Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

**DATE:**     **THURSDAY, 25 APRIL 2024**
**TIME:**     **5:30 pm**
**PLACE:**    **Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ**

**Members of the Committee**
Councillor Dawood (Chair)
Councillor Mohammed (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Agath, Aldred, Chauhan, Halford, Karavadra and Singh Johal

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

# Information for members of the public

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- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact:
**Ed Brown and Katie Jordan, Governance Support Officer on 0116 4546350**.  Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**.

## PUBLIC SESSION

## AGENDA

**FIRE / EMERGENCY EVACUATION**

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1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**                **Appendix A**

   The minutes of The Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on 29th January 2024 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. **CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

5. **QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

   The Monitoring Officer to report on any questions, representations and statements of case received in accordance with Council procedures.

6. **PETITIONS**

   The Monitoring Officer to report on any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures.

7. **VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY & SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**      **Appendix B**
   **(VCSE) SECTOR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE**

   The Director of Corporate Services submits a report to provide an overview of the advancements and future direction of the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Engagement Strategy.

8. **SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - WARD COMMUNITY**          **Appendix C**
   **FUNDING**

   The Vice-Chair submits a report providing an overview of the Commission's examination of Ward funding and how it is distributed.

**9.    LEICESTER TOURISM ACTION PLAN**                    **Appendix D**

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investments submits a report to update the Commission Members on the progress to date made on the delivery of actions outlined in the Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025.

**10.   DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME**                            **Appendix E**

The current version of the Work Programme is attached. Members of the Commission will be asked to forward any item they wish to consider on the work programme for the Commission to the Chair or the Governance Services Officer.

**11.   ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**
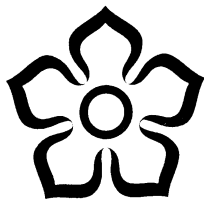
Leicester
City Council

<u>Minutes of the Meeting of the</u>
<u>CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION</u>

Held: MONDAY, 29 JANUARY 2024 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

<u>Councillor Dawood – Chair</u>
<u>Councillor Mohammed – Vice-Chair</u>

| | |
|---|---|
| Councillor Agath | Councillor Aldred |
| Councillor Chauhan | Councillor Halford |
| Councillor Karavadra | Councillor Singh Johal |

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**43.   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Cutkelvin.

**44.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the

business to be discussed.

Councillors Aldred, Dawood and Singh-Johal declared that they were members of Council-run gyms.

*These declarations were made during the item on the Draft Capital Programme.*

**45.   MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 5 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

**46.   CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**47.   QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

**48.   PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

**49.   DRAFT GENERAL REVENUE BUDGET**

The Director of Finance submitted a report detailing the proposed Revenue Budget for 2024/25.

The Chair directed the Commission to the relevant parts of the document to Culture and Neighbourhoods.

The Head of Finance (CDN) then presented the report.

Key points included:

- The budget was very challenging for the 2024/25 financial year and was the worst outlook that the Council had ever faced.
- Without drastic action, the Council would not be able to balance the budget in the 2025/26 financial year.
- A Section 114 notice would not mean that the Council was bankrupt, as Councils cannot technically go bankrupt.  A Section 114 notice would state that the Council's resources could not meet its commitments and as such it could mean a freeze on commitments and government interventions.
- Many other Councils were in a similar position to Leicester.
- Whilst not directly linked to Culture and Neighbourhoods, a growth in statutory services had put pressure on the budget, for example, the costs of Adult and Children's Social Care, pressure on home-to-school transport and the homelessness budget.
- The budget was in a volatile position and there was expected to be a need to add a further £11m to the final budget, largely due to an increase in minimum wage which had raised care costs and homelessness.
- The growth in statutory services and the failure of the government to provide adequate funding had meant it was difficult for local authorities to keep up.  Despite pressures and inflation increasing since 2021, the government had only just announced additional finding for local governments, however, this may only amount to around £3m for Leicester City Council.
- There was £10m of savings in the budget, but this still left a large sum to

be met from the reserves.

- A further austerity drive from the government was signalled from 2025-26.  Analysis from the Institute of Fiscal Studies showed that there would be a real-terms cut of 3.4% per year for services other than the NHS, aid and defence.
- The Council approach to budget reductions had been to use a managed reserves strategy, however, the proposed budget would make use of all reserves available.
- Some local authorities had been offered exceptional financial support from the government which in some cases allowed them to use the proceeds from the sale of assets to balance the revenue budget, and in some cases allowed councils to increase their council tax above the 5% permitted.  However, no local authority had been offered extra money.  No exceptional financial support would be offered to Leicester City Council in 24/25 as it was able to balance the budget.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- The situation was expected, and it was possible that many services would be cut or lost.  The Council was doing what it could with what it had.
- The Council were doing everything possible to deliver services and statutory duties.  It was noted that people in need of statutory duties such as social care also benefitted from services such as libraries and leisure centres.  Credit was given to officers for their work on preventing a Section 114 notice which would take control of such services away from the Council.
- The information on savings was the impact on the 2024/25 budget of decisions that had already been taken.
- With regard to parks, a number of savings decisions had been made across many areas, including street cleansing and grounds maintenance.  A number of options had been explored in a wide review.  Work had been undertaken on statutory services and discretionary functions.  Parks involved many discretionary functions and many efficiencies had been identified such as removing back-office overheads, consolidating depots which had given a capital receipt to the Council and saved a revenue cost.
- Workforces were shrinking as staff who left the service were not being replaced, however, capacity was being maintained in order to maintain standards and as such there was minimal visible impact to the public due to the work of the team to balance the service.  Capacity was also being maintained by introducing technology to deal with reports from the public, allowing more efficient triage of issues and allowing more targeted work and allowing a quicker response.
- Opportunities were being explored for new income on discretionary services.

- Regulatory services had many statutory functions and where they were delivered above a statutory level, the service looked to deliver them to a statutory level.
- In terms of trading standards, each case was assessed on its own merits.
- In the case of many regulatory services, such as Houses of Multiple Occupation licencing or selective licencing, there was no scope for cutting back as the services needed to be sustained and the budget is ring fenced to the scheme.
- It was requested that a breakdown of which services were impacted by savings and how be produced.
- Reviews of discretionary services would be on-going.  Savings needed for 2025/26 would impact upon all areas of the Council, in some places this would be very significant.
- The allocation of Government grant funding was based on data that was out of date and did not reflect the current pressures on the city.  Issues such as population increase would need to be reflected in the Fair Funding Review in order to produce more equitable funding. It was not clear when the government would conclude this work.

AGREED:

1) That the elements of the report pertaining to Culture and Neighbourhoods be noted.
2) That a report how services would be impacted by savings be produced.
3) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
4) That the report be brought to Overview Select Committee prior to Full Council.


## 50.  DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Director of Finance submitted a report detailing the proposed Capital Programme for 2024/25.

The Chair directed the Commission to the relevant parts of the document to Culture and Neighbourhoods.

Key points included:

- This was a one-year programme of schemes from grants, borrowing and the sale of assets.  The programme was limited to one-year due to the uncertainty of resources, the impact of inflation and to ease pressure on revenue budgets.
- The Commission were given a rundown of expenditure relevant to Culture and Neighbourhoods, including:
  - £1 million for leisure centre refurbishment.

- o £200,000 for Park Depot relocation.
- o £48,000 for the relocation of the pest and dogs depot.
- o £245,000 for grounds maintenance equipment rendered.
- o £300,000 for the community garden gardens and allotments through the Growing Spaces project.
- o £195,000 for heritage interpretation panels
- o £75,000 for historic building grants.
- o £50,000 for festival decorations.
- The operational estate Maintenance Programme would help to maintain buildings out of which services operate.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and make comments. Key points included:

- In response to a query about potentially trying to empower local organisations with the knowledge and experience needed to take over and/or run assets, it was noted that there was a fundamental branch review of everything in the Council and the use of community organisations was a part of this.
- Further to this it was raised that if assets were sold off then that would result in a one-off payment to the Council, whereas if they were held by the Council and leased to organisation then the Council would hold the asset whilst also raising revenue.  In response to this it was noted that prior to any decision on asset sale, there would be consideration given to leasing.
- It was noted that in terms of service provision, it was sometimes possible for the third sector to help to deliver services on behalf of the Council, an example of this was the African Caribbean Centre where involvement with the voluntary sector had saved the council around £150,000 per year.  Additionally, there were many third sector groups that showed potential to work with the Council and they were being encouraged to come forward as the Council were keen to work with them.  Consideration was being given to whether such groups could be supported long-term, perhaps with a view to them eventually running a service (perhaps on behalf of the Council, however, this would take time. Additionally, before an asset went on the market, it was considered as to whether it could be run by a community group.
- The University of Leicester was being worked with to help understand the potential of community groups working with the Council.
- It was noted that Leicester's Shared Prosperity Fund programme funded a bid from the University of Leicester to work with social enterprises in the city to develop business plans, organisational capacity and skills. Additionally, there was another £350k from the SPF programme for bids from Community Asset Transfer organisations. This could support investment in buildings for energy efficiency, essential repairs, works that could enhance revenue earning etc.  This money could be spent in 2024/25.  This was outside the Capital Programme.
- In terms of value for money on leisure centres, membership was

increasing, so this indicated good investment. Energy efficiency was also being explored as a saving; an example was the solar arrays on Aylestone Leisure Centre. Customer satisfaction with leisure centres was good and there was a £0.5m overachievement in income as a result of an increase in usage linked to the capital scheme.

- It was requested that a report be brought to the Commission on engaging community organisations.

AGREED:

1) That the report be noted.
2) That a report on engaging community organisations be brought to the Commission.
3) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.
4) That the report be brought to Overview Select Committee prior to Full Council.


## 51. WORK PROGRAMME

Members of the Commission were invited to consider content of the work programme and were invited to make suggestions for additions as appropriate to be brought to future meetings.

It was noted that the next meeting of the commission was likely to be postponed until April.

It was noted that the task group on Ward Community Funding had met for the first time in January and would meet again in February.

The work programme was noted.


## 52. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further items of urgent business, the meeting finished at 18:18.

# Neighbourhoods & Culture Scrutiny Commission

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## Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Engagement Strategy Update

Date of Commission meeting**:** 25th April 2024

**Assistant City Mayor for Communities, Adult Learning, Jobs & Skills**

**Lead officer:** Andrew Shilliam, Director of Corporate Services

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## 1. Summary

This report provides an overview of the advancements and future direction of the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Engagement Strategy. It covers the implementation progress and plans for moving forward, building on the recommendations from the initial scrutiny conducted in September 2023. Additionally, the report includes a status update on the CrowdFund Leicester platform, highlighting its role in supporting community projects throughout the city, and updates the Commission on the arrangements we have in place for managing volunteering in the Council using our Assemble platform.

## 2. Recommended actions

The commission as recommended to:

2.1 Note the summary report, and

2.2 Make any recommendations for consideration to the Executive Lead and VCSE Engagement Team

## 3. VCSE Strategy and Delivery

3.1 Following the successful launch of the VCSE Engagement Strategy at Hansom Hall on November 28, where members of the sector, internal colleagues, and other sector partners provided valuable insights, we are moving forward to ensure active involvement from the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise (VCSE) community.

**Strategy Overview**

3.2 Our VCSE Engagement Strategy (Please see Appendix 1) serves as a full roadmap that outlines our goals, objectives, and the overarching direction for LCC when engaging with the VCSE sector up until 2027. Our six pledges, allow us to focus and adapt as and when needed with the changing trends nationally and locally where need for support is greatest.

3.3 Relating to each pledge are a series of strategic actions, created to translate the aims into tangible outcomes. These actions encompass a diverse range of initiatives spanning internal awareness, and stakeholder engagement.

3.4 To facilitate the effective execution of our strategy, we have developed an internal delivery plan that details the specific steps, timelines, and responsibilities associated with each action. This plan serves as a guiding framework for the VCSE Engagement Team, providing clarity on the sequence of activities and the resources required for

successful implementation. Through a coordinated approach, we aim to streamline processes, mitigate risks, regularly review, and evaluate success to optimise resource allocation to maximise our chances of achieving our strategic objectives.

3.5 Our strategy embodies our commitment to the VCSE sector and serves as a blueprint for driving organisational engagement with the sector. By aligning pledges with actionable delivery and implementing a robust delivery plan, we are delivering our strategic aims to create value for all stakeholders. We remain committed to transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement, recognising that the success of our strategy relies upon our collective efforts both internally and externally to support the sector in new and innovative ways.

3.6 Following the last commission in September 2023, this report will focus on three key areas: updating on recommendations from the previous Scrutiny commission, reviewing the progress of CrowdFund Leicester, and outlining recommendations; and providing a review and update on Internal Volunteering initiatives.

3.7 The VCSE will be a part of a strategic conversation:

3.7.1 In response to the feedback received, we are extending an opportunity for VCSE members to participate in reviewing the Delivery Plan aligned with the strategy. This inclusive approach aims to incorporate the sector's perspectives, ensuring that the actions and micro-actions outlined in the plan are reflective of the community's needs and aspirations. It is imperative that the sector plays a pivotal role in shaping and influencing the strategic direction.

3.7.2 To facilitate this new collaborative way of working, engagement meetings will be organised to gather input and feedback from VCSE members. These sessions will serve as a platform to discuss and refine the Delivery Plan, to give a sense of ownership within the sector.

3.7.3 Moreover, we intend to identify key members from these engagement meetings to form an External Champions Group these members will be from differing backgrounds and experience in the sector to ensure a voice for all approach. This group will convene quarterly to delve into pertinent topics such as upcoming events, important dates, and sector needs for infrastructure support. The objective is to establish a dynamic and ongoing dialogue mechanism that allows for continuous refinement and adaptation based on the evolving needs of the VCSE sector.

3.8 Opportunities for joint working between LCC and VCSE organisations on funding bids:

3.8.1 Now that LCC cannot be relied on for funding to the sector with the ongoing budget cuts it is important we are looking into varying venues to channel funding into the sector. An example, Leicester City Council's active participation on the "Making Local Lives Better" panel alongside the Community Foundation to direct funding to City groups. Our City of Leicester Education Fund, housed within this panel, offers a valuable resource for education projects designed by VCSE groups.

