

# Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

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## **Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 Update Report**

Date of Commission meeting: 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Lead Director: Mike Dalzell

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**Useful Information:**

- Ward(s) affected: **All**
- Report author: Sarah Harrison, City Centre Director
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**1. Summary****1.1 The purpose of the report is:**

- To update Scrutiny Commission members on the progress to date made on the delivery of actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025
- To seek comment from Scrutiny Commission members on the Update Report

**1.2 Overview****UK travel and tourism industry summary: Source Commons Library Research Briefing November 2023**

- UK tourism fell sharply due to the pandemic, though data indicates domestic tourism has largely recovered and VisitBritain expects inbound tourism to recover by the end of 2024.
- In 2019, the sector accounted for £74 billion of economic output with domestic spending being higher than spending by overseas visitors. While inbound trips are skewed towards London, domestic trips are more spread throughout the country.
- The sector was heavily supported by Government funding during the pandemic but remains fragile. It continues to be affected by issues stemming from Brexit and the increased cost of living. The industry has said that recent Government policies to increase border security have negatively affected inbound tourism.
- The direct and indirect Economic Impact of Tourism UK £134bn representing 6.6% of the whole economy. The direct Economic Impact is £74bn representing 3.6% (EU average 4.5%) of the whole economy.
- In 2022 overseas residents made 31.2 million visits to the UK, down from 40.9 million visits in 2019. Spend £26.5 billion, down from £28.5 billion in 2019.
- Visiting family and friends taking longer trips (averaging 8.4 nights in 2022 compared to 7.1 nights in 2019).

**Leicester Performance Indicators 2022: Source: STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity)**

<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>% change 2018 vs 2022</b>	<b>Target 2025</b>	<b>% change to reach 2025 target</b>
Value of Leicester Tourism (£m)	651	724	+11.2%	792	+9.4%
No of overnight stays inc VFR (m)	4.8	5.0	+4.2%	5.6	+10.7%
No of visitors to Leicester (m)	11.5	9.9	-13.7%	14	+41%
No of jobs created and safeguarded (000)	7.9	7.2	-8.8%	9.2	+27%

- Although the number of visitors decreased due to the pandemic, there was a rise in the number of people visiting friends and relatives and inflation increased prices which in part accounts for the rise in the value of tourism to the city.
- The number of jobs decreased throughout the pandemic and employment in this sector has been slow to recover due to a number of factors including BREXIT, people leaving the hospitality industry as seen as a less attractive option and increases in minimum wage.

**Challenges for Tourism and Hospitality Sector**

Recovery from the pandemic	Businesses taking on more debt
Hospitality workers leaving the sector	Energy and minimum wage increases
EU workers/BREXIT	Staff shortages (5 vacancies for every 100 workers)
Chefs removed from Shortage Occupation List in April 2021	Youth Mobility Scheme does not permit young people from EU to work in UK for up to 2 years
Electronic Travel Authorisation (EA)	Removal of VAT tax free shopping
Government Tourism Recovery Plan – DMOs to LVEP	Perception of UK as tourism destination has fallen. Industrial action

## Tourism Trends

- World changes due to the pandemic, war in Europe and the Middle East, the energy crisis, cost of living and climate crisis.
- People focusing on health and managing finances.
- Booking times have shortened.
- Digital focus with the rise of AI, influencers and channel innovation.
- Collation, analysis and use of key audience data.
- Focus on local.
- Demonstrated value.
- Integrated creative (e.g. Use of movement)

Tourism Trends	
Bleisure Travel	Combining business travel with an extended leisure stay
Automation	More bookings/reservations are automated
Mobile phones	People are using mobile phones increasingly to source information and to make bookings 2 in 5 booking are made on mobile phones
Personalisation	Visitor behaviours, personal preferences and past choices
Tech-Empowered travel	On-trip notifications, self-service check in, contactless mobile payments, automated and flexible cancellation policies, mobile boarding
Sustainable tourism	Making travel decisions with the environment in mind.
Active ecotourism	Combining the passion for travel with direct involvement in conservation and supporting the local environment.
Transformative travel	Transformative travel is traveling for leisure and aiming to make a difference in both the lives of others and oneself. e.g. volunteering

Experience tourism	This trend is about having a once-in-a-lifetime experience or gaining an emotional connection with cultures and nature. Live like a local
Wellness Travel	Looking for an enriching experience with the primary purpose of achieving, promoting, or maintaining the best health and sense of well-being and balance in life.
Longer trips	Travel less, further afield but for longer
Staycation	Staying in home country and often involves day trips to explore other places.

