

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	7 December 2022
Subject:	Tourism and Destination Marketing Progress Report 2022		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Tourism and Destination Marketing Review 2022		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present a progress report (Appendix 1) on the Tourism and Destination Marketing Function against the objectives outlined in Tourism and Destination Marketing Plan issued in January 2022 to Cabinet for information/comment.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the Tourism and Marketing Progress Report be noted, and that the progress made against the marketing plan in 2022 be endorsed.

3.0 The Visit Gloucester Tourism and Destination Marketing Progress Report

- 3.1 The Marketing Plan is written every year in December for the following year and the objectives are presented to the Marketing Steering Board for comment and this year they were sent out to 180 Visitor Economy businesses in the city through the B2B e-newsletter to allow them to feedback on the priorities presented. This year's objectives were as follows:

1. Ensuring diversity of promotion across tourism businesses of all sizes within our geographical area.
2. Promote all relevant festivals and events and engagement activities.
3. Embody and promote the Gloucester brand, support our partners to use the new Gloucester narrative and brand assets
4. Support our tourism businesses in the city to grow the visitor economy through networking, seminars, and our Business-to-Business newsletters.
5. Promote Sustainable Travel to tourists (initiatives such as visit like a local, green credentials, and promoting green travel options).

6. Audience Development for our digital marketing channels, concentrating on Instagram and TikTok in 2022.
7. Deliver seasonal marketing campaigns that raise awareness of Gloucester as a destination for a city-break.

3.2 The Progress Report provides information on the campaigns and event promotion delivered by the Tourism and Destination Team including information on:

- Bright Nights Marketing Campaign (appendix 1, section 2.1) a winter festival delivered in two bursts over October and November and February and March.
- The two trails (appendix 1, section 2.2 and 2.7) we ran in spring in Summer Easter Eggsplorers and the Rainbow Trail both were designed to send people into various visitor economy businesses in the city promoting the walkable nature of the city.
- Kings Square Launch Campaign (appendix 1, section 2.3). A multichannel promotional campaign celebrating the newly redeveloped Kings Square and highlighting the opportunities for cultural use of this space.
- The Escape the Everyday Campaign (appendix 1, section 2.4)– a Visit Britain funded campaign working with Visit Cheltenham to promote Gloucester and Cheltenham as complementary dual centre staycation destinations. The project was awarded £80,000 worth of marketing spend via Visit Britain and allowed the destinations to deliver one of the biggest marketing campaigns for the region in many years.
- Tall Ships Festival, (appendix 1, section 2.5) supporting Plaster Communications in promoting the three days festival following its hiatus due to Covid19. We sold tickets for the event through visitgloucester.gov.uk using our TXGB platform and ran a social media and Google display campaign.
- Serenity in the City (appendix 1, section 2.7) was a campaign with associated activities that aimed to directly contribute to residents and visitors health and well-being, encouraging them to undertake in mindfulness exercises, read poetry and connect with each other.
- Luminarium Promotion (appendix 1, section 2.8) the team supported the promotion and ticket sales for Arboria II the giant immersive light and sound installation in Kings Square. The majority of the pre-bookable timed entry slots sold out for this event.
- Gloucester Goes Retro (appendix 1, section 2.9) one of Gloucester's most well-loved events. We delivered a social and Google display campaign, alongside flyers and posts for the event and maintained the gloucestergoesretro.com website.

3.3 The Progress Report also provided information on the 'always on' (appendix 1, section 3) activity the Tourism and Destination provide for the city, this activity is crucial for the recovery of the city but as it is less visible than the major marketing campaigns is often overlooked by our stakeholders:

- Each month we send out two e-newsletters (appendix 1, section 3.1 and 3,2) one consumer facing 'Whats on' guide to our subscriber base of nearly 2,000 people (this has only been operational since January hence the lower figures but is growing well). The second newsletter has a steady audience base of our 180 visitor economy businesses in the city and provides them with activity updates

and opportunities from the team. It has an above industry open rate of 33% (industry average is 26%).

- We have made a number of website improvements. Including sourcing co-curated blogs, adding a book now button to our TXGB products, and adding seasonal elements to create mini-campaign content. All these changes and the campaigns we have run this year have led to astronomical growth in our website user figures. 40% on this time last year (318,000 vs 226,000 which was a record-breaking year for website figures)

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 The total value added created by tourism, total employment in tourism, cost savings of potential unemployment, quality of life of residents generated by tourism, and environmental infrastructure of tourism cannot be underplayed. Also, the role the team have played in promoting cultural activities to the local and regional community is increasing in importance as we continue to feel the effects of the pandemic. Tourism contributes to the appreciation of the built and natural environment by highlighting the importance of our architecture and green spaces, and we can encourage our residents to consume their local leisure facilities and care more deeply about preserving them for the future. Tourism can be a catalyst for strengthening a local community. Events and festivals of which local residents have been the primary participants and spectators are often rejuvenated and developed in response to tourist interest. The Serenity in the City marketing campaign was developed to directly benefit the health and well-being of our visitors and residents and the city branding project which aimed to build pride in the city saw our residents and community groups engage in the place positioning narrative of the city.

5.0 Environmental Implications

The team promote all aspects of the city's cultural offer as well as encouraging green forms of travel. There will be some limited impact on the environment, however, as increased tourism and movement of people will increase emissions. This year, the team have worked with GWR and the Community Rail Partnership to support our businesses in becoming more environmentally friendly.

Air travel does undoubtedly contribute to climate change especially the long-haul market. However, this market is one that is crucial to the recovery of Gloucester's Tourism Industry. We are targeting a younger audience in the US, especially slow travellers. Slow travel is an approach to travel that emphasizes connection: to local people, cultures, food, and music. It relies on the idea that a trip is meant to educate and have an emotional impact, in the present moment and for the future, while remaining sustainable for local communities and the environment. We will be looking for audiences who are more eco-conscious and we will be signposting to our sustainability blog to encourage people to visit the city in the most sustainable way. We also work very closely with GWR to encourage visitors to use public transport.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The priorities outlined in the Marketing Plan have been agreed in conjunction with our partners (visitor economy businesses in the city), and as such, we would not be able to change with them without consulting them again.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The report shows the team's progress in promoting the city and supporting our visitor economy businesses in 2022.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 It is likely that a Destination Management Plan will be created for the county in the next few years. We will work closely with Visit Gloucestershire to help steer this. In the longer to medium term, we will assess the impact of the DMO Review and what this may mean for the team. The report includes a note on the likely impact of the DMO review (appendix 1, section 3.7)

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 None directly arising from this report.

10.0 Legal Implications

10.1 None directly arising from this report.

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

11.1 The risk by the report not being adopted is that the team are delayed in starting the actions laid out on the plan. As the plan lays out quite a demanding set of actions, any delay would impact the ability of the team to deliver against all the actions outlined.

11.2 As the priorities were created in partnership with our key stakeholders, we would have to talk to our stakeholders to let them know about any suggested changes and delays that may be incurred by the report not being adopted. This may erode the excellent relationship the team have built with the tourism businesses in the city.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact. Therefore, a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

13.1 None

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

14.1 None

Background Documents: Tourism and Destination Marketing Plan 2022