed branding/narrative work) that they can use to talk about the city to their customers and suppliers - around the UK and around the world
- They would be asked to feedback to GCC any leads they come across of businesses looking to expand, move premises etc. The ambassadors become the 'eyes and ears' of the city

- Two or three times a year, they would be invited to a GCC briefing about the development of the city and regeneration initiatives. This would be a great and easy way of improving relationships and getting the business community really engaged in the place marketing effort

It should not be a problem that GFirst LEP promote a similar initiative across Gloucestershire.

7. BUDGET

The existing budgets (£200,000 contingency fund and £70,000 for two years) does not represent a significant amount of money to set up a new place marketing function. However, the constraints are recognised and it is recommended that the money is allocated as follows :

Contingency fund :

- £50,000 to be allocated to the branding/narrative project
- £25,000 allocated to the digital upgrade project
- £5,000 to be allocated to the 2021 Visitor Guide project
- £80,000 (spread over two years) to be added to the operating budget of the new place marketing function
- £40,000 to fund any remaining costs relating to Marketing Gloucester with any remainder left as further contingency.

Operating budgets for 2020/21 and 2021/22 * :

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Operational budget allocation	£70,000
Contingency fund allocation	£40,000
Revenue target	£30,000
TOTAL	£140,000

* Subject to delay and change due to COVID 19

Notes :

- It is assumed that the bulk of the £140,000 will be spent on staff costs (1 manager and 2 marketing assistants) and overheads e.g. licenses, expenses etc.
- The two one-off initiatives (the branding/narrative project and the digital project) will generate the bulk of the work in the early months and so the lack of a discretionary marketing budget should not be an issue.

- As the team and function develops, there will be the opportunity to develop marketing campaigns that partners and stakeholders can buy into.
- The revenue target should be achievable. Some revenue already exists (e.g. £12,000 from roundabout sponsorship) and there are other opportunities e.g. digital advertising on the new website, sponsorship, funding bids, developing the Christmas offer etc.
- No revenue is assumed from the BID. **This is a relationship that GCC needs to re-form and recalibrate.**
- This does not take into account the costs and revenue of the existing events staff member who hires out the City’s spaces. This could make a net positive contribution, particularly when King’s Square becomes available for hire.
- This budget does not take into account any other GCC budgets which might fit better with the place marketing function.
- This two year time-frame gives ample opportunity for the main projects to be delivered. **Towards the end of that period, the effectiveness of the activity can be assessed, the potential to seek private sector support can be reviewed and a decision can be taken as to whether the function stays within the Council or is spun off as a separate entity.**

8. OUTLINE PROJECT PLAN

Given current uncertainties, it is difficult to develop a detailed project plan so the table below represents a draft timeline as to how the plan could be implemented. Most of the 10 recommendations are discrete projects and can be introduced or delayed as necessary through the two year cycle

RECOMMENDATION	ACTIVITY	TIME-FRAME
	Project mobilisation (stakeholder communication, detailed job descriptions etc.)	Month 1
1	Recruit new team of 3 through an open process	Month 2-3
1	Develop a suite of KPIs and a baseline for measurement	Month 2-3
2	Recruit new Marketing Steering Board, including a Chair	Month 2
3	Procure the agency to take on the branding/narrative work	Month 4
3	Agency fulfils the branding/narrative brief	Month 5-7
3	Roll-out of new narrative for the city	Month 7 onwards
4	Procure the agency to take on the digital development project	Month 4

4	Digital development work takes place	Month 5-7
4	New websites rolled out	Month 8
5	Agency procured to produce 2021 Visitor Guide	Month 4
5	2021 Visitor Guide ready for distribution	January 2021
6	Support possible 'Visit Gloucestershire' initiative	As and when
7	'History and Heritage'	Ongoing
8	Events and festivals development	Ongoing
9	Inward investment integration	Ongoing
10	Business Ambassador Scheme	Month 7 onwards
	Formal review and evaluation of place-marketing performance and future budgeting and in-house/outsource decisions	Month 21-24

APPENDIX 1 :

Stakeholders invited to discuss and contribute to the future marketing of the City of Gloucester