3.8.2 Despite it not being the largest fund, the City of Leicester Education Fund has made contributions to various initiatives within the VCSE sector. In the current year, this fund has supported projects such as DORCAS's FGM Awareness Project and the St Phillips Centre's interfaith relations project in schools. These endeavours underline

the fund's versatility and commitment to addressing critical issues within the community. This fund is currently sitting at £21k.

3.8.3 Internally, efforts are well underway with VCSE Champions to uncover additional funding streams that various service areas within LCC are aware of, with the goal of additional support for the VCSE sector. The VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme is one such initiative that is being explored for its potential to provide financial backing to relevant projects, brought to us by the Sustainability Team. And also exploring opportunities with the VRN using the leverage they have along with ours to put in a large-scale bid to the Lottery Fund to support groups that focus on violence reduction in the City.

3.9 Supporting community based VCSE organisations

3.9.1 Our role is evolving into that of facilitators, enabling sector outreach with internal service areas, fostering collaboration within the sector, and establishing partnerships with external stakeholders to provide more impactful support wider than the VCSE Engagement Team offer. Through engagements with the sector, Councillors, and internal colleagues, we are refining our focus on addressing the most critical needs.

3.9.2 Spanning a strategic horizon of three years, this approach underscores the importance of adaptability and attentive listening to the changing needs of the sector. Rather than a reactive stance, we are committed to an approach that is research-oriented and responsive, ensuring that our actions are well-informed and aligned with the identified needs. That we will back up with data from MyCake, ward profiles and our engagements with the VCSE sector.

3.9.3 The needs assessment process is designed to cater to the requirements of newer and smaller organisations within the VCSE sector. By providing longer-term support, particularly in the form of infrastructure support, and creating opportunities for larger, more established organisations to assist smaller counterparts, we aim to encourage these collaboration to help alleviate pressures on LCC.

3.9.4 The primary goal is to nurture a more self-sustaining sector where VCSE organisations, regardless of size, can thrive. Building confidence within VCSE groups is integral to empowering them to effectively support the communities they serve. Through strategic support, collaboration, and a proactive approach, we aspire to create an environment where the VCSE sector can flourish, contributing significantly to the well-being of communities in Leicester.

3.10 Developing the relationship between the VCSE and the Business sector

3.10.1 In the pursuit of fostering meaningful collaboration between the VCSE sector and the business community in Leicester, a business-focused event will be taking place Wednesday 29 May. The primary objective is to provide VCSE groups with insights into effective engagement strategies with the business sector. This initiative aligns with our strategy action to facilitate opportunities that promote interaction and collaboration between these two sectors.

3.10.2 A component of this initiative is the introduction of a business pledge campaign. This campaign aims to underscore the significance of the VCSE sector and emphasise the pivotal role that Business Partners can play in supporting,

celebrating, and collaborating with these groups. The campaign will aim to showcase how such collaborations can make a positive impact on communities, addressing the needs of the most vulnerable.

3.10.3 To ensure the success and widespread reach of this initiative, strategic partnerships have been forged with influential organisations, including Leicestershire Cares and Reaching People. These partners bring valuable knowledge and extensive networks to the table, enabling the maximization of outreach efforts across Leicester.

3.10.4 Inviting key collaborators such as the Chamber of Commerce, Leicestershire Cares and Reaching People will contribute its expertise to enhance the effectiveness of the initiative. Leveraging its established connections within the business sector, these partners can support with introductions between VCSE groups and potential Business Partners. This collaboration is pivotal in bridging the gap and fostering sustainable relationships.

3.11 For the VCSE team to engage more with Ward Councillors in delivering the strategy. Two initial meetings with Councillors were held on January 16 and January 30, with 17 Cllrs attending across both. To understand how we can strengthen ties between elected representatives and the VCSE sector. This meeting serves as a crucial starting point for fostering a more synergistic relationship, where Councillors can actively engage with the sector, and the VCSE Team gains a deeper understanding of the specific needs within their respective wards, as well as the impactful initiatives undertaken by VCSE groups at the localised ward level.

3.12 The key areas of focus from engaging with Councillors will be:

- Informed Decision-Making - by actively engaging with VCSE groups, Councillors can make more informed decisions that align with the needs and aspirations of their constituents.

- Enhanced Support for VCSE Initiatives - a closer working relationship will enable Councillors to provide targeted support to VCSE initiatives, contributing to their success and amplifying their positive impact on local communities.

- Effective Localised Solutions - understanding the localised needs of wards empowers the VCSE Team to design and implement initiatives that resonate with the unique challenges faced by each community, encouraging more meaningful and sustainable outcomes.

**Crowdfund Leicester**

4.1 CrowdFund Leicester in numbers.

4.1.1 Since the inception of the CrowdFund Leicester platform in 2017, a significant amount of funding has been raised, totalling £431,469 across 32 projects. Among these projects, 27 successfully met their fundraising targets, reflecting the value of the platform in facilitating community-driven initiatives.

4.1.2 Geographically, the projects are distributed across various areas of the city, with notable concentrations in Braunstone, Leicester City, and other neighbourhoods. Specifically, 29 projects were located in Leicester City, 1 in Broughton Astley, 1 in

Birstall and 1 in Glenfield and demonstrating a need from Ward Cllrs to help with reach within the Leicester community.

**Community Engagement Fund**

5.1   The Community Engagement Fund is a Mayoral fund that was awarded £100,000 and that from which pledges of up to £10,000 could be contributed to projects dependant on size and reach within the community. We have around £40,000 left within this fund. This is not an annual rolling fund.

5.2   The projects CEF looks to fund are those that make a real difference to the quality of life for some of our communities particularly those from underserves and hard to reach communities.

5.3   Additionally, the Community Engagement Fund has played a crucial role in supporting these projects. This fund has supported 20 projects, showcasing its significance in bolstering community-driven endeavours.

5.4   On average, the Community Engagement Fund provides support amounting to between 10- 33% of the total project funding, contribution to project success. In comparison to other council led platforms hosted by SpaceHive Crowdfund Leicester sits below average with pledge funding to projects. But this is due to a smaller fund total this isn't a rolling fun and also to be in line with our VCSE Engagement Strategy of not being relied on for funding and encouraging projects to reach new audiences and diversify their income from other sources.

5.5   Looking ahead, our CFL pipeline and Spring funding round opened on 11th April. With this round hoping to drive more interest and enhance engagement of Leicester community projects driving positive change and innovation through the CrowdFund Leicester platform. There were 43 attendees in the launch webinar.

5.6   There are two funding rounds per year, a Spring and an Autumn round. Each funding round features a launch-style webinar, jointly promoted by SpaceHive and LCC, aimed at expanding outreach. These webinars explain CrowdFund Leicester and the crowdfunding process, share success stories, and provide insights to determine project suitability. Following submission to our Spacetive platform, projects undergo review by SpaceHive. Upon approval, SpaceHive facilitates project launch and offers support and guidance to achieve crowdfunding targets. Projects meeting the eligibility criteria for The City Mayor's Community Engagement Fund can apply for it. The VCSE Engagement Team reviews these applications, with final approval granted by The City Mayor. Approved projects receive a 'pledge' visible on their project page towards their total funding goal.

5.7   We will increase our involvement in the support sessions with SpaceHive, providing localised knowledge, insights, and potential city connections to assist projects in reaching their targets.

5.8   We will work closely with the Comms team to help promote wider than our own network to improve reach and also send comms to Ward Cllrs to share within their wards as and when appropriate.

5.9   Recommendations to Enhance Project Experience for CrowdFund Leicester Project Leads:

- Provide comprehensive guidance and training sessions for project leads on effective crowdfunding strategies, campaign management, and promotion techniques. These sessions should cover aspects such as setting realistic goals, creating compelling campaign narratives, utilising social media effectively, and engaging with potential backers.

- Offer personalised support and guidance from SpaceHive and Leicester City Council representatives throughout the crowdfunding process. This could include regular check-ins, personalised feedback on campaign strategies, and troubleshooting assistance to address any challenges project leads may encounter.

- Curate a repository of crowdfunding resources, including articles, case studies, and tutorials, accessible to project leads. These resources should cover various aspects of crowdfunding, such as campaign planning, communication strategies, and donor engagement, providing valuable insights and tips for success.

- Encourage project leads to leverage existing tools and platforms beyond SpaceHive for campaign promotion and donor engagement. This could include utilising social media platforms, email marketing tools, and community forums to expand reach and attract potential backers.

- Facilitate collaborative promotion efforts among project leads, encouraging cross-promotion of campaigns within the CrowdFund Leicester community. By fostering a spirit of collaboration and support among project leads, campaigns can benefit from increased visibility and engagement.

- Establish feedback mechanisms for project leads to provide input on their experience with the crowdfunding process, including suggestions for improvement. Regular surveys or feedback sessions can help identify areas where additional support or resources may be needed, ensuring continuous refinement of the project experience.

- Recognise and celebrate the achievements of successful projects through our own channels, including social media, newsletters, and events. Highlighting success stories not only provides recognition for project leads but also inspires others within the community to pursue their crowdfunding endeavours.

- Provide ongoing support and resources to project leads beyond the completion of their crowdfunding campaigns. This could include assistance with project implementation, networking opportunities with potential collaborators or funders, and access to additional funding opportunities to sustain project impact in the long term.

- By implementing these recommendations, CrowdFund Leicester project leads can receive enhanced support and guidance throughout their crowdfunding journey, ultimately increasing the success and impact of community-focused projects in Leicester through The CrowdFund Leicester platform.

**Enabling Volunteers across Leicester City Council through Assemble: Focus on Volunteering within Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment**

6.1 Assemble serves as Leicester City Council's corporate system for managing and supporting volunteers. While pre-configured with global settings for the Council, it offers flexibility for each service to adapt the system according to their specific processes. The system employs a team structure to ensure access to relevant information for each service area. Services can also choose to advertise their volunteering opportunities to existing Council volunteers and the public. Additionally, it facilitates easy identification of individuals volunteering for multiple services.

**User Types within Assemble**

Volunteer and Non-Volunteer Categories:

Within Assemble, users fall into two categories: volunteers and non-volunteers. Volunteers are individuals engaged in volunteering activities, while non-volunteers typically serve as volunteer coordinators, supervisors, or managers responsible for managing volunteers and activities.

**Current User Statistics:**

As of now, Assemble hosts 2,510 volunteers and 56 non-volunteers.

**Role of Volunteer Coordinator/Manager:**

Individuals with the job title of volunteer coordinator/manager are tasked with recruiting and overseeing volunteers. Their responsibilities include creating role descriptions, managing application forms, and engaging volunteers in activities.

**Managerial Access and Responsibilities:**

Upon approval of volunteers, coordinators/managers gain access to oversee their team's activities. This involves various tasks such as viewing profiles, assigning tasks, providing recognition, sending messages, and creating events.

**Dashboard Features:**

Managers utilise the dashboard to monitor team activities, including messages, application statuses, tasks, available opportunities, and notifications.

**Analytics Function:**

The analytics function allows coordinators/managers to assess team performance by filtering records to analyse volunteer hours, training needs, outcomes, and yearly metrics. Data can be exported for reporting purposes.

**Volunteer Capabilities**

Self-Management Features:

Volunteers have the capability to review and control their personal information, activities, and schedules. They can access training materials, submit expense claims, communicate with supervisors, and participate in events.

**Flexibility in Roles:**

Volunteers can join multiple teams and undertake various roles, enabling them to contribute autonomously across different areas.

**Available Opportunities**

Currently, there are 13 advertised opportunities on Assemble, covering a range of areas including Environmental initiatives, Youth Justice, Independent Children's services, Neighbourhood Services, and external VCSE opportunities.

**Opportunity Management:**

Managers can set minimum and maximum volunteer thresholds for each opportunity, enabling effective management of volunteer cohorts.

**Engagement with Partner Organisations**

Supporting VCSE Groups:

While prioritizing internal volunteering initiatives, we recognise the importance of collaborating with local VCSE groups, as outlined in the VCSE Engagement Strategy.

Partner Organisation Feature:

Assemble facilitates collaboration with external organisations by allowing them to post opportunities on the platform. We've supported 4 organisations thus far and are committed to enhancing visibility through networking and corporate channels.

Overall, the revisions aim to enhance clarity and readability while maintaining the integrity of the original content.

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1-** VCSE Engagement Strategy PDF VCSE Strategy 2023-27 (leicester.gov.uk)

## 6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

| N/A |
| --- |

6.2 Legal implications

| N/A |
| --- |

6.3 Equalities implications

| N/A |
| --- |

6.4 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. As service delivery generally contributes to the council's carbon emissions, any impacts can be managed through measures such as encouraging sustainable staff travel behaviours, using buildings efficiently and following sustainable procurement guidance, as applicable to the service and any changes implemented.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

# Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise

Engagement strategy: 2023-2027

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Leicester
City Council

Leicestershire Cares

Front cover: St Philip's Centre

# Contents

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Cllr Mustafa Malik

# Foreword

Leicester's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector makes a distinctive contribution to the city and has long been a valued partner to Leicester City Council and other public bodies, providing a range of services, many of them on our behalf.

These groups and organisations both enrich our lives and offer much needed support to people, families, communities, and neighbourhoods that experience economic inequalities.

Through promotion of the arts, culture, education, the environment, festivals and events, heritage, sport and tourism; they help make Leicester an attractive, dynamic, and progressive place to live, work, study in and visit.

The challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions made the number of vulnerable people in the city more evident and showed us just how important our VCSE sector is to our residents for local support and assistance.

Citizens stepped in to help each other, connect with the VCSE and engage in partnership with the council and other bodies and organisations. This experience has taught us much about our reliance on each other.

I believe that the council, the local VCSE sector and those that make up the wider civil society share a responsibility to maintain, channel and direct that sense of engagement, that willingness to get involved. I am glad to say that we address this directly in our new strategy.

Likewise, we must all make the effort to better understand the many pressures this sector faces such as the ongoing impact of government austerity, reduction in public spending, the negative economic impact from Brexit and the current cost of living crisis. This has resulted in a greater number of people seeking assistance from VCSE groups and organisations.

We recognise the need for the council to have a more consider approach on how we engage with the local VCSE sector groups and organisations so that we find ways to reconnect, refocus, and rebuild our relationship.