### **Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025**

- Leicester Tourism Action Plan has been developed closely in parallel with the Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire. Both plans are designed to complement each other. The city plan helps to deliver priorities for the wider area, for example product investment, improved productivity and in particular it supports the strategy for creating a strong, distinctive and visible destination through the campaign brand entitled *Uncover the Story*. [Leicester Tourism Action Plan](#).
- The framework of the five-year Tourism Growth Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire developed by the jointly funded Place Marketing Team has helped focus effort, reduce duplication, inform, guide and influence decisions on investment and bring individual partners together to increase impact. By visualising the area as a single, integrated visitor destination, the sector can achieve more growth, more visitors, more economic value and more jobs. By working collaboratively with the city, county and districts councils, a more joined up approach to developing tourism across the sub-region can be achieved. The Plan is supported by a region-wide Tourism Advisory Board. [Leicester Leicestershire Tourism Growth Plan](#)

### **1.3 Summary Progress Report Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025**

Summary of delivery progress to date against the objectives and actions outlined in the Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 since the previous report in March 2022.

There has been considerable progress made despite the challenging Covid environment the country and particularly Leicester has faced. Projects have moved forwards and brand marketing campaigns Uncover the Story, Fitcation and Taste the Place have been launched by the Place Marketing team to encourage more visitors to visit.

#### **Four themes**

The Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 is organised around four themes:

## **Product – Place – Positioning – People.**

### **Theme 1: Product**

***Improving the tourism product offer in terms of quality, diversification, productivity and profitability***

#### **Jewry Wall Roman Museum**

- The Grade II listed Vaughan College designed by Trevor Dannatt is to be the home of the Jewry Wall Roman Museum – A Real Roman Experience, comprising objects from Leicester Museums & Galleries and stories of Roman Leicester associated with the Roman finds discovered across the city, with cutting edge interactive multi-media displays, a large immersive Roman experience entrance hall, and new public, private hire and education facilities, including a 70-seat café. It is adjacent to the scheduled ancient monument, Jewry Wall, a Bath House complex dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD, it is one of the tallest surviving sections of Roman masonry in Britain, standing over 9 metres high.
- The museum has been closed since 2017 for refurbishment and to include the upper levels of the former Vaughan College, Adult Education Department of the University of Leicester. However, thousands of people have attended activities and events supported by Leicester Museums & Galleries and the Friends of Jewry Wall, such as: Ride Roman Leicester, The Jewry Wall Roman Leicester Walking Trail, Festival of Archaeology, Jewry Wall An Adventure in Time, and the Roman Festival at Chester's House to celebrate Leicester's two thousand years of history and to promote the Jewry Wall Museum project.
- The scheme has now recovered from the problems that arose from the original contractor going into administration. That inevitably caused delays that couldn't be avoided but the new building contractor has now been on site for months and is making excellent progress whilst the exhibition designers and installers have been busy working offsite for some time and will start on site in the next few weeks. The public opening date will be confirmed in the next few months.

#### **Leicester Cathedral and Heritage and Learning Centre**

- Leicester Cathedral was closed for significant periods during the pandemic and was fully closed from the beginning of 2022 until 26 November 2023 for the Leicester Cathedral Revealed building works.
- Visitor numbers since re-opening on 26 November 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 have reached over 33,000 and the reaction to the work has been overwhelmingly positive.

- Leicester Cathedral will fully re-open in Q4 of 2024 following the completion of the construction of the new Heritage and Learning Centre and the reinstatement works to Cathedral Gardens.

