

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	6 March 2024
Subject:	Tourism & Destination Marketing - Christmas Evaluation Report 2023		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Gloucester Believes Evaluation		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the Evaluation Report (Appendix 1) on the Tourism & Destination Marketing Christmas Campaign, 'Gloucester Believes', to Cabinet for information/comment.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) The Tourism & Destination Marketing Christmas campaign evaluation be noted.

3.0 Summary of the Tourism & Destination Marketing Christmas Campaign 2023

- 3.1 The Tourism & Destination Marketing Campaign was developed and implemented ahead of Gloucester's annual festive celebrations, which commenced with the Lantern Procession and the Christmas Light Switch-on on 18 November 2023, and continued until early January.

The Aims and Objectives of the campaign were:

1. To raise awareness of all key Christmas-related/festive events and activities available in Gloucester, across all consumer-facing business sectors, within a campaign budget of £10k.
2. To work collaboratively and include key partners and stakeholders, including the 300+ businesses who are members of Visit Gloucester, Gloucester BID, Gloucester Quays, and others, to communicate a single concept, that 'Gloucester Believes' (in Christmas).
3. To provide a digital 'one-stop shop', where all activity information could be easily accessed by users.

4. To promote a local civic pride by highlighting that Gloucester is an amazing place to visit to experience all things festive.
5. To drive visitors and residents into the city during the festive period, through promoting experiential events and activity, retail, food and drink, and staycations.
6. To promote a 'feel good' Festive Feeling, that Gloucester not only believes in Christmas, but in how brilliant its people are too.
7. To drive visitors to the Lantern Procession and Christmas Lights Switch-on.
8. To present two key campaign creatives, a graphical skyline and short video 'a Christmas thanks to Gloucester', capturing events across the season in the city, and that were easily identifiable as representing the city of Gloucester.

4.0 Tourism and Destination Christmas Campaign Evaluation Report 2023

The Evaluation Report provides information on the performance of the Christmas campaign, Gloucester Believes, delivered by the Tourism and Destination Team. The campaign was successful in achieving its aims, with growth observable against each of them.

Specifically, the report highlights:

- 4.1 The total Organic Reach of the campaign was 297k people.
- 4.2 The Winter Markets was the most viewed Festive Event on Visit Gloucester website.
- 4.3 The Visit Gloucester B2C Festive Newsletter had an open rate of 97.5%, which is exceptionally high.
- 4.4 Organic Engagement Rate on Visit Gloucester's social media channels were between 2 and 7% higher than the industry average for Travel, Hospitality and Leisure.
- 4.5 Visit Gloucester's festive film, 'a Christmas thanks', launched on 24 December 2023, had over 7,700 views.
- 4.6 Over 100k people were reached via our Paid Advertising Campaign for Gloucester Believes with SoGlos.
- 4.7 The Display Advertising with SoGlos achieved a 0.52% Click Through Rate, which is well above the SoGlos average of 0.14% for campaigns.
- 4.8 The lantern procession was the standout piece of Content Marketing via SoGlos, achieving high viewing numbers.
- 4.9 The Christmas Campaign landing pages on the Visit Gloucester website saw a 134% year on year increase in the number of views compared to 2022, and a 124% increased in the number of users. Between 1 Nov 2023 and 31 Jan 2024, 69,000 people used the Visit Gloucester website to find out about Christmas-related events.
- 4.10 Both Gloucester Quays and Gloucester Cathedral saw increases in footfall numbers in Nov and Dec 2023 compared with 2022.

5.0 Social Value Considerations

5.1 The total value added created by the Christmas campaign is difficult to quantify economically, however all marketing data reported, along with footfall, saw an increase when compared with the 2022 data. However, this campaign was also designed to raise pride in the community of Gloucester, where the city demonstrated its belief as the place to visit and encouraging both visitors and residents to believe in themselves. Tourism can be a catalyst for strengthening a local community by raising pride in their place and this was visibly apparent at the Lantern Procession and the Christmas Light Switch-On and activities in Kings Square, which launched the start of the Festive Celebrations. The turn-out at these events was significantly higher than in previous years, and the 'Gloucester Believes' campaign was a key part of that.

6.0 Environmental Implications

6.1 The campaign promoted all aspects of the city's festive offering as well as encouraging green forms of travel, and within the overall context of Visit Gloucester's Environmental objectives. The Christmas campaign was predominantly a digital campaign, including digital postering, and as such, had a low environmental impact.

7.0 Alternative Options Considered

N/A

8.0 Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 The report shows the impact of the Christmas Campaign in promoting the city and supporting our visitor economy businesses in November and December 2023.

9.0 Future Work and Conclusions

9.1 The success of the 'Gloucester Believes' campaign will be further developed in 2024, with expectation that it will generate an even greater reach and resulting positive impact on the city and its businesses. With the redevelopment of Visit Gloucester's website in the first half of 2024, we are hoping that the growth we see this year will be even higher.

10.0 Financial Implications

10.1 None directly arising from this report.

11.0 Legal Implications

11.1 None directly arising from this report.

12.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

N/A

13.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

N/A

14.0 Community Safety Implications

14.1 None

15.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

15.1 None