I have no doubt that by doing all we can to activate and enhance our relations with this sector we will be in a much better position to respond to challenges now and in the future. And we must do that together, by being honest with what can and can't be accomplished, and by making the best use of our respective resources.

**Cllr Mustafa Malik**
Assistant City Mayor
Communities, adult learning, jobs and skills

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# Introduction

The aim of this strategy is for Leicester City Council to reconnect, refocus and rebuild our relationship with the local VCSE sector. It details how the council will engage with organisations and groups in Leicester for mutually beneficial outcomes with a focus on the actions we'll take to establish a strong foundation for long-term gains.

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Afro Innovation Group

Since the start of Conservative rule in 2010, financial cuts from central government have hit charities hard and placed a huge pressure on local authorities to deliver services with less funding.

As a result, the council continues to have to make tough decisions on how best to respond to the reduction in government grants, rising inflation, and additional support needed for residents because of the cost-of-living crisis.

Unfortunately, this also means the council can no longer provide the same level of financial support as it has in the past to our local VSCE organisations and groups.

Now more than ever we must work together to establish an effective and sustainable local VCSE sector that can survive these challenges as well as utilise new and existing opportunities for a positive future.

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## Overall, our VCSE sector engagement strategy intends to:

LOROS Hospice

Improve our understanding and awareness of the **issues faced by the VCSE sector**

Clearly **identify the VCSE groups and organisations** we directly work with now and should do in future

**Help us to better understand** the role these groups and organisations play, and services they provide

Broker better relationships **between VCSE groups and businesses** for mutual benefit

Reinforce and uphold the **importance of civil society**

Champion the important **role of the VCSE sector**, both within the council and with external partners

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**Improve communication** between the council and the VCSE sector

**Gather and use data** and information about the local, regional, and national VCSE sector

Provide **more targeted support** to smaller, fledgling, or newly established VCSE organisations

Provide tailored and needs-based **infrastructure support**

Be more **organised and coordinated** across the council in engaging with the VCSE sector

**Improve and promote** volunteer opportunities

The desired outcome for all involved is that the local VCSE sector becomes resilient, sustainable, and viable within the wider context of civil society and that the council plays its part as one of many principal enablers of that outcome.

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Leicestershire Cares

# The VCSE sector in Leicester

The VCSE sector plays a crucial role in Leicester and in many cases is a key partner in delivering services to residents and communities across the city.

VCSE groups and organisations differ in size, nature of their work, activities and services they provide. Generally, it includes groups and organisations such as:

- Community associations
- Community groups
- Co-operatives
- 'Friends of' groups
- Faith organisations
- Housing associations
- Grant-making trusts
- Registered charities
- Charitable incorporated organisations
- Tenants' and residents' group
- Social enterprises
- Community/grassroots-based sports clubs and groups
- Environmental, arts and heritage organisations
- Non-constituted groups of residents working together

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**DORCAS**

# How big is the VCSE sector?

Our understanding of the VCSE sector in Leicester is an evolving one, and we are committed to improving our knowledge so we can draw more meaningful insights and better direct our engagement with the local VCSE sector.

We do know that VSCE organisations and groups provide a wide range of services and activities that address a variety of needs in Leicester, enabling it to be a thriving city.

These groups and organisations can be broken down into the following sub-sectors:

- Social care
- Health
- Religion or faith
- Philanthropy and volunteering
- International aid
- Environment
- Education
- Culture and sport
- Community, employment, and housing
- Law, advocacy, and politics
- Business and professional

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**Leicester Diamonds Baseball Club**

# How the strategy was developed

This strategy has been developed by engaging with a range of VCSE organisations in the city. We've taken the time to hear from the sector, then used these findings to set out our pledges and actions for the future. We plan to continue this engagement and fully recognise that this is crucial to ensure we do the best for our residents and communities.

## Dialogue sessions

We held more than a dozen 'open dialogue sessions' in public venues across Leicester. These sessions allowed us to engage face-to-face with people who work for and lead VCSE groups and organisations to learn first-hand what mattered most in their own areas.



**Pakistan Youth & Community Association**

## One-to-one interviews

We held a series of one-to-one interviews with individuals from 13 VCSE groups and organisations, seeking their views regarding the potential benefits, outputs and outcome of our intended strategy. The following points came up most frequently:

- Infrastructure support

- Partnerships

- Sources of funding, tendering and contracts

- Attracting younger people into volunteering

- Capacity building, including investing in staff, sharing skills and assets

- Council staff being aware of and valuing the VCSE contribution to Leicester.

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Volunteers from Freeths with Leicestershire Cares

## Topic sessions

We held a series of online sessions that were open to all VCSE organisations in Leicester. The five 'focus' topics discussed were based on our previous work and were:

- Finance and funding
- Partnership and collaboration
- Civil society
- Infrastructure support
- Volunteering

## Survey of VCSE groups

We invited all VCSE groups and organisations known to us to take part in the survey, to gather their views on the infrastructure support provided by the council.

## Review of VCSE strategies

We reviewed the strategies from other councils throughout England seeking good practice in how they engage with and support their local VCSE sectors. We focused on strategies from local authorities with similar characteristics to Leicester.

## VCSE support organisations

We gathered information from national agencies and organisations directly involved with the sector, most significantly, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) – of which the council is a public sector member, and also the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and Locality.

## Internal discussions with council service leads

We spoke with services and teams in the council that work closely with the sector, to better understand the services and support we commission, the grant-aided work that takes place, as well as other forms of engagement and contact with the VCSE sector that transpires.

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# Our priorities

The VCSE sector in Leicester is ever changing with newer, smaller, organisations and groups forming on a weekly basis.

We must be able to support these groups to become sustainable and thrive in our city. And although we can't commit to the level of funding as we have in previous years, it is clear we can support in other ways such as through our business connections, providing needs-based infrastructure support, upskilling VCSE groups where we can, volunteer promotion, and creating ways for organisations to collaborate.

Following our engagement with the VCSE sector to shape this strategy, it is clear what our priorities for the upcoming years need to be and our pledges to the organisations and groups in the sector.

This is a pivotal time for the VCSE sector, and we are committed to doing everything we can to refocus, reconnect and rebuild the best possible relationship with it.

**The Spark Arts for Children**
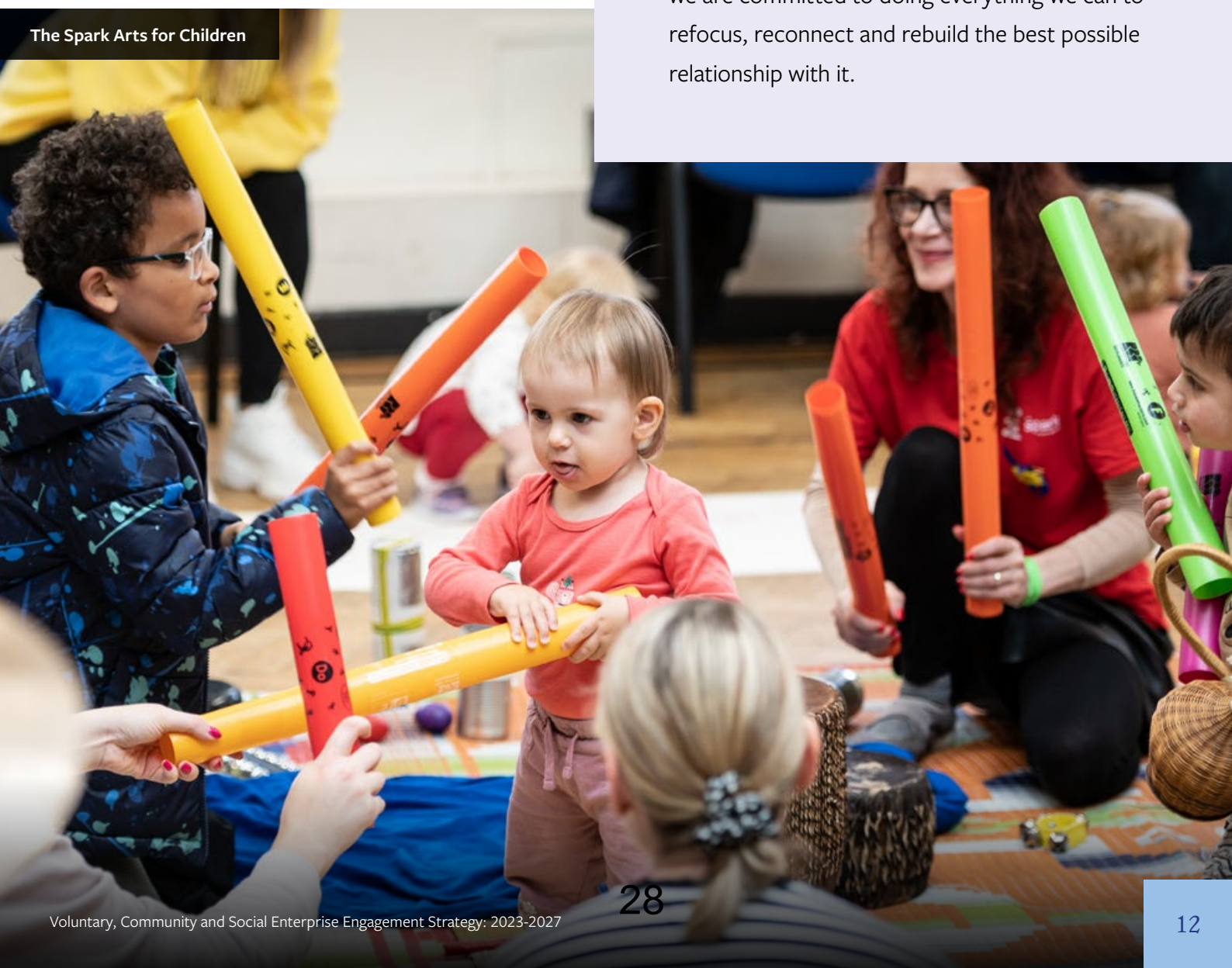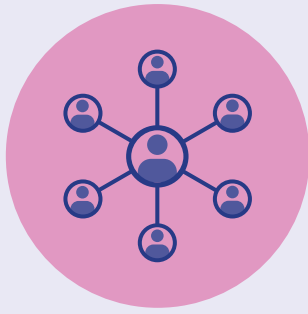
**Reconnect**          **Refocus**          **Rebuild**

# VCSE sector priorities at a glance

— ## Organisations in our civil society

Nurture a more collaborative civil society

— ## Insights, importance, and impact

Understand the sector through better use of data and information

— ## Funding

Help the sector to be more financially robust

— ## Infrastructure support

Identify the sector needs through peer review and support

— ## Volunteering

Develop and help to sustain volunteer opportunities

— ## Businesses

Facilitate relationships between the sector and businesses for mutual benefits

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# Organisations in our civil society

## Our pledge

We will promote the notion of civil society and recognise its fundamental role in developing the best sense of self and community for all. In doing so we'll recognise the ecosystem of social and community activists, agencies, groups, and organisations that are independent of government (local or national) and look for ways to work more closely with the sector to benefit our communities.

## Our actions

+ Develop a fuller picture of key groups and organisations in our local civil society and find ways of working in a more coordinated way with these organisations to address issues of mutual interest.

+ Work with anchor groups and organisations in each of our wards to maximise local impact.

+ Champion the concept of civil society, making it an important part of internal and external discussions and activities.

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# Insights, importance, and impact

## Our pledge

We will champion the sector inside and outside the council by promoting its activities, worth, and benefit. We will enable this by gathering more accurate, current, and reliable information from the sector, locally and nationally, and will make informed decisions based on the data and information collected. We will also share this data and information with VCSE organisations.

## Our actions

+ Coordinate planning and working across the council's divisions and service areas in relation to local VCSE groups, organisations, projects, and services.

+ Establish better lines of communication between the council and the VCSE sector so that we can share relevant information and collaborate more effectively with groups and organisations, where possible, to build meaningful relationships across our city.

+ Develop better ways of working more closely with VCSE organisations, link up more regularly, and work with a variety of representatives from the local VCSE sector and other civil society partners on important matters, and especially when reviewing progress of this strategy.

+ Improve our mutual understanding of assets held by us which are used by the sector, and those that could be used by the VCSE sector, to contribute towards common goals.

+ Improve our mutual understanding of the contribution of the VCSE sector to the economy and annually share this information with the local sector and the city.

+ Set up an outreach programme for elected members, to familiarise them with the diverse range of groups and organisations in the sector that are working with and/or situated in their wards.

+ Work with partners, share and make use of different sources of information, data and intelligence about the local and national VCSE sector.

+ Establish systems within the council that enable us to gather, analyse, and understand data more intelligently, to direct our work with the VCSE sector for the good of the city.

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# Funding

## Our pledge

We will do everything possible to help the sector become more financially robust, paying particular attention to micro (less than £10K p.a.), small (less than £100k p.a.), and fledgling or newly established VCSE groups and organisations. As the council can no longer be the funder of first choice, we have to rethink the role we play in relation to the sector and enable it to be funded and supported in different ways.

## Our actions

+ Make use of Crowdfund Leicester as an effective vehicle for financial support of local VCSE sector groups and organisations.

+ Engage with and establish stronger relations/awareness of local, regional and national funders.

+ Put together a toolkit to display all relevant funding opportunities in an accessible way for the local sector.

+ Explore ways of making it easier for VCSE organisations to provide services on our behalf.

+ Look at how VCSE partners, the council and other public organisations could pool funding, resources, and capacity to tackle issues.

+ Encourage joint fundraising among local sector groups and organisations for activities and projects of common benefit.

+ Take the lead as the local voice in lobbying national government for effective funding of the sector.

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# Infrastructure support

## Our pledge

Put in place a fair and transparent process of assessing VCSE support needs and matching them with appropriate sources of support and assistance, either from our own resources or through other providers.

## Our actions

+ Identify and assess the needs of individual VCSE groups and organisations and meet these with tailored support. This will range from information and advice that is already freely available from local and national experts or peer sources to more direct grant-based or commissioned support.

+ Identify and work with local, regional, and occasionally national providers who can meet specific infrastructure support needs of applicant groups and organisations from the local VCSE sector.

+ Establish a VCSE peer review and support process.