### **Phoenix Expansion**

- Construction of Phoenix's expansion project began in September 2021 with completion in December 2022. The new extension opened on 20 January 2023 creating two additional cinema screens (making 4 screens in total), a larger more prominent gallery, dedicated spaces for making and learning, a larger Café Bar, a multi-function event space and a new roof terrace bar and seating area. The official launch was in May/June 2023 with a 2-week summer festival.
- When the venue was closed for 8 weeks in September/October 2022 while work was undertaken to link the extension with the foyer in the existing venue, the team worked with partner organisations to present a 'Phoenix on Tour' programme with screenings in venues across the city.
- Post-pandemic recovery across the cinema sector has been slow and a recent survey conducted by the Independent Cinema Office revealed that audiences are 25% lower than in 2019. Despite the construction of the new extension and the cost-of-living crisis, the audience figures now exceed those of pre-pandemic levels. The release of Barbie and Oppenheimer in July 2023 provided a major boost to summer trade and saw many new customers coming to Phoenix for the first time.
- Q4 2023/24 was buoyant with good levels of visitor attendance, Café Bar trade and growing hire business. Phoenix was the host venue for a number of key events as part of the annual Comedy Festival.
- Hosted over 30 events including the City Mayor's launch reception and awards ceremony for Leicester Comedy Festival. Nominated for Best Venue.
- Two sell-out 'Reggae and Rum' event in the largest screen to mark the release of the Bob Marley biopic.
- Sell-out event in the largest screen marking the launch of Challo Cinema season of contemporary Gujarati cinema.
- Stage on Screen programme with shows from National Theatre, Royal Opera House, Royal Ballet and Exhibition on Screen.
- In Conversation with Charles Dance and Andy Gotts in partnership with DMU
- Launch of The Nest rooftop cocktail bar on 8 March 2024

### **Leicester Museum and Art Gallery**

- LMAG is planning for significant restoration and refurbishment works which will

create a new café, repair Victorian glazed roofing and create quality new permanent gallery space that re-presents our art collections, tells the social history of the city and responds to the climate emergency. The social history and climate galleries require NLHF funding which is currently being applied for.

- The Open: The People's Exhibition at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery in 2023 was the largest in its 30+ history and had a record number of artists submit their work.
- Pierre Auguste Renoir's masterpiece 'The Umbrellas', one of the most famous artwork in the world will be displayed at LMAG. On loan from the National Gallery as part of the National Gallery's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, 12 museums around the country will be displaying iconic artworks in the summer of 2024 under the title 'National Treasures'.
- LMAG in association with Arch Creative, Soft Touch Arts and Sean Knapp was awarded the NLHF Heritage Project of the Year Award for Punks: Rage & Revolution.
- LMAG in association with Navrang was awarded the best 'Temporary or Touring Exhibition' at the prestigious Museums + Heritage Awards in London for Rebuilding Lives: 50 Years of Ugandan Asians in Leicester.
- Visitor numbers for 2022/23 were 400,586 (22% higher than 2019/2020)

### **Leicester Market**

- A major improvement programme to create a contemporary market environment for a quality shopping experience and better facilities for traders. The traders were moved to a temporary market on Green Dragon Square on 30 November 2023.
- The improvement programme will deliver: -
  - Approximately 70 new stalls with improved point of sale display
  - Better lighting
  - Smart new paving
  - Shuttered perimeter to keep the site secure at night
  - Better pedestrian routes through the market
  - Attractive, flexible and lockable units
  - Green roofs and solar panels
  - Open up views of the Grade II\* listed Corn Exchange building by removing section of the market roof.
- The demolition of the original market is close to completion and site clearance and site investigations have commenced.
- The bronze sculpture of the fifth Duke of Rutland has been relocated from outside the Corn Exchange and after cleaning will be returned to its original 1852 location in Cheapside. This was the first-ever statue erected in Leicester.



### **King Richard III Visitor Centre**

- The addition of a new Greyfriars digital interactive window display, taking visitors back through time to show how the burial site of Richard III has changed over 500 years, from 1485 through to 2013 covering four other significant time periods in between (The Dissolution, Elizabethan, Georgian/Victorian & World War II)
- Celebrations of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the rediscovery and identification of Richard III and planning for the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the reinterment in 2025.
- Recipients of the Travellers Choice Award by TripAdvisor, Gold Accolade by Visit England, History Museum of the Year by Luxury Travel Group, Quality Food & Drink Award by Visit England. Celebrated the milestone of receiving their 50th award since opening in 2014.
- Visitor Numbers: for the 2022/23 Financial year: 60,610. KRII saw brilliant visitor numbers post-covid but have seen a slight 'cost of living' dip at the end of October/November 2023.

