

# **Cheltenham Borough Council**

## **Tourism and Marketing Strategy – 2<sup>nd</sup> draft**

### **1. Why does Cheltenham need a tourism and marketing strategy?**

Ever since Cheltenham developed and grew as a spa town in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, visitors have been a very important part of its life. Today they remain a crucial part of the economic life of the town, and it is important for Cheltenham Borough Council to have a clear strategy for maintaining and enhancing the characteristics that make Cheltenham attractive to visitors, and for marketing its attractions regionally, nationally and internationally.

### **2. What does this strategy aim to do?**

This strategy aims to fulfil the following objectives:

- To evaluate the importance of visitors to Cheltenham and its local economy
- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Cheltenham offer to visitors
- To consider what the threats are to Cheltenham's visitor economy
- To identify ways of strengthening the Cheltenham offer
- To consider what can be done to clarify and strengthen the Cheltenham 'brand'
- To consider what needs to be done to promote Cheltenham more effectively.

### **3. What is the strategic context?**

This strategy is consistent with the Borough Council's Economic Development Strategy 2007-17, which describes tourism as "an important element in the Cheltenham economy". It also contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan, as part of Objective 2 (Strengthening the Economy) and links to the Gloucestershire Integrated Economic Strategy.

March 2010 saw the launch of a new Government Tourism Strategy, but this has now been overtaken by the change of Government. A new strategy is promised for early 2011. In the meantime, the Government has decided to abolish South West Tourism in its 'bonfire of the quangos', replacing it with looser partnerships and putting a question mark over the future of the regional tourism strategy. Our own strategy has therefore to be set within a fluid and developing national and regional policy framework and to be capable of responding to changes and opportunities as they occur.

#### **4. How important are visitors to Cheltenham?**

The Cheltenham Borough Tourism Economic Impact Assessment for 2006 estimated that Cheltenham had a total of 1.8 million visitors in that year. Total expenditure by visitors was £121 million. Of this spend, 32% was on retail goods and services, 30% was on catering, 13% on accommodation and 11% on entertainment. At the same time, a total of 2,874 jobs in the borough were directly or indirectly related to tourism. These figures will have changed with the onset of the economic downturn, and now urgently need updating, but the point remains that tourism is a vital part of our prosperity.

#### **5. Why do visitors come to Cheltenham?**

Cheltenham does not have a single dominant attraction, but visitors come here for a number of reasons, of which these are some of the most important:

- The town's historic architecture and beautiful gardens are a major draw.
- So too is the cultural life, including the festivals, which have a national and international reputation.
- The town has a prosperous commercial sector, with many successful businesses, many of which have been relatively successful in surviving the economic downturn.
- Cheltenham has excellent shopping, and is particularly well known for its boutique shopping and specialist markets.
- Cheltenham has a wide variety of eating places, including a number of very high quality restaurants, and has a relaxing and enjoyable café culture.
- Cheltenham has a vibrant evening economy, including restaurants, pubs and clubs.
- The race meetings at Cheltenham Racecourse, especially the Cheltenham Festival, are an international attraction.
- Cheltenham is a popular venue for conferences and for special events such as the Morgan Centenary celebrations in 2009.
- Visitors are drawn here to visit friends and relatives, and especially to visit students in the many educational centres in the town.
- Cheltenham is a base for touring and exploring the surrounding area, for example through the Romantic Road transport and hotel packages.