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2Funky Arts

Leicester Pride

## Volunteering

### Our pledge

We will help develop, improve, and sustain efficient volunteering policies and processes within the sector. We will provide support where we can and share learning with groups and organisations to help recruit, manage and retain volunteers. This will create a connected volunteering ecosystem in Leicester and will encourage better volunteering opportunities to be developed.

## Our actions

+ Lead by example in recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers.

+ Work with VCSE groups and organisations, businesses, and other agencies in Leicester to create a twelve-month action plan to raise the profile of volunteering in the city.

+ Use Assemble as an accessible digital platform to promote and update volunteering opportunities from local VCSE groups and organisations.

+ Draw on local and national examples of good practice to enhance the quality of the volunteer experience and consider new models for volunteering, such as incentivisation of volunteers in appropriate settings.

+ Find ways of sustaining and channelling community spirit shown by grassroots volunteering initiatives that came to the fore during lockdown (such as, mutual aid groups; food and medicine pick-up; keeping an eye on vulnerable neighbours).

+ Encourage our council colleagues to volunteer with local groups, organisations, activities, and projects.

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# Businesses

## Our pledge

We will broker and facilitate relationships between the VCSE sector and businesses, employers and investors to maximise mutual benefits. This takes place at some level now, but we want to make it more regular, reliable and coordinated to be much more beneficial to all.

## Our actions

+ Promote more realistic options for VCSE groups and organisations to develop commercially and sustainably (for example, to establish a 'trading arm' for goods and services).

+ Look for opportunities for the local VCSE sector to work together with local businesses for mutually beneficial ends.

+ Identify opportunities for the local VCSE sector within government initiatives that apply in Leicester, such as the Levelling Up agenda.

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Leicester
City Council

# Leicester City Council
# Scrutiny Review

**Scrutiny**

## Examining Ward Community Funding

## A Review Report of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

## April 2024

Leicester
City Council

# Contents

# Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

**Participating Commission Members**

Councillor Raffiq Mohammed (Chair)
Councillor Nags Agath
Councillor Teresa Aldred
Councillor Yogesh Chauhan
Councillor Elaine Halford

**Evidence to the Commission was provided by:**

Lee Warner - Head of Neighbourhood Services

## FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the final report from the informal scrutiny Task Group on Ward Community Funding, and the way it is distributed and allocated, for the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission.

Ward funding had been, and continues to be, vitally important in providing financial backing for community projects that help bring together our diverse communities and provide services that are so valued by the residents of Leicester.

Our work focussed on how to most effectively use the funding allocated to each Ward and how to ensure that the money went to the most deserving organisations and was used in ways that gave value for money and provided optimum benefit and enjoyment to the people of the Ward concerned.

The work of the group was very focussed, efficient and concise.  We managed to make speedy progress, and following detailed discussion of the issue from members and officers with a good knowledge of the issues at hand, we were able to produce some pertinent and useful recommendations that we hope will be taken forward.  I am particularly thankful to Head of Neighbourhood Services, Lee Warner, for his insights and expertise and the evidence he provided that helped us gain an even better understanding of the processes of the application process for ward funding and the delivery of the community projects funded by it.

We hope that the recommendations we have made will make the process of applying for, and the allocation of ward funding clearer, more efficient and allocated more effectively to provide optimal benefit to the ward and value for money.



**Councillor Raffiq Mohammed**
**Vice-Chair of Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission**

1.      **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.1      Background to the Review**

1.1.1      At the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission on 26 September 2023, it was noted that each Ward received the same amount of funding, regardless of the size and number of Ward Councillors.

1.1.2      It was also noted that further work needed to be completed on the guidelines for who was able to apply for ward funding and the amount of funding issued. Councillor Dempster – Assistant City Mayor for Education, Libraries and Community Centres, suggested undertaking some informal scrutiny with Ward Councillors or as a Scrutiny Commission.

1.1.3      Following discussions between Cllr Raffiq Mohammed – Vice-Chair of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission, and the Head of Neighbourhood Services, it was decided to convene a task group to consider: The allocation of ward funding considering ward size/number of elected members, a possible review of guidelines and criteria to expand on purpose of ward funding, outcomes i.e. ward priorities and assessment of whether these are met by an application, a possible review of information required in bid assessments to support decision making, and the effect of multi-ward applications and how city-wide groups are funded.

1.1.4      The review was set up solely to examine issues around funding and not to examine the operation of Ward Community Meetings in general.

1.1.5      The Group held an initial session to look at the background of Ward funding including current guidelines and practice and how they wanted to go about examining the above issues and what evidence they wished to examine. This was followed by a session examining the evidence and drawing out recommendations.

1.1.6      This review serves as an example of a short, focused piece of work that allowed members to look at an issue in more depth than they would in a formal Scrutiny Commission.  Sections 2.4 and 2.5 set out more detail of the evidence gathered and summarises how conclusions were reached.

**1.2      RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.2.1      At the informal meeting on 20 February 2024, members endorsed the following set of proposed recommendations:

   a) That wording be added to the Ward Community Funding Policy to clarify that:

1. Applications demonstrating self-sustainability, value for money and in particular the use of match funding are highly encouraged.
2. The size and resources of the applicant are likely to be considered when determining the merits of a grant application.
3. New applicants (within each financial year) will be prioritised to support as many different community organisations as possible.

   This guidance will help officers to present information on bids back to Councillors on the assessment form.

b) That information in the guidance to let applicants know where they can find support be made clearer and moved to Section 2, to encourage applications from groups who are not used to the process.

c) To provide tools for Councillors to establish Ward priorities – the budget setting sheet, and to include a prompt for officers to assess bids against ward priorities where these have been set.

d) For prompts to be added to the Assessment Form template for officers to record the size/resources/financial standing of applicants – to enable Ward Councillors to assess the status and resources of different organisations.

e) Ward Community Engagement Officers to encourage information for larger bids to be more detailed.

f) Following any changes made, training be given to Ward Councillors on the new procedures.

g) That the current three deadline dates for considering applications over £500 be dropped.

2.      **REPORT**

**2.1      Review Rationale**

2.1.1      It had been noted that all wards received £18,000 annually for funding community projects.  This is regardless of the population of the ward, its geographical size, or whether it was a two or three-member ward. Following discussion on the matter between the Vice-Chair of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission and the Head of Neighbourhood Services, it was decided to undertake some informal scrutiny to examine whether funding might be distributed differently in order to take account of the different populations and geographies of wards.

2.1.2    Further to this, it had been raised that larger charitable organisations often had more resources than smaller local community groups and organisations, therefore it was decided to review the guidelines and criteria to expand on the purpose of ward funding.

2.1.3    In terms of outcomes and meeting Ward priorities, it was seen as necessary to consider value for money in terms of how many people would benefit from an organisation receiving Ward funding.  It was also raised that Wards had certain priorities, and as such there was scope for prioritising applications that helped the Ward to meet these priorities.

2.1.4    It was apparent that certain events funded through Ward funding benefitted people from other Wards, and in some cases people from across the city, particularly with events held in the city centre (Castle Ward).  Therefore, there was scope for organisations applying for funding from multiple wards, perhaps beyond, three Wards which organisations are currently limited to applying to.


**2.2**    **Review Approach**

2.2.1    An initial discussion was held between the Vice-Chair of Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission (as Chair of the work), the Head of Neighbourhood Services, the Governance Support Manager and Senior Governance Support Officer to establish the scope of the review in terms of the aspects of Ward funding it aimed to look at.  It also discussed how the task group would be compiled and what each meeting would look at.

2.2.2    The first meeting of the task group examined the following issues that had been identified by the Chair of the task group:
- Allocation of ward funding considering ward size/number of elected members.
- Guidelines and criteria to expand on purpose of ward funding.
- consideration of outcomes - ward priorities and assessment of whether these are met by an application.
- Information required in bid assessments to support decision making.
- The effect of multi-ward applications and how city-wide groups are funded.


2.2.3    A second meeting was convened to consider the outcomes of the first meeting.  Namely the following areas:
- How the budget is distributed and allocated given the populations of wards,
- The possibility of increasing the amount that can be carried forward,
- Guidelines and policy – additional information and ward priorities.

- The application process – the possibility of obtaining more financial information from organisations so as to assess their resources and their need for funding, with a view to making formal recommendations.
- The members were given the documentation appended to help inform their consideration.

## 2.3    Current Arrangements

2.3.1    Currently, all Wards receive £18,000 which can be used to support activities, events and projects that bring benefits to that ward.  All Wards receive the same amount regardless of the population or geographic area of the Ward.  These arrangements have been in place since before Neighbourhood Services took over Ward Funding over a decade ago.

2.3.2    Applications are considered that are made by individuals, community groups, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies, and partners, that live, work, or have any other interest in the ward.

2.3.3    There is no council-wide upper limit for ward funding applications, but some ward councillors set limits for applications in their wards.

2.3.4    Elected Members also have the flexibility to make local arrangements for their ward to set limits on how much funding can be allocated to each application.

2.3.5    Applications can be made to a maximum of three wards, for which applicants must be able to demonstrate benefits spanning across all the wards.

2.3.6    There was currently an option to carry over 10% of the Ward budget into the next municipal year if Councillors have unallocated budget at the end of the financial year.  However, all of the budget needed to be spent and closed by the end of an election year.

## 2.4    Evidence Gathering

2.4.1    The group agreed that evidence could be largely provided by the service and from the Councillors involved.  This was a focussed exercise to quickly gain further insight, rather than seeking the input of a range of stakeholders over a longer period of time.

2.4.2    To assist with their consideration of potential changes, members were shown the following documents: A breakdown of ward population and

funding, the Ward Community Funding Policy 2023, the Assessment Form Template, the Ward Funding Application Form, the Evaluation Form and the Ward Budget Profile (as appended).

2.4.3    The pros and cons of increasing the amount of ward funding that can be carried forward each financial year above the current 10% permitted were discussed; one of the pros being that it could avoid the loss of unspent funding.

2.4.4    Carry-over was exceptional due to the need to close accounts at the end of the financial year, although the Head of Finance advised that 10% could continue to be carried over where this was necessary.

2.4.5    It is unusual for Wards to lose unallocated money over and above 10% of the annual budget as most was spent within the financial year.

2.4.6    Allowing a larger carry-over would allow saving for larger projects on a longer term, however, having a lower carry-over promotes more funding for a wider range of smaller projects.

2.4.7    The current funding policy document did not currently have much information in terms of ward priorities, and whilst there was some explanation of what the funding was and what would not be funded, it was suggested that there perhaps needed to be more explicit guidance to suggest that smaller local not-for-profit groups would be a priority, recognising that larger groups had more resources and other funding streams.  Conversely, Councillors do not necessarily want to put off larger self-sustaining charity organisations as they often had a positive impact on the ward.

2.4.8    It was noted that Ward Community Engagement Officers were often consulted by Councillors to assess the merits and appropriateness of a bid.

2.4.9    It was noted that funding applications in a ward could often benefit other wards.  For example, an application may be received form an organisation in a neighbouring ward and supported on the basis that residents of the ward being applied to would make use of what was being bid for.  Other examples were given by members including the funding of a float for the Caribbean Carnival being granted by Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields Ward, and the funding for events based on Victoria Park and Spinney Hills Park granted by Stoneygate Ward as the Ward did not have similar parks for such events within its boundaries.

2.4.10   It was noted that some Wards explicitly prioritised funding within their own boundaries and bids that would benefit their own Ward directly. This was the case in Braunstone Park and Rowley Fields.

2.4.11  With regard to the suggestion of emphasising ward priorities in the policy, it was raised that it was necessary to be mindful of how this was positioned as different wards may set priorities in different ways. It was also suggested that putting such information in the guidelines might discourage smaller and less experienced organisations from making valuable applications because they may not appreciate how they might align with the wider strategic priorities for the ward.

2.4.12  With the aid of the updated Assessment form (Appendix B) it was demonstrated that tools and mechanisms could be put into place in terms of budgeting priorities which could be shared with Councillors at the beginning of the year. This can include prompts on the assessment sheets and budgeting tools to assist Councillors to reflect their priorities. Having this information in the guidelines for Councillors would help the Ward Councillors to monitor ward budget spend against their priorities.

2.4.13  A full audit of the application process had been undertaken in January 2023 and significant reassurance had been given around the procedures in place.

2.4.14  Some Ward Councillors researched the organisations in further depth when assessing applications to assess their suitability.

**2.5     Review Findings**

2.5.1   Any change in the way Wards were funded would need to remain within the existing overall budget. Further to this, redistribution of the overall budget (i.e. larger Wards receiving more funding) would likely result in smaller Wards having their budgets decrease. This could be detrimental as it could be that a Ward, despite being small, could have a high need for community funding due to deprivation in the area.

2.5.2   Criteria for prioritising applications could include value for money and the number of people the application would benefit.

2.5.3   Additional information being added to the guidance encouraging match funding and value for money should be considered. For example, an the number of residents benefitting from the project would be one measure of value for money.

2.5.4   A suggestion was made that the application process could be broken down into applications for less than £500 and applications for more than £500, with applications for under £500 requiring less information and applications for over £500 being more extensive.

2.5.5      Ward priorities set by Ward Councillors, could be considered more easily with the aid of budget setting tools when considering applications.

2.5.6      Community Ward Engagement Officers support Councillors, using their research and experience to help assess the merits and appropriateness of a bid. Further information could be brought forward to the assessment forms to assist Councillors in their considerations.

2.5.7      In terms of making decisions as to where the need is, it is necessary to consider the need and the size of the organisation applying. Supporting information could be collected on the application form to help assess the needs of the organisation and the target beneficiaries of the project.

**Benchmarking**

2.5.8      Desk based research was undertaken to explore any similar schemes which operate in other Councils. Whilst there were a small number of schemes which could be found, these operated on smaller budgets when compared to the Leicester scheme. Examples include:

2.5.9      Newcastle operates a ward community fund with a budget of £239,000 allocated across 26 wards. The minimum amount considered for an application is £150.

2.5.10      Staffordshire county councillors have funding available to support a community activities. Each county councillor has to £2,500 to allocate to community projects.

2.5.11      Heatons & Reddish Area Committee in Stockport delegates £3000 to each ward to allow Community Groups and other non-commercial organisations to apply for contributions toward funding for projects within the community.