### **Visit Leicester Information Centre – KRIII Visitor Centre**

- Visit Leicester Information Centre saw a slower visitor recovery post pandemic, due to the lower numbers of international visitors to the country, but they are significantly improving and are at near pre covid numbers for the last six months.
- Retail Income from the Leicester themed books, gifts and souvenir are the best they have ever been.

### **National Space Centre**

- A new experience has been added [Tetrastar Spaceport](#) (an immersive journey to the edge of space), which has also just added a schools mission.
- Home Planet, a brand new gallery has been created, focused on the use of space science on our home planet as well as the impact of humans.
- Replacement of the seats in the UK's largest Planetarium started in May 2023 and is now complete. We Are Guardians, a new award-winning show was created by one of the world's leading fulldome show production companies.
- NSC has seen a fantastic bounce back from a very long closure period. Total visitor numbers for 2023 were 330,731, the busiest year on record (even with a reduced daily cap moving from 3,000 a day to 1,650).
- Awarded the Large Visitor Attraction. NSC Creative team has seen huge success with its fulldome show commissioned by Pink Floyd to celebrate 50 years of the Dark Side of the Moon album, which is currently being screened to sell out audiences all over the world. The content team reached their 1 million views milestone on YouTube.
- The National Space Academy team's Space Engineering course, in

partnership with Loughborough College, was given the nation's highest education award: a Queen's Anniversary Prize, which will be collected from the King later this year.

### **Great Central Railway**

- Recovery of visitor numbers following the pandemic has been steady, with special events and our First-Class Restaurant Services performing strongly. However, whilst the cost of utilities and coal has stabilised, the impact on business performance continues to be profound, with a significant loss being recorded for our 2023/24 that ended on 31 January. As a consequence, the need to make staff cost savings through redundancies was announced on 15 January.

### **Curve**

- 2022/23 was one of Curve's most successful years selling 249,000 tickets across 600 performances.
- Finding Home: Leicester's Ugandan Asian Story at 50 was acknowledged as a special event hosted by His Majesty King Charles III at Buckingham Palace.
- The Neighbour-hubs programme of work which is delivered across five areas of the city has seen 3,700 instances of people of all ages taking part in either free or low-cost activity – ensuring that finances are not a barrier to engaging with Curve.
- Billy Elliot the Musical won Best Regional Production at the WhatsOnStage Awards and Best Musical at the UK Theatre Awards.
- The Wizard of Oz transferred for a summer season at the London Palladium and is now on UK Tour.

### **De Montfort Hall**

- This year De Montfort Hall has continued to see a reduction in the number of shows and the number of visitors compared to pre covid levels. Before the pandemic there was an average of 220,000 attendees for ticketed performances and around 220-250 performances per year. In 2023/24 there were just over 200,000 attendees and around 200 performances.
- The industry as a whole has seen a downturn for venues of a comparable size. However, De Montfort Hall has seen an excellent performance in Q4 of 2023/24 compared to previous years. This is mainly due the programming of more tribute acts to fill the available dates remaining, and potentially the industry starting to return to normal.
- One of the highlights of the year was the performance of the Christmas Pantomime (Jack and the Beanstalk), which saw both attendances and ticket

sales reach an all-time high, with over 33,000 tickets sold. The show saw huge PR for the venue and city in the national press, due to the casting of BBC's Scott Mills for his stage debut.

- Another plus point this year has been the performance of the bars. There has been a trend of people spending more at the bar, with the average spend per head going from £3 pre pandemic, to over £4 in 23/24. This is down to a combination of price maintenance, greater efficiency of service and also the different type of shows on offer. This may also be a general trend of customers going out less, but making sure they make the most of it when they are out.
- Overall, De Montfort Hall is showing positive signs of recovery and so is the industry as a whole.