- Outgoing board members of Marketing Gloucester
 - The Dean of Gloucester Cathedral
 - Relevant officers of GCC (Jon McGinty, Anne Brinkhoff, Jonathan Lund, David Evans, Ian Edwards, Philip Walker, Lucy Chilton, Phil Ardley)
 - The three main political party leaders - Richard Cook, Kevin Stephens, Jeremy Hilton
 - Councillor Steve Morgan
 - Board members of the BID
 - Philip Cooke, Destination Marketing Group
 - Richard Graham MP
 - Heather Forbes, Gloucestershire County Council
 - Hollie Smith Charle and other members of the The Culture Trust board
 - Paul Carter, Geoff Smith - The Mosaïque Group
 - Esther Croft - the Reef Group
 - Lance Bradley - CEO, Gloucester Rugby Club
 - Edwina Bell and members of the Gloucester Heritage Forum
 - Steve Collins - Hatton Hotels
 - Stephen Marston - VC of Gloucestershire University
 - Dev Chakraborty -Gfirst LEP
 - Phil Moss and members of the Civic Trust
 - Neil Hopwood - Cyber Central
 - Jason Pullen - The Peel Group
 - Jason Robinson - Eastgate Shopping Centre
 - Peter White - King's Walk
 - Anne Cranston - Gloucester Cathedral
 - Martijn Vos - MD, Hydro Components UK Ltd.
 - Lawson Willett - CBF Creative
 - Richard Muller - Group CEO, Prima Dental Group
 - Emma Willis - Emma Willis Ltd.
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- Jenny Groves, Chair - Switch on to Swindon
 - Paul Walker, Destination Manager - Carlisle City Council
 - Emma Thornton, CEO, - Visit Cambridge
 - David Jackson, Marketing Cheltenham Manager
 - Michelle Gorman, Managing Director - Visit County Durham
 - Kevin Blackadder - Cheltenham BID Director
 - Andy Farrell, Interim CEO - Visit Cheshire
 - Cris Brown, Operations manager - Northumberland Tourism
 - Peter Jones, Marketing Consultant - Visit Plymouth and Visit Exeter
 - Fiona Wright, BID Director - Ipswich Central

APPENDIX 2 :

Basic requirements for the job roles and job descriptions of the place marketing team (to be developed)

Place Marketing Manager

Key qualities required - Someone who is collaborative, a skilled marketer (with experience), energetic, resourceful, commercial and creative.

Key job role - Manage a small team, develop positive relationships with key stakeholders across the city, lead on collaborative place marketing projects, build partnerships across Gloucestershire and with other relevant organisations (e.g. Visit Britain) and create and execute marketing campaigns across the City.

Key responsibilities :

- Help to create and then report against a range of place marketing KPIs
- Lead on the city branding/narrative project
- Lead on the digital development project
- Prepare relevant reports and data for the Marketing Steering Board
- Develop a rolling plan of creative marketing campaigns for the city
- Search for and then respond to funding opportunities for the city
- Oversee the development of the city's marketing collateral
- Bring together city stakeholders for collaborative projects
- Work closely with the GCC Cultural Services team, the Culture Trust and the Heritage Forum in support of their activity
- Take personal key account responsibility for Gloucester Cathedral, Gloucester Rugby Club and Gloucester Quays
- Ensure that inward investment considerations are factored into the place marketing agenda
- Support the launch of a Business Ambassadors Scheme for the City

Place Marketing Assistants

Key qualities required - Two people with excellent 'all round' digital marketing and social media skills and who are flexible, creative and resourceful (ideally, one of the team will have good graphic design skills.)

Key job role - To curate content from across the city and present it, across all available channels, in an engaging, timely and compelling way, consistent with the brand narrative of the City.

Key responsibilities :

- Develop networks that enable the gathering of positive content about the City.

- Promote content across all available channels
- Manage the Visit Gloucester website, and associated sites, keeping content fresh and relevant and using all available media - video, photographic, audio etc.
- Manage social media activity and networks to promote positive content to as many people as possible
- Create and manage a weekly 'what's on' e-newsletter aimed at residents
- Consistently produce fresh marketing content that inspires residents and visitors
- Help to ensure that the City's new brand/narrative is supported and adhered to
- Help to create and promote regular marketing campaigns that support the place making objectives of the City