2.5.12      Doncaster allocates £3,000 to each ward. The scheme was introduced in 2020 during the lockdown.

**2.6      Summary of Task Group Conclusions**

2.6.1      Given that lots of applications for smaller projects were often received, it was decided to continue with the allowance of a 10% carry-over.

2.6.2      Match funding was strongly encouraged, especially for larger self-sustaining charity organisations. This may be non-monetary such as matching funding received with volunteer hours or similar.

2.6.3    With regard to multiple applications within the same year, it was suggested that first-time applicants within year should be prioritised over applicants who had already received funding in the same financial year. The idea of second applications only being considered at the end of the financial year was decided against as this could create a bottleneck of applications.

2.6.4    When the practical, logistical and administrative issues of expanding the number of wards that could be applied to above the three currently permitted, it was decided that the current situation be maintained.

2.6.5    Ward councillors could set as one of their priorities at the beginning of the year that applications from their own wards and perhaps neighbouring wards would be prioritised.

2.6.6    It was decided not to develop cross city funding for communities of interest as opposed to ward based communities as this moves away from the more individualised, ward funding remit.

2.6.7    Information in the guidance to let people know where they can find support could be made clearer.  This could help people who would be otherwise hesitant to fill out the form, and also, should larger organisations ask for support, it will help the Ward Community Engagement Officers to assess the suitability of the application.

2.6.8    Prompts were suggested on the assessment form for Ward Community Engagement Officers to help them assess a bid, including the category that the bid fell into, whether the bid had audited accounts, whether the organisation had paid staff and whether the activity would take place without funding.

2.6.9    The application form will be the same for bids of under £500 and above £500, however, WCEOs should encourage information for larger bids to be more detailed, and support organisations to supply the required level of detail before this is presented to ward councillors.

## 3   Financial, Legal and Other Implications

### 3.1      Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of the recommendations in this report. Given the financial pressures facing the authority, it is not considered appropriate to extend the existing flexibilities in relation to carrying over unspent funding from one year to the next.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance, Ext 37 4004

**3.2      Legal Implications**

No direct legal implications.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister, Ext 37 1401

**3.3      Equality Implications**

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

We need to be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, we must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the options in the report and, in particular, the proposed option; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.

Protected characteristics under the public sector equality duty are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Each ward is allocated a yearly budget which can be used to support projects that bring benefits to the community within the ward and encourages local people and organisations to promote or improve wellbeing in their neighbourhoods. Ward funding continues to be vitally important and aims to support stronger, successful communities by making grants available to local voluntary, community, and self-help groups and projects.  The funding can support the fostering of good relations by providing financial backing for community projects that help bring together diverse communities and provide services that are valued by the residents of Leicester. It is important that the process is accessible fair and transparent, amendments that help to make the process for applicants easier to understand should impact positively for people from across many protected characteristics.

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

### 3.4 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

When considering updates to the proposed policy and assessment form, consideration should be given to opportunities to ensure that projects funded avoid negative climate or environmental impacts. Consideration could also be given to encouraging projects which support the council's strategic objectives, including tackling the climate emergency.


Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284


### 4 Summary of Appendices

Appendix A: Ward Community Funding Policy.
Appendix B: Breakdown of Ward Funding and Population
Appendix C: Evaluation Form
Appendix D: Ward Funding Profile 2023
Appendix E: Application Form


### 5 Officers to Contact

Ed Brown
Senior Governance Officer - Scrutiny
Edmund.Brown@leicester.gov.uk
0116 454 3833

# Ward Community Funding Policy

Leicester
City Council

## 1. What is Ward Community funding?

Each ward has been allocated a yearly budget of £18,000 which can be used to support activities, events and projects that bring benefits to that ward. This guidance explains how individuals, groups, and organisations can apply for Ward Community funding, how funding decisions are made, and what applicants can expect during the application process.

Elected Members support a wide a range of activities, events and projects. Elected Members also have the flexibility to make local arrangements for their ward to set limits on how much funding can be allocated to each application.

## 2. What will not be funded?

Ward Community funding **cannot** be used for the following:

- Staffing, except temporary staff or specialist staff brought in to do a specific and short-term piece of work (for up to a maximum of 12 months)

- Full costs of infrastructure, running costs or capital investment

- Recoverable VAT – Ward Funding cannot be awarded for monies that will be reclaimed back as recoverable VAT by the applicant / organisation

- Any liability arising out of illegality or negligence

- Any form of gambling (except small fundraising activities e.g., raffle, tombola)

- Exclusively religious activity

- Political activity

- Applications where previously awarded funds have not been accounted for with an evaluation and evidence of expenditure

- An event or activity which has already taken place e.g. an application that is submitted after the activity, event, or project has taken place (Retrospective Application).

## 3. Who can make a Ward Community Funding application?

- Applications will be considered that are made by individuals, community groups, voluntary organisations, statutory agencies, and partners, that live, work, or have any other interest in the ward.

- Applicants will be considered for funding, for more than one activity, event or project in the same or concurrent financial year, provided that they are different.

- Applications can be made to a maximum of three wards, for which applicants must be able to demonstrate benefits spanning across all the wards.

- Elected Members are not permitted to submit funding applications and must declare any interest in applications submitted where applicable.

### 4. How to make an application?

Applications should be submitted using the Council's Web application form. **Please click here to access the application form**.

**All sections of the form must be completed.**

Having the following information available in advance will assist you when completing the application form:

- Number of people attending from the ward(s)

- Number of people attending from outside the ward(s)

- Number of Volunteers involved

- Date of the event/activity/project

- Previous funding received in the past five years

- Audited accounts (where applicable)

- DBS information, if working with unsupervised children (under 16) or vulnerable people

- Risk Assessment

- Public Liability Insurance (where required)

- Full breakdown of your expenditure, including costs

- Full Bank Account details

- Name and contact details, including date of birth, of the person responsible for the finances.

Please note that you may be required to provide additional information, or clarify information submitted in your application, as part of the application and assessment process.

### 5. When to apply?

You should submit your application as soon as possible – especially if it is for an activity, event or project that will take place at a specific time during the year.

Remember that funding cannot be made for activities, events or projects that have already taken place (i.e. retrospectively) so it is vital you submit your application in time.

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# Applications above £500

**(Where the total amount requested from one or more wards is above £500)**

Applications are considered at a Budget Meeting by the Elected Members, three times a year. The deadlines for submission for funding consideration are:

## 31st January

## 31st May

## 30th September

(**In very exceptional circumstances Elected Members may use their discretion to consider an application before the deadline dates**)

It can take up to 6-8 weeks after the submission deadline for decisions to be made. This is to allow sufficient time to make further enquiries relating to the application, if necessary, and to provide an opportunity for the Elected Members to carefully consider the applications before a final decision is made.

# Applications up to and including £500

**(Where the total amount requested from one or more wards is up to and including £500)**

Applications up to and including £500 may be considered by Elected Members at any time during the year. Please note this will also follow the same process overleaf and can take up to 6-8 weeks to process.

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## 6. Application process

```
┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│                                  │
│  Application is submitted online │
│                                  │
└──────────────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Application is assessed and where│
│ necessary further information    │
│ sought                           │
│ Application may be held/deferred │
│ pending further information or   │
│ investigation up to 4 weeks.     │
└──────────────────────────────────┘
```

Application is considered by the relevant Elected Members, (or at a Budget meeting if above £500)

[**If applicable**, the relevant Elected Member submits a Declaration of Interest, and removes themselves from the decision making process for the application]

Application may be held/deferred pending further

information or investigation up to 4 weeks

| **Application Supported (In full or partially)** | **Application not Supported** |
|---|---|

| Final Approval will be made by the City Mayor/Deputy City Mayor and/or Assistant City Mayor | Applicant is contacted (via email) within five working days of the decision |
|---|---|

| Applicants will be contacted (via email) confirming the decision. Payment is initiated. We aim to complete payment within 4-6 weeks from final approval | * Where funding of the application is made **conditionally upon additional requirements being met,** we will write to the applicant asking them to agree to the conditions of payment. Once we receive confirmation, we will then issue the grant payment. |
|---|---|

| Applicant to submit a full set of invoices and legitimate receipts, evaluation, and return any unused monies to the Council within 4 weeks after the activity, event or project | * Successful applicants must ensure that the words **'Leicester City Council Ward Community Funding'** and/or Leicester City Council Ward Community Funding **logo** is clearly acknowledged on any promotional material and annual reports (if applicable) |
|---|---|

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## 7. Funding conditions for successful applications

- Funding must only be used for the purpose for which it was awarded, as set out in your application and/or any other agreed conditions approved in writing.

- Full evaluation and proof of expenditure should be submitted within four weeks from the end of the activity, event or project, or as outlined in the outcome email.

- The Council may reject applications for any future funding and/or require you to <u>repay funding</u> and return items purchased with Ward funding if:

  - You do not use the funding for the purpose for which it was issued or for a purpose which it cannot be used.
  - Your organisation closes, or sells, or transfers, or ceases to carry out the activity, event or project.
  - You significantly change the activity, event or project for which the funding was given without our prior written approval.
  - You have given false or misleading information to us.
  - Full evaluation and proof of expenditure (only legitimate receipts are acceptable) has not been submitted at the end of your activity.

- You must acknowledge the funding we give you in your publicity and other similar literature (where appropriate).

- Funding must not be used for activities, events or projects that would bring the Council into disrepute.

- The Council shall not be responsible for liability to third parties, for any debts or liabilities you incur or that are incurred through any act or omission by you. Any such debts or liabilities shall be your entire responsibility.

- The Council shall not be responsible for the omission of undertaking, and implementing a full risk assessment, and the implementation of the control measures, this is your entire responsibility.

- The Council shall not be responsible for the purchase of the Public Liability insurance, where required this is your entire responsibility.

- **<u>Safeguarding</u>** – where the activity, event or project falls within the definition of a regulated activity relating to children and/or to vulnerable adults, the group/organisation shall ensure that all individuals engaged in the activity, event or project are:

  - Subject to a valid enhanced disclosure check undertaken through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) including a check against the adults' barred list or the children's barred list, as appropriate; and

  - Shall not employ or use the services of any person who is barred from, or whose previous conduct or records indicate that they would not be suitable to carry out Regulated Activity or who may otherwise present a risk to users.

  - A Risk Assessment should be completed for your activity, event or project, and where applicable public liability insurance must be obtained.

<div align="center">56</div>

## 8. Where can I get further information?

More information about Ward Community Funding and the application process can be found on the **Ward Community** pages on the Council's website.

Alternatively, if you need further help or advice on completing the form, please contact the Council's Ward Engagement Team:

By Phone:        **0116 454 1940**

By Email:        **community.meetings@leicester.gov.uk**

If you require support to access the web application form please feel free to visit any of our **libraries and multi-service centers** where we will be able to assist you to contact the Ward Engagement Team or take you to the appropriate area online using the Council's free public access computers.

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| WARD | POPULATION (AS PER CENSUS 2021) | NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS | WARD FUNDING ALLOCATION (CURRENT) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Abbey | 22,112 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Aylestone | 11,942 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Beaumont Leys | 18,823 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Belgrave | 20,563 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields | 21,021 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Castle | 23,691 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Evington | 17,261 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Eyres Monsell | 12,011 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Fosse | 14,363 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Humberstone & Hamilton | 21,133 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Knighton | 16,831 | 3 | 18,000 |
| North Evington | 23,905 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Rushey Mead | 17,396 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Saffron | 13,888 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Spinney Hills | 13,037 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Stoneygate | 21,095 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Thurncourt | 12,067 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Troon | 14,792 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Westcotes | 15,795 | 2 | 18,000 |
| Western | 21,074 | 3 | 18,000 |
| Wycliffe | 15,792 | 2 | 18,000 |
| TOTAL | 368,592 | 54 | 378,000 |

Our Ref:

Date:


Leicester
City Council

**1a. Application reference number:**

**1b. Contact Name:**

**1c. Organisation (If applicable):**

**1d. Position within organisation:**

**1e. Telephone Number:**

**1f. Email:**

**2a. Total amount you received through ward funding:**
 **Ward Funding:**

| Ward | Amount (£) |
|---|---|
|  |  |

**2c. Please state how much funding was spent:**
**Additional Income:**

| Income (Item description) | Income Amount (£) | Proof enclosed if applicable (Receipt, Invoice, Bank Statement) | Notes/Comments |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |

**Expenditure:**

| Expenditure (Item description) | Cost (£) | Proof enclosed (Receipt, Invoice, Bank statement) | Amount used from ward funding (as per application) |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**3e. Attendees from within the ward:**

**3f. People within the ward involved in organising the activity:**

**3g. Attendees from outside the ward:**

**3h. Paid public / private sector individuals:**

**3i. Volunteers:**

**3j. Please describe how your project provided benefits to the local community. Do you consider your project / activity has proved to be successful? Why?:**

**3k. Which other agencies / organisations were involved in this project?:**

**Did you produce / obtain any publicity for this project?:**

**Did you acknowledge the contribution from Leicester City Council in this publicity?:**

**Publicity documents:**

**Signed:**

**Position:**

**Date:**

| Ward Budget Profile | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Ward Name:** | | | | Pol Ref: NSP.005 |
| **Total Ward Budget** | | 0 | | |
| **Monthly Allocation** | | **Priority Spend Allocations** | | **Application Ref No.** |
| **Sports and health activities** | | **Priority Spend 1** | | |
| | | **Description** | | |
| **Outdoor, recreation, greenspaces** | | **Priority Spend 2** | | |
| **climate change** | | **Description** | | |
| **events, celebrations** | | **Priority Spend 3** | | |
| | | **Description** | | |
| | | **Priority Spend 4** | | |
| | | **Description** | | |
| **Total Monthly Allocations** | 0 | **Total Priorty Spend Allocations** | 0 | |

## Leicester City Council Ward Community Grant Application form

### Section 2 Contact Information

Applicant name / Group name

Contact name(if applying on behalf of a group)

Your Position In Group

### Section 3 - Details about your group

What category does your group fall into?

Does your group / organisation have a constitution?

Does your group have audited accounts?

Please provide a brief description of the activities
your group undertakes

Does your group/organisation receive any other funding from
Leicester City Council?

How did you hear about Ward Community Funding?