### **Morningside Extension**

- The Arena Extension Project consists of a standalone, 1,200 metres squared, 2-court sports hall on the existing car park at the Morningside Arena, at Charter Street, Leicester.
- The project significantly increases flexibility of the arena, and whilst not increasing the 3,000 capacity of the main hall, it enables the venue to accommodate an increasing range of national and international sports and entertainment events. The new facilities enable increased, regular and predictable community sports usage for the burgeoning underage age basketball programmes of Riders charity, the Leicester Riders Foundation, for Leicester College students, for wheelchair basketball users and other community sport users. The venue is the largest of its type in the UK.
- The Arena is set to undergo a transformation in its naming rights as a tribute to the generous support of the Ian and Clare Mattioli Charitable Trust. In 2022, the Trust generously contributed £500,000 towards the Arena Extension project.

### **Itineraries and Trails**

- Fifteen city itineraries have been created to provide ideas for staying less than a day and more than a day. [Less than a Day - Visit Leicester Here for a Day or More - Visit Leicester](#)
- Leicester Arts & Museums completed the milestone of installing their 300<sup>th</sup> Heritage Panel, a project that has been running since 2014 placing colourful panels in both neighbourhood and city centre locations so that local people and visitors can learn more about Leicester's 2,000-year history that's all around them. A Heritage Panel Trail has been created which is available both online and in print. [Heritage Panel Trail - Visit Leicester](#)
- The creation of Uncover the Story themed five city trails (Newarke, New Walk, King Richard III, Old Town eateries and City Heritage Panels) promote the

city's heritage. [City Trails - Visit Leicester](#) This initiative was adopted by the Districts and a series of county trails have now been developed, funded through their respective Shared Prosperity Fund allocations.

- Three Leicester riverside maps (North, Central and South) created in partnership with the Canal and River Trust provide riverside trails to encourage walkers, cyclists and those travelling on the water to enjoy the area by following the course of the River Soar and the Union Canal. [Leicester Riverside Trails - Visit Leicester](#)

### **New Leisure Venues**

- The city centre has seen a welcomed increase in the number of leisure venues offering activities ranging from mini golf to virtual cricket. The latest venues to open are Roxy Ballroom on Humberstone Gate West and the refurbishment of Caddyshackers to include Footpool.

### **New Restaurants**

- New restaurants have opened reflecting the diversity of the city's population. Recently the city centre has benefitted from the opening of Sakura on High Street, The Frame in St Martins Square, Time to Delhi on Belvoir Street, Varanasi on High Street, Wild Tango on New Walk and The Good Thai on Belgrave Gate. Granby Street has seen a significant number of restaurants opening since the public realm improvements reducing the overall street vacancy rate to under 6%.

### **Serviced Accommodation**

- The number of bed spaces in the city centre has increased by 47% since 2020 with the addition of five new serviced accommodation providers; Novotel and Adagio, The Gresham, Travel Lodge and Kew Green Hotels acquired the lease of Hotel Brooklyn in December 2023 and under a franchise agreement with IHG is now a Voco hotel.

## **Theme 2: Place**

### ***Developing the place and connectedness***

- **Connecting Leicester** continues to be central to the vision of creating and providing a connected, safe and family friendly city centre. There have been a number of significant improvements to enhance the connections between shopping, leisure, heritage, housing and transport facilities in Leicester for the good of the city.
- **Animating public spaces programme to deliver high quality events**  
Festivals bring people together and promote a sense of belonging and community. They are a vibrant expression of a community's cultural heritage promoting unity and boosting the local economy. The city centre has seen a substantial step change in the quality and scale of festivals and events. Some examples:-

- **Bring The Paint** the award-winning international street art festival returning in May 2024. The festival brings together internationally acclaimed painters to transform the city centre with world-class mural paintings. Supported by Arts Council England, Leicester City Council, BID Leicester and other organisations.
- **Light Up Leicester** The city centre was lit up with the extraordinary illuminated artworks as part of a brand new international festival in early March 2022. A bid has now been submitted to Arts Council England that will hopefully enable the event to return in March 2025. The giant puppet '**Storm**' attracted mass crowds breaking Saturday footfall records. In October 2023, **The Monsters** trail delighted families as they discovered giant inflatable monsters on roofs throughout the city. Crowds turned out to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Diwali** light switch on event and **Christmas** saw the addition of Enlightenment in Abbey Park to the packed programme of festive events and activities.

### **Safe Nighttime Economy**

- The increase in the number of restaurants and leisure activities adding to the theatres, cinemas, bars, clubs and pubs is adding to the appeal of the city centre as an exciting place to spend an evening. A recently formed nighttime venue forum brings together late night venues and attractions to work in partnership with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Police, CityWatch and BID Leicester to deliver a safe and welcoming environment.