Additional Information

Estimated no. of attendees from within the ward

Estimated no. of people within the ward involved in
organising the activity

Estimated no. of attendees from outside the ward

No. of volunteers

No. of paid public / private sector individuals

Does your activity/project involve any of the
following

### Section 5 - Costs

Please provide details of the amounts you are applying for (Maximum 3 wards)

Wards                                    Amount

Have you / your group previously received Ward Community
funding in the last five years?

Please provide details of the projected expenditure for running the project / activity

| Item | Cost | Is this Cost Actual or Estimate? | Amount requested for Ward Community funding? |
|------|------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|

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Please provide below details of any funding requested / obtained from other sources

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## Section 7 - Data protection

Please ensure that you read this section before submitting your application.
The information provided in this application form will be held by the Leicester City Council in print and on the computer.
This will be used for the administration of grant applications and for statistical analysis. Copies of this information will be given, where necessary, to individuals we consult with when assessing applications and for monitoring grants.

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## Section 8 - Declaration

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge all the information contained within this application is correct. I confirm that I have read the guidance for completing the application form and I understand and agree with the terms and conditions stipulated in the Guide to Ward Community Funding.
Furthermore I confirm that follow completion of the activity for which funding is awarded I shall ensure that the evaluation form and associated receipts of expenditure are provided within one month.
I will inform the Council immediately of any changes in the information I have provided within this application form.
I accept that Leicester City Council may reject this application or withdraw any funding granted if any of the information provided in this form is inaccurate.
I agree to complete and return a project evaluation form once the project has been undertaken.
Fullname

Date

# Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

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## Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025 Update Report

Date of Commission meeting: 25th April 2024

Lead Director: Mike Dalzell

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**Useful Information:**
- Ward(s) affected: <mark>All</mark>
- Report author: Sarah Harrison, City Centre Director
- Author contact details sarah.m.harrison@leicester.gov.uk

## 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**

| Performance Indicator | 2018 | 2022 | % change 2018 vs 2022 | Target 2025 | % change to reach 2025 target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 2nd 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 31st 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 200th 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 10th Anniversary of the rediscovery and identification of Richard III and planning for the 10th 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 Mood 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 300th 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 top 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 40th 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 campaigned 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.

<u>**Theme 3: Positioning**</u>

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

| Action | Status | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| Heritage Panel Trail | Completed<br><br><br><br>June 2024 | 300 panel trail guide available online at Visit Leicester and Story of Leicester websites and in print from Visit Leicester Information Centre.<br><br>An updated trail guide will be created to include the 50 additional heritage panels that have been installed. |
| City Trails | Completed<br><br>May 2024 | 5 city trails and 15 itineraries<br><br>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<br><br><br>May 2024 | 8 sector guides created online and in print.<br><br>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:

    o Help providers meet aims and objective of internal plans. For example, facilitating employer engagement, supporting curriculum development and being consistent with LSIP developments.
    o 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.
    o 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)**

# Leicester City Tourism Plan 2020 – 2025 Update

## Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny

25 April 2024

Sarah Harrison

City Centre Director

"The traveller sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see"

Gilbert K Chesterton

# Leicester Tourism Action Plan 2020-2025

| Performance Indicator | 2018 | 2022 | % change 2018 vs 2022 | Target 2025 | % change to reach 2025 target |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Value of Leicester Tourism (£m) | 651 +Inflation 2018 - 2022 | 724 745 | +11.2% -2.8% | 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% | 14.0 | +41% |
| No of jobs created and safeguarded (000) | 7.9 | 7.2 | -8.8% | 9.2 | +27% |

# STEAM REPORT FOR 2011-2022 - DRAFT
# LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL

| 2011 to 2022 Historic Prices | TOTAL | KEY MEASURES Historic Prices |
|---|---|---|

## Economic Impact - Historic Prices - Total

**Historic Prices £M**

| % Change Year on Year | |
|---|---|
| 2012 | 1.8% |
| 2013 | 6.1% |
| 2014 | 5.6% |
| 2015 | 6.7% |
| 2016 | 5.1% |
| 2017 | 3.2% |
| 2018 | 4.1% |
| 2019 | 4.9% |
| 2020 | -70.1% |
| 2021 | 160.7% |
| 2022 | 36.0% |

Economic Impact values: 2011: 474.00, 2012: 482.72, 2013: 512.09, 2014: 540.79, 2015: 576.88, 2016: 606.05, 2017: 625.44, 2018: 651.02, 2019: 682.63, 2020: 204.00, 2021: 531.91, 2022: 723.52

Legend: Economic Impact — Linear (Economic Impact)

## Visitor Numbers - Total

**M**

| % Change Year on Year | |
|---|---|
| 2012 | -6.0% |
| 2013 | 2.6% |
| 2014 | 3.2% |
| 2015 | 5.9% |
| 2016 | 4.4% |
| 2017 | 1.3% |
| 2018 | 5.3% |
| 2019 | 1.5% |
| 2020 | -74.0% |
| 2021 | 180.0% |
| 2022 | 16.2% |

Tourist Numbers values: 2011: 9.82, 2012: 9.24, 2013: 9.48, 2014: 9.78, 2015: 10.36, 2016: 10.81, 2017: 10.95, 2018: 11.53, 2019: 11.71, 2020: 3.05, 2021: 8.53, 2022: 9.92

Legend: Tourist Numbers — Linear (Tourist Numbers)

## Visitor Days - Total

**M**

| % Change Year on Year | |
|---|---|
| 2012 | -3.1% |
| 2013 | 2.5% |
| 2014 | 3.0% |
| 2015 | 5.5% |
| 2016 | 3.9% |
| 2017 | 0.7% |
| 2018 | 4.5% |
| 2019 | 1.2% |
| 2020 | -72.6% |
| 2021 | 164.6% |
| 2022 | 22.8% |

Tourist Days values: 2011: 12.68, 2012: 12.29, 2013: 12.59, 2014: 12.97, 2015: 13.68, 2016: 14.21, 2017: 14.32, 2018: 14.96, 2019: 15.15, 2020: 4.15, 2021: 10.99, 2022: 13.49

Legend: Tourist Days — Linear (Tourist Days)

## Total Employment Supported - Total

**FTEs**

| % Change Year on Year | |
|---|---|
| 2012 | 0.2% |
| 2013 | 4.8% |
| 2014 | 1.0% |
| 2015 | 3.9% |
| 2016 | 2.7% |
| 2017 | 2.2% |
| 2018 | 3.9% |
| 2019 | -1.1% |
| 2020 | -69.4% |
| 2021 | 137.8% |
| 2022 | 27.6% |

Employment values: 2011: 6,585, 2012: 6,597, 2013: 6,913, 2014: 6,982, 2015: 7,252, 2016: 7,451, 2017: 7,612, 2018: 7,911, 2019: 7,825, 2020: 2,397, 2021: 5,699, 2022: 7,274

Legend: EMPLOYMENT — Linear (EMPLOYMENT)
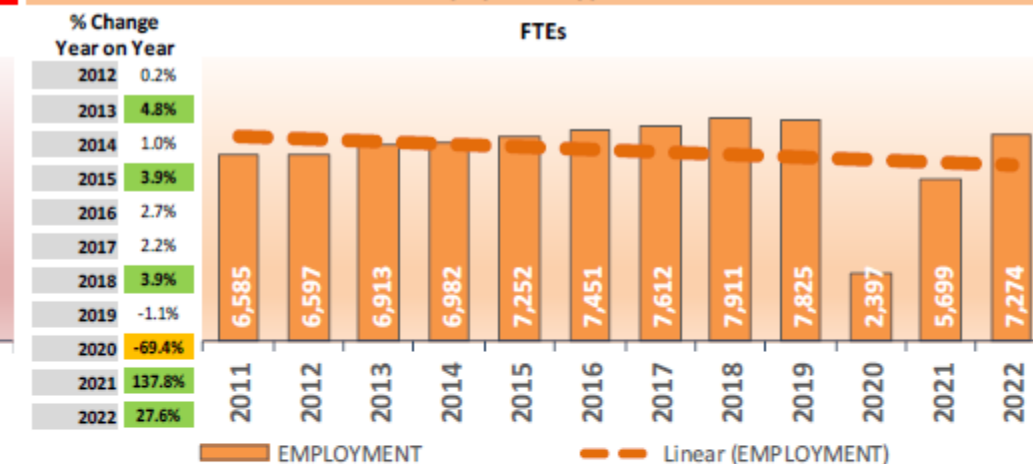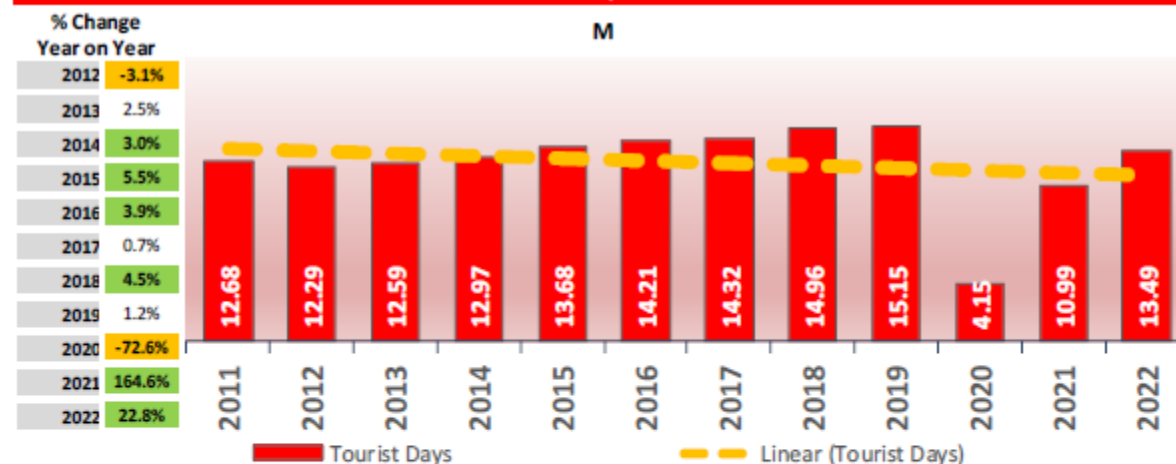
| % Change from 2011 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economic Impact - Historic Prices | | 1.8% | 8.0% | 14.1% | 21.7% | 27.9% | 31.9% | 37.3% | 44.0% | -57.0% | 12.2% | 52.6% |
| Visitor Numbers | | -6.0% | -3.6% | -0.5% | 5.4% | 10.0% | 11.5% | 17.4% | 19.2% | -69.0% | -13.1% | 0.9% |
| Visitor Days | | -3.1% | -0.7% | 2.3% | 7.9% | 12.1% | 12.9% | 18.1% | 19.5% | -67.2% | -13.3% | 6.5% |
| Total Employment | | 0.2% | 5.0% | 6.0% | 10.1% | 13.2% | 15.6% | 20.1% | 18.8% | -63.6% | -13.4% | 10.5% |

"Linear" = Linear Trendline

Weekly Leicester City Centre Footfall
3 counters, High Street, Humberstone Gate and Gallowtree Gate
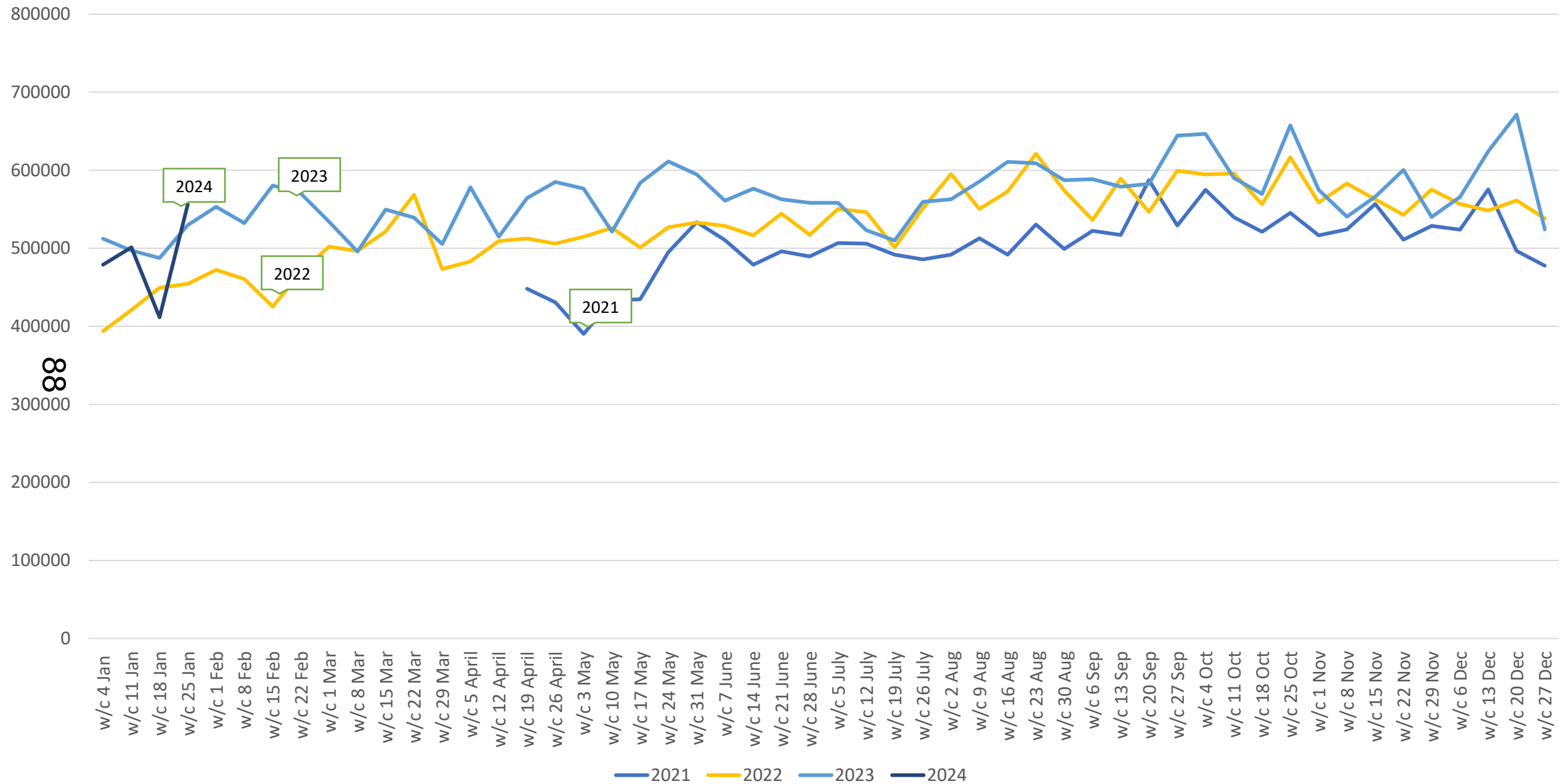
Product
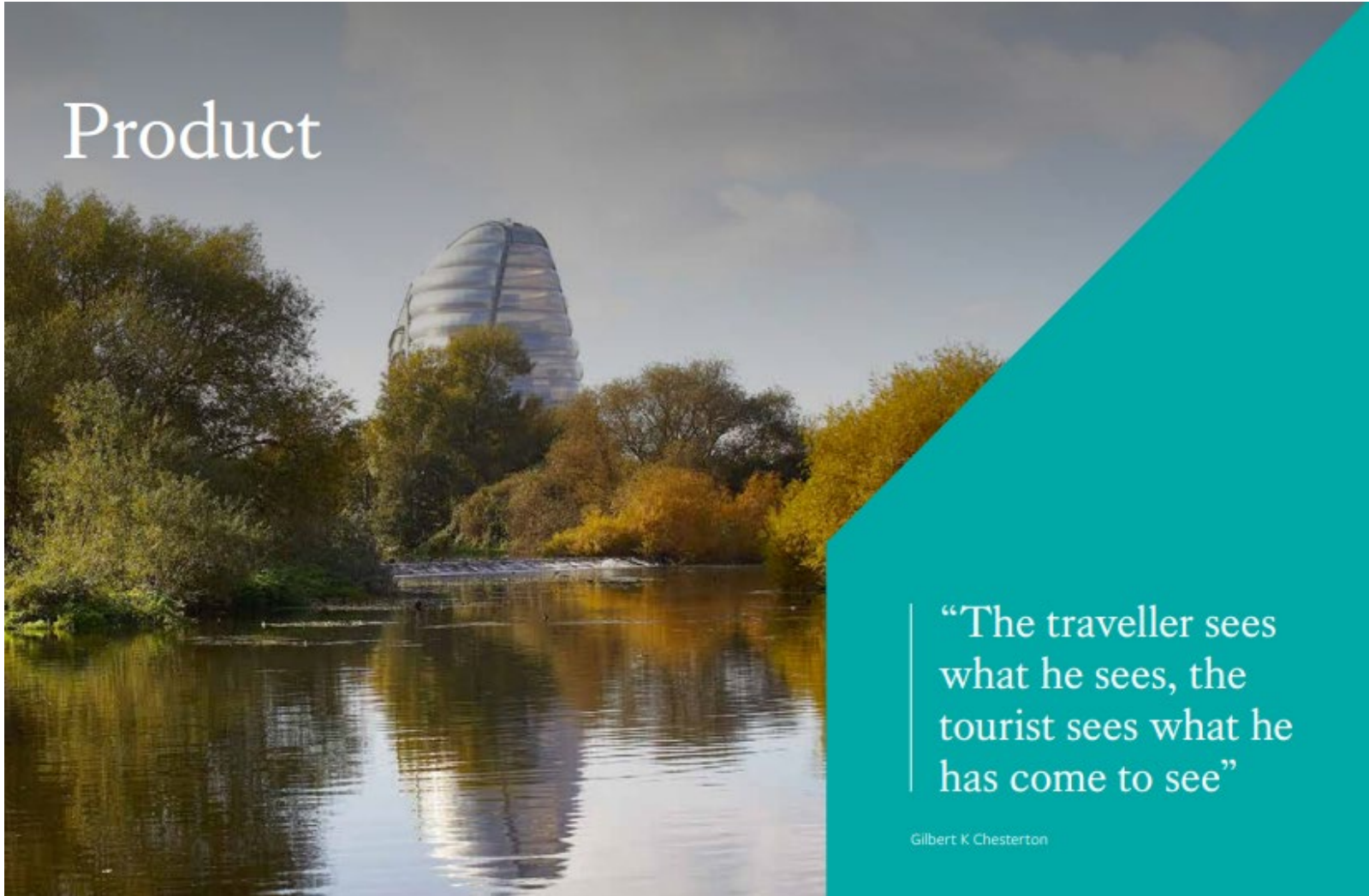
"The traveller sees what he sees, the tourist sees what he has come to see"

Gilbert K Chesterton

Jewry Wall Artist Impression



Great Central Railway



Leicester Cathedral Artist Impression



King Richard III Visitor Centre & Visit Leicester Information Centre



Leicester Museum & Art Gallery



Riverside and Waterways



National Space Centre

Heritage Panels


De Montfort Hall


Curve Theatre

91


Mattioli Arena


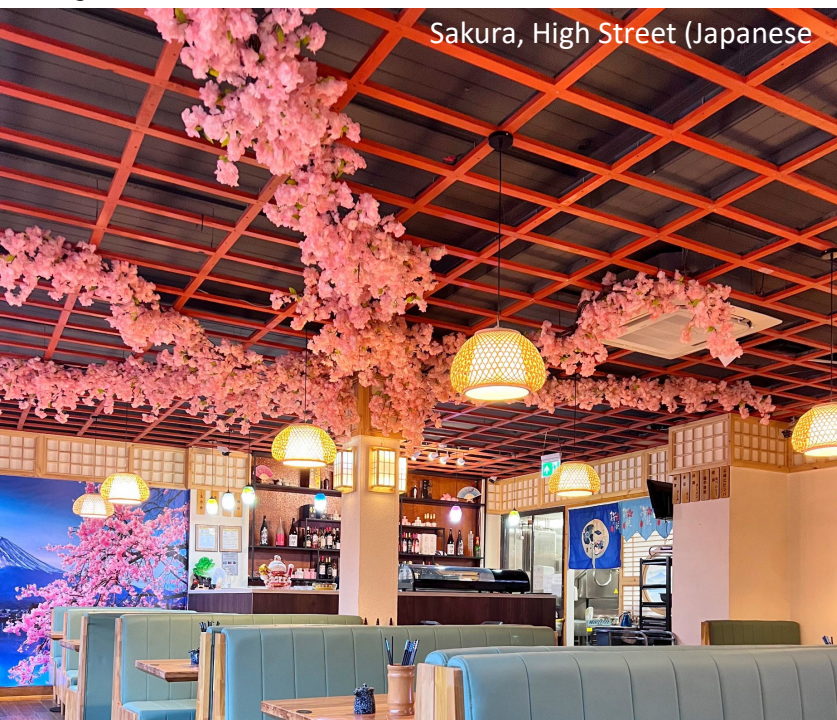Leicester Market Artist impression


Phoenix Cinema and Art Centre

Foot Pool (part of Caddyshackers refurbishment
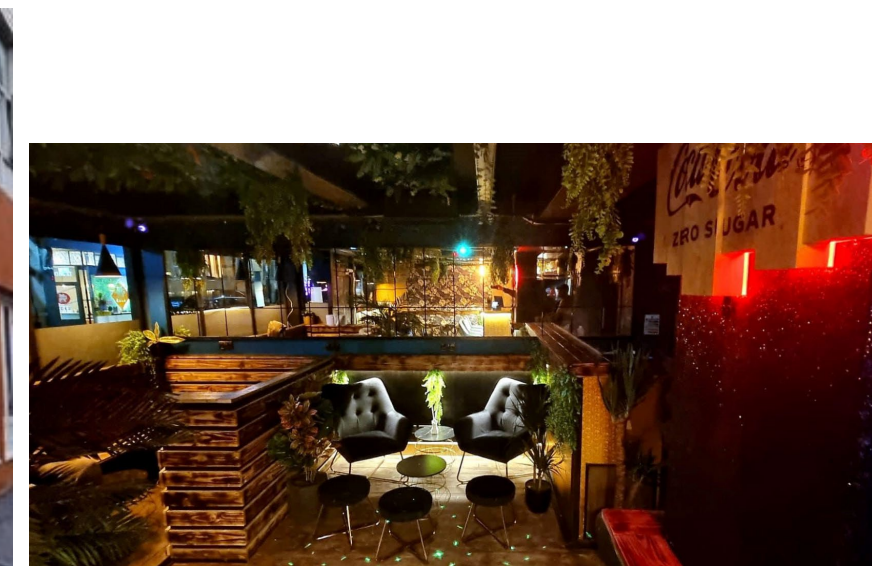
Varanasi, High Street


Sonrisa, Greyfriars


The Frame, St Martins Square


Sakura, High Street (Japanese


Time to Delhi, Belvoir Street


Bungles Bar, King Street

# Place

"Sense of place is the lens through which people experience and make meaning of their experiences in and with place"