### **Purple Flag Accreditation**

- Leicester regained its Purple Flag award in January 2024 for the fourth time following a visit by assessors in December 2023. Purple Flag status is awarded to towns and cities that meet or surpass the standards of excellence in managing the evening and nighttime economy. The assessment is based on the effectiveness of multi-agency partnership working. The report highlighted "Key successes in Leicester's submission include an excellent range of national and local operators, the work by St. John Ambulance during weekends, and the engaging street art installations. The nighttime crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Leicester city centre saw a reduction of 28% over the five years from 2018 to the end of 2022."

### **Best Bar None**

- In 2023, BID Leicester in partnership with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire Police and Leicester City Watch, launched the Best Bar None scheme in Leicester. 47 licenced premises have now received accreditation having undergone a thorough assessment process conducted by trained assessors.
- The Best Bar None scheme is dedicated to recognising and celebrating establishments that go above and beyond in ensuring a safe, enjoyable and inclusive environment for all patrons.
- Winner of Best New Scheme at National Awards Event held at The House of

Lords in London.

### **St John's Ambulance**

- A first aid service for the evening and nighttime economy operating in the city centre from 10pm – 5 am. Match funded by BID Leicester and the Community Safety Partnership (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner)
- 45 sessions managing 587 patients in 2023.
- Saving to the NHS estimated at circa £480,036 as well as saving police time.

### **Walk Away Campaign**

- Home Office funded campaign developed through the VRN police team.
- Aim to reduce nighttime violent incidences by changing behaviour.
- The campaign encourages self-control, support from friends and for men to walk away from heated situations before other people become violent.
- Venues supporting the campaign and using campaign materials in their venues and amplifying using their own social media channels.

### **Theme 3: Positioning**

***Developing a strong identity to position Leicester as a desirable destination attracting first-time visitors***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Heritage Panel Trail	Completed  June 2024	300 panel trail guide available online at Visit Leicester and Story of Leicester websites and in print from Visit Leicester Information Centre.  An updated trail guide will be created to include the 50 additional heritage panels that have been installed.
City Trails	Completed  May 2024	5 city trails and 15 itineraries  2 further trails to be created – Suffragettes and 'Look Up' to capture gems above shopfronts e.g. wire foxes, cathedral gargoyles, etc. Funded by SPF
Make A Date with Leicester	Completed  May 2024	8 sector guides created online and in print.  Updated versions for 7 sectors will be available online at Visit Leicester. The tourism guide will be updated for online and print.
Leicester Tourism Facts for Ambassadors	May 2024	Developed for the tourism ambassador training, this booklet will

		have 70 multiple choice questions on Leicester's tourism venues and attractions. Funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)
Tourism Leaflet	May 2024	30 top tourism attractions in Leicester. Online and in print. Distributed through hotels, shopping centres, transport hubs, universities and volunteer tourism ambassadors. Funded by UKSPF
Legible Leicester tear off maps	April 2024	The mapping has been updated. Printed tear off pads for Visit Leicester Information Centre, hotels, shopping centres and transport hubs.
Pocket maps	May 2024	Using the updated Legible Leicester map, the pocket maps will include priority information for visitors. Funded by UKSPF
Old Town brochure	Summer 2024	Old Town brochure. Promoting character area highlighting heritage and culture and new attractions – Jewry Wall, Leicester Cathedral Heritage and Learning Centre, Visit Leicester Information Centre, Leicester Market
No and Low Alcohol Guide	June 2024	Featuring the range of no and low alcohol option available in the city centre from numerous venues.
Restaurant and Café Leaflets	May 2024	Leaflets listing restaurants by cuisine and cafes to support Visit Leicester Information Centre team, hotels and tourism ambassadors and Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors.

#### **Theme 4: People**

##### **Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors**

- A Volunteer Tourism Ambassador scheme is currently being developed in partnership with Leicester College and Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL). The team of volunteers will be recruited from Leicester's neighbourhood areas, universities and businesses reflecting diversity, inclusion and equality.
- The opportunity has been advertised on the council's Assemble platform, through VAL, universities, colleges and the businesses. To date nearly 40 people have applied.
- The Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors will support the promotion of the city's tourism venues and attractions and festivals and events programme. The focus will be on the Visiting Friends and Relatives market (VFR).
- An initial cohort of 10 volunteers are currently undertaking a 6-week training

programme with a proposed start date for their roles at the beginning of May 2024.

- A further initiative will train people in customer facing roles to be tourism ambassadors for the city. This will include staff working in hotels, shopping centres, transport hubs, BID ambassadors and taxi drivers.

### **Skills, networking, support and engagement from tourism businesses**

- Good progress is being made on creating a practical local skills plan for the sector for the benefit of providers and businesses. The proposal is to create a skills plan for Tourism and Hospitality, taking into account guidance from the Local Skills Improvement Plan which has been developed by the Chamber of Commerce. The aim is to establish buy-in from the Tourism Advisory Board for skills work including a nominated lead.
- Tourism and Hospitality Skills Forum established in 2023. Chaired by Leicester College. Members include South Leicestershire College and Loughborough College. The aims for the Forum are shaping course curricular, employer engagement, careers fairs, employer-led projects industry placements, engagement with Springboard charity's hospitality courses.
- The purpose is to produce a practical Local Skills Plan for the sector:
  - Help providers meet aims and objective of internal plans. For example, facilitating employer engagement, supporting curriculum development and being consistent with LSIP developments.
  - Help businesses link more easily with providers via planned activity, supporting curriculum development to reduce the gap between education and work and access to the talent pipeline of trained staff.
  - Help all involved have a shared and agreed vision for local skills development in the sector, share quantitative and qualitative labour market information about trends and development in the sector and discuss issues and topics of mutual interest.
- Skills Plan for Tourism and Hospitality 2024-25 completion Summer 2024.

## **2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny**

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- Note the progress made to improve the quality of our overall tourism offer.
- Note the creation of new marketing collateral to promote the city's tourism offer and encourage longer stays.
- Note the new initiative to recruit a team of Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors and to train front of house staff.
- Comment on the progress reported on in the Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 Update Report.



### 3. Supporting Information

N/A

### 4. Financial, legal and other implications

#### 4.1 Financial implications

Whilst tourism contributes positively to the finances of the Council, there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.  
Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance Ext 4004

#### 4.2 Legal implications

The report provides an update, any proposed works or services identified in this report may be subject to the Public Contracts Regulations 2015- (“Regulations”) and the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and as such the Council’s Procurement team and Legal services will need to be engaged to provide advice and ensure such works or services are procured in accordance with the Regulations. Likewise, any partnership initiatives with external bodies will need to need to be reviewed. Legal advice should be sought as and when required.

Mannah Begum, Principal Solicitor, Commercial Legal, Ext 1423

#### 4.3. Climate Change implications

#### 4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report provides an update to the Scrutiny Commission members on the progress to date made on the delivery of actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025. There are no direct equality implications arising out of it.

The tourism sector, along with the arts, entertainment and recreation, has been one of the sections of the economy that was most impacted by COVID-19. Leicester is the largest city in the East Midlands and the most diverse, the city has a rich mix of cultures, languages, and communities, making it a vibrant and diverse place to live

and visit. Culture presents an opportunity for authentic cultural exchange between locals and visitors and for destinations it encourages local communities to embrace their culture and boost economic growth. Thus, providing an opportunity to foster good relations between different protected characteristics.

One in five people in the UK has an impairment and those with health conditions, and their travelling companions, are estimated to spend £12 billion on trips in England each year. Half a million British adults cited 'lack of accessibility provision' as the reason they did not take a domestic trip in the last 12 months. It is important to consider inclusive design principles in relation to accessibility for people from across all protected characteristics.

Efforts to promote equality and diversity and to engage people from across communities should have a positive impact on visitors from across all protected characteristics. Having accessible safe and inclusive places to visit that helps to create an environment that encourages as many people to access services and participate fully, helps to advance equality.

Equalities Officer Surinder Singh Tel 37 4148

#### 4.5 Other Implications

(You will have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate any which apply?)

N/A

**5. Background information and other papers:**

**6. Summary of appendices:**

**7. Is this a private report? NO**

**(If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)**