Adams, 2013

# Connecting Leicester

Diwali
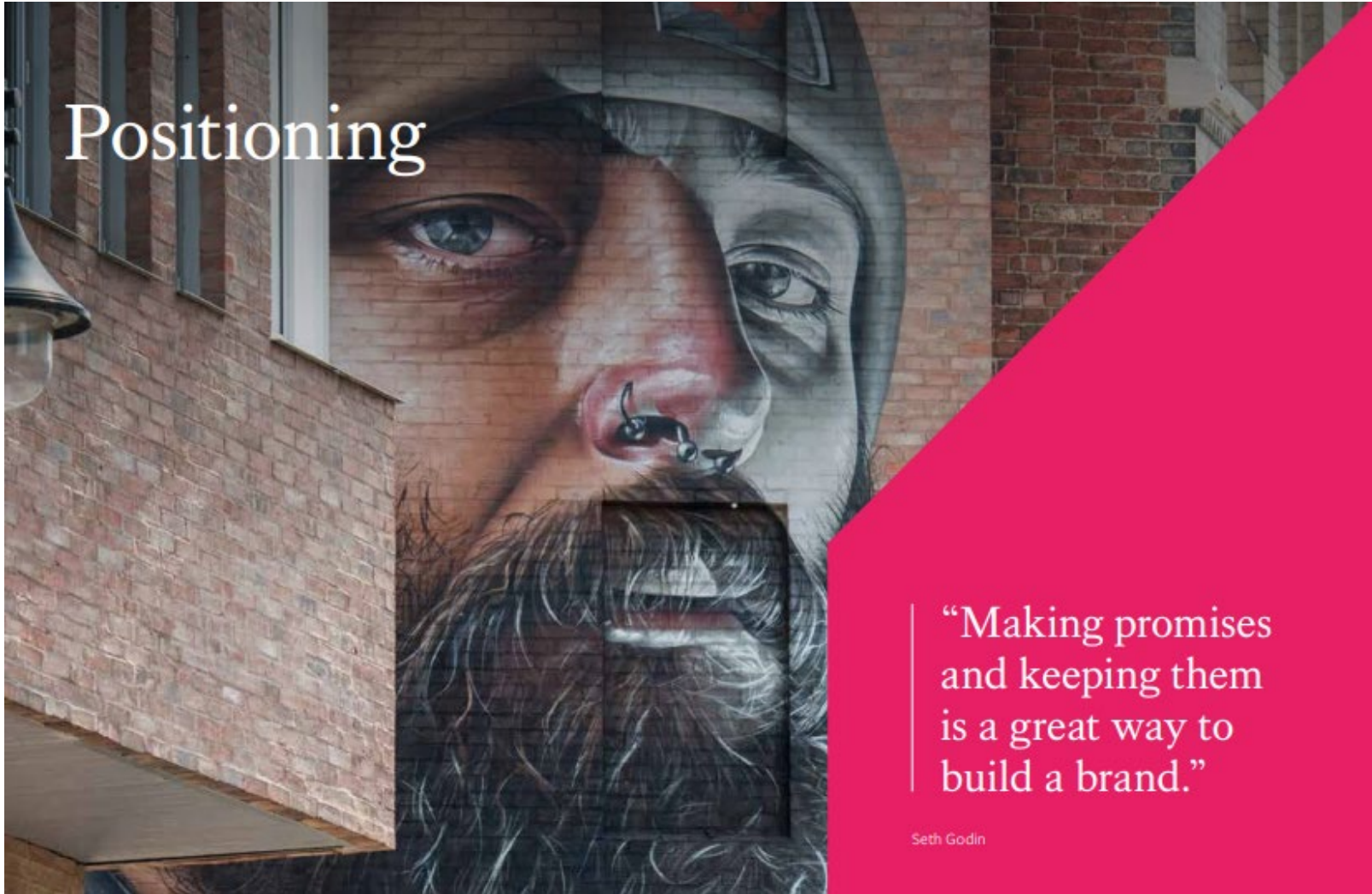
98

STORM puppet

Brewbeat

Monsters Trail

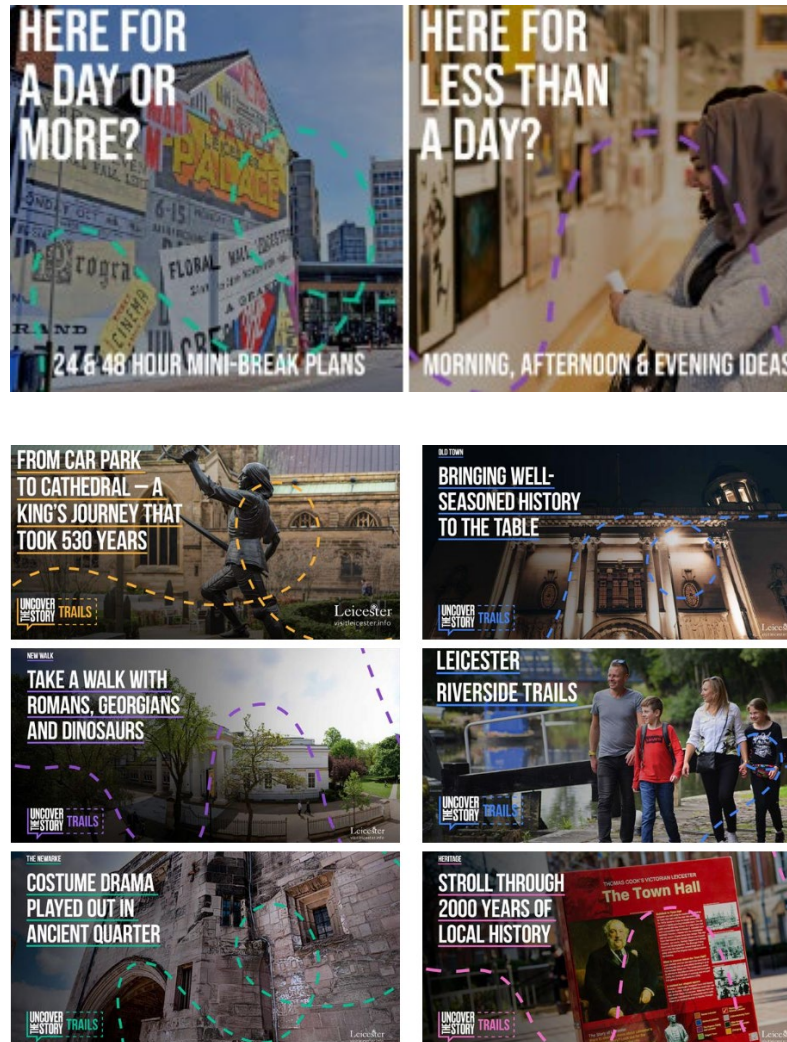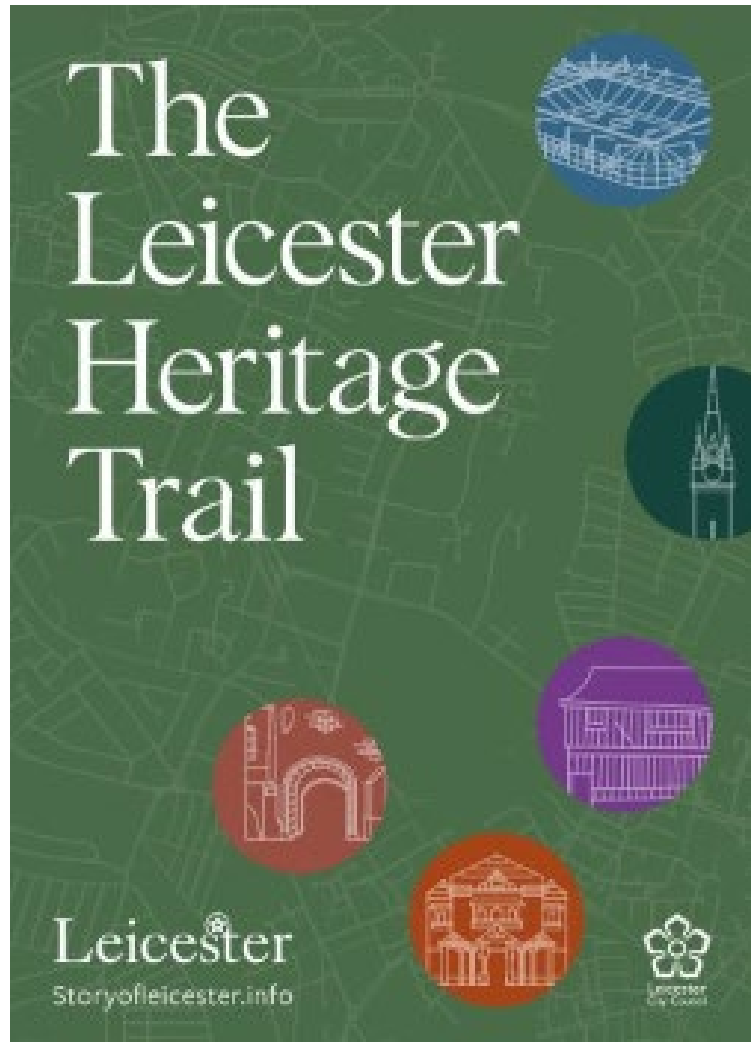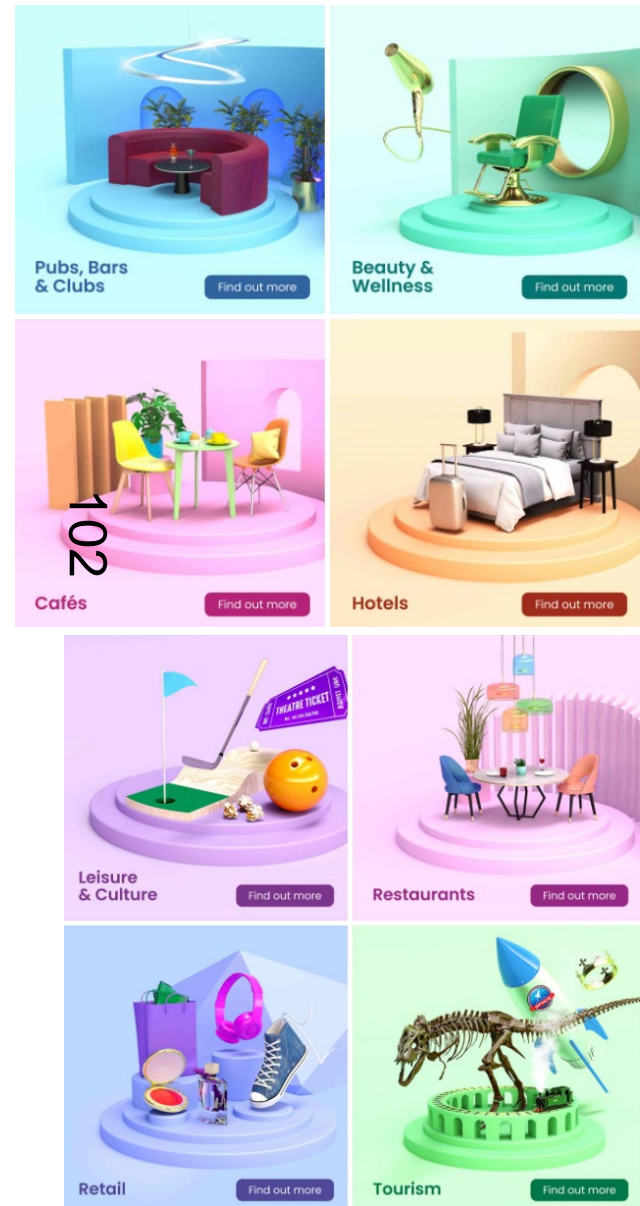City Night-Time Economy Safe City

66

# Positioning

"Making promises
and keeping them
is a great way to
build a brand."

Seth Godin

- Itineraries [Itineraries - Visit Leicester](#)
- City Trails [City Trails - Visit Leicester](#)
- Trails video - [City Trails - Visit Leicester](#)
- Make a date with Leicester [Make a Date With Leicester - Visit Leicester](#)
- The Leicester Heritage Trail [Heritage Panel Trail - Visit Leicester](#)
- Riverside Trails [Leicester Riverside Trails - Visit Leicester](#)

# Current city marketing initiatives

| Project | Completion Date |
|---|---|
| **Tourism Leaflet – 30 city attractions** | May 2024 |
| **Tear off Legible Leicester map pads for Visit Leicester Information Centre, hotels, transport hubs and Highcross** | Completed April 2024 |
| **Pocket Maps – city map and attraction information** | May 2024 |
| **Leicester Tourism Key Facts for Ambassadors** | May 2024 |
| **Update Make a Date with Leicester guides for online. Print run for Tourism Guide** | May 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** | End of Summer 2024 |
| **Heritage Panel Trail Guide – update to include 350 panels** | June 2024 |

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Pubs, Bars & Clubs  Find out more

Beauty & Wellness  Find out more

Cafés  Find out more

Hotels  Find out more

Leisure & Culture  Find out more

Restaurants  Find out more

Retail  Find out more

Tourism  Find out more

# People

"It is no longer enough to satisfy your customers. You must delight them."

Philip Kotler

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- First cohort of 10 local Volunteer Tourism Ambassadors currently undertaking a 6-week training programme.
- The Ambassadors will support support tourism attractions and venues as well as the council's festivals and events programme..
- Training programme supported by Leicester College.
- Partnership working – Assemble, VAL, Leicester College.
- First cohort will be certificated in May 2024
- Over 35 applications in total.
- Additional City Tourism Ambassador scheme with customer facing businesses e.g. hotels, shopping centres, transport hubs, taxis

**leicester tourism ambassador**

# Tourism Training and Skills

## Sub-regional Skills Plan 2024-2025

- Tourism and Hospitality Skills Forum established in 2023
  - Chaired by Leicester College
  - Members include South Leicestershire College, Loughborough College
    - Shaping course curricula, employer engagement, careers fairs, employer-led projects, industry placements, engagement with Springboard charity's hospitality courses
- Purpose to produce a practical local skills plan for the sector for the benefit of providers, businesses in the sector
  - Help providers meet aims and objectives of internal plans
  - Help businesses link more easily with providers via planned activity
  - Help all involved have a shared and agreed vision for local skills development in the sector.
- Skills Plan for Tourism and Hospitality 2024-25 completion Summer 2024.

**Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission**
**Work Programme 2023 – 2024**

| Meeting Date | Item | Recommendations / Actions | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|
| **16 August 2023** | Introduction presentation to Culture and Neighbourhoods services. | Suggested topics for scrutiny to be added to the work programme. | Complete |
| **26 September 2023** | • Voluntary Community sector engagement strategy report<br>• Draft Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy report<br>• 2 reports: a) Ward Funding Policy and b) Ward Funding Annual Report<br>• Work Programme – draft work programme | 1) a) To explore formalising structures with VCS.<br>   b) To explore LCC and VCS joint funding initiatives / boards.<br>   c) LCC to provide helping hand to VCS to empower communities.<br>   d) To explore a business pledge for LCC to sign up to.<br>   e) To engage more with ward cllrs.<br><br>2) A fuller report to be brought back to a future meeting.<br><br>3) a) to consider increasing the ward funding budget.<br>   b) Vice chair to lead a Review group to be set up to look into this topic.<br>   c) The engagement of volunteers to be explored.<br>   d) To consider best practice.<br>   e) For the members training re: ward meetings on 11th Oct - suggested 2 levels of engagement needed – one for more experienced cllrs and one for newer cllrs. | 1) In progress – officers to respond in due course.<br>2) Listed on the work programme.<br>3) b) Initial discussions taking place between officers and members. |

Appendix E

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| Meeting Date | Item | Recommendations / Actions | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|
| **24 October 2023** | 1) Executive response back from previous review re: Encouraging women to participate in sports and physical activities.<br><br>2) Museum Service Overview<br><br>3) Bereavement Services/Burial Policy | 1a) Amend/clarify wording on women swimming in burkhas.<br>1b) A report on various bodies that could promote Women's engagement in Sport (i.e. the NHS or Universities) could be produced, perhaps a Board could look at.<br>1c) Good practice in other authorities to be considered.<br>1d) Other Groups with protected characteristics such as disability sport could be considered. Data could also be broken down into, for example, age and ethnicity.<br>1e) Indicators of success to be provided.<br>1f) Delivery and implementation of the Sports Strategy to be reported to Scrutiny.<br><br><br><br>2a) Update to be brought to Scrutiny once Museums Strategy in place.<br>2b) Updates to be brought annually.<br><br>3a) Annual update to come to Scrutiny.<br>3b) Commission to be kept aware of the national consultation of the issue and any legislative changes on re-burial policy. | 1a) Complete, document amended.<br><br>1b) Sport & Active Recreation Development Manager happy to consider for future meeting, subject to approval by the Chair.<br><br>1c) Noted, and ongoing practice adopted with this.<br><br>1d) Point to note.<br><br>1e) This can be supplied, as and when required. Sport & Active Recreation Development Manager recommends an annual update on women's participation in sport. This could link into above point of disability too.<br><br>1f) Being brought forward at December meeting.<br><br><br>2a) Update following Museum Strategy likely to come in January 2024 |

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| Meeting Date | Item | Recommendations / Actions | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|
| **5 December 2023** | 1) Active Leicester Strategy Action Plan<br><br>2) Tree Strategy review | 1a) Opportunities to encourage cooperation between professional sports clubs and the voluntary sector to be considered.<br><br>1b) Report to come back to Commission once more complete and the findings of the seminar are known.<br><br>1c) Should Sport England Funding become available, grassroots/community sports clubs to be considered for priority over larger professional clubs with their own funding streams. | 1a) Update sent to members of the Commission. |
| **29 January 2024** | Council budget reports – general fund and capital | 1) A breakdown of how services were impacted by savings to be produced in a report.<br><br>2) Report on engaging community organisations to be brought to the Commission. | 1) There will be wide consultation on future savings proposals which should include all scrutiny commissions. |

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| Meeting Date | Item | Recommendations / Actions | Progress |
|---|---|---|---|
| **25 April 2024** | 1) VCSE Strategy/Crowdfund Leicester Update/Enabling volunteers.<br><br>2) Informal Scrutiny Recommendations – Ward Community Funding<br><br>3) Tourism Plan Review | | |

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**Forward Plan Items (suggested)**

| Topic | Detail | Proposed Date |
|---|---|---|
| Informal Scrutiny Response Report – ASB team | Deferred until 2024/25 municipal year. | |
| Draft Museum Strategy | Deferred from 25 April 2024. | |
| Festivals and Events Review update | Deferred from 25 April 2024. | |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Engagement of Community Organisations | Report on how community organisations could be engaged to help the Council run services as requested at the meeting of 29 January. | |
| Library and Community Needs Assessment | | |
| Culture and Creative Industry Strategy | A fuller report to be provided following the item on 26 September. | |
| Community Safety | | |
| Fly-tipping strategy | | |
| Growing spaces strategy | | |
| Jewry Wall museum development, progress update | | |
| Heritage panels, inviting members suggestions for new panels | | |
| Heritage Lottery Fund (Place Programme Funding) | Requested at meeting on 24 October | |
| Food Service Plan Update | | |
| Active Leicester and Women in Sport – Annual Update | Following discussion at the meeting of 5 December, it was requested that the report come back to the commission around 6-months later when it was fuller and the findings of the seminar were known. It was later decided to combine this with the report on Women in Sport, To include indicators of success, information ton bodies that can help promote Women's engagement in sport, other groups with protected characteristics such as disability sport and data broken down into, for example, age and ethnicity.  As suggested at the meeting on 24 October 2023, with a possibility of a Board looking at this. | |

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