#### **6. How do visitors and non-visitors perceive Cheltenham?**

There are clues as to how Cheltenham is perceived in the Profiling Research which the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Destination Management Organisation (DMO) produced in 2008. This research segmented the UK visitor market as follows:

- Style Hounds (usually young, fashion conscious and style conscious)
- Cosmopolitans (active and confident, high spenders)
- High Street (mainstream, followers of high street fashion)

- Discoverers (independent, looking for new and educational experiences)
- Followers (strongly influenced by what people will think, risk averse)
- Traditionals (self-reliant, traditional values)
- Functionals (self-reliant, price driven but not risk averse)
- Habituals (largely inactive, low spending, traditional and risk averse)

In the research, the different segments had different ideas of what they associate with Cheltenham. Style Hounds were most likely to think that Cheltenham is old-fashioned, and associated the town most strongly with its historic attractions, cultural and sporting events. More than half of Cosmopolitans think that Cheltenham is old-fashioned and again associate the town most strongly with historic attractions and culture, though more than two thirds also associate the town with boutique shopping. The High Street segment and the Followers are least likely to see the town as old-fashioned but they are also least likely to see it as cosmopolitan – maybe because being cosmopolitan is not very important to them. Less than half of the High Street, Discoverers, Followers and Functionals segments associated Cheltenham with boutique shopping or specialist markets, though you would expect Discoverers to be interested in both.

The profiling research also analysed the ages and life stages of visitors and non-visitors to Cheltenham. This showed that:

- Visitors are more likely to be Traditionals.
- The High Street segment is likely to be strongly represented in those who would consider coming to Cheltenham.
- Non-visitors are most likely to be Discoverers, Followers and Habituals.
- In terms of age profile, there is a strong bias towards people over 51 years with no children at home (roughly 7 out of 10 of visitors), with a much smaller number of young families (less than 1 in 10).

## **7. What market sectors do we want to appeal to?**

The profiling research outlined above throws up a number of obvious conclusions.

- It is important that Cheltenham keeps its attractiveness to older people, traditionalists and mainstream High Street shoppers. From this point of view it would be a mistake to portray Cheltenham as a noisy, brash place or as an exclusive and expensive town.
- It seems that the town is not doing enough to appeal to Style Hounds, Discoverers and Cosmopolitans, many of whom currently seem to have a negative view of Cheltenham, but all of whom can in reality find much to interest and appeal to them here.
- There is scope for developing the family market, as long as this is done in ways that do not alienate the older visitors.

## **8. What are the strengths of the ‘Cheltenham offer’?**

### **8.1 A high quality town centre**

Cheltenham offers a relatively compact town centre with a variety of experiences readily at hand: high quality retailing; well-maintained and spacious parks in the shape of Imperial Gardens and Montpellier Gardens; high quality restaurants; an historic entertainment venue in the shape of the Town Hall; a renowned Art Gallery & Museum; and the unique Holst Birthplace Museum. The Promenade is widely regarded as one of the most attractive streets in England. Within walking distance of the town centre are the delightful Montpellier and Suffolks areas with distinctive characters and their mix of eating places and high quality retail.

### **8.2 An accessible town centre**

The town centre is highly accessible, being ringed with car parks and having a bus station and bus stops right in the centre. Coach parking is available at North Place. The Cheltenham Spa rail station, though outside the town centre, is well connected to the centre by bus and taxi. Road links are good, especially to the M5 which runs just to the west of the town. Cheltenham also benefits from the fact that Gloucestershire Airport is nearby, with air passengers being just a five-minute taxi ride from Cheltenham Spa Station and also being well served by a frequent bus service to Cheltenham town centre.

### **8.3 Historic architecture**

Cheltenham has only existed as a significant town for about two and a half centuries, and is not therefore an historic town in quite the same way as Gloucester or Cirencester. However it has a great deal of excellent architecture from the Regency and Victorian eras which the Borough Council over the years has been anxious to preserve. These buildings range from artisan housing to grand crescents and find their most glorious expression in Pittville Pump Room, built in 1825-30 in the austere Greek Revival style, which is in many ways an icon of Regency Cheltenham. In addition, outside the town centre but still within easy reach are the historic village of Prestbury and slightly further a field historic towns such as Winchcombe.

### **8.4 Parks, gardens and open spaces**

Cheltenham has a valid claim to be one of England’s major garden towns. ‘A Town within a Park’, a phrase coined by a visitor from overseas, aptly describes Cheltenham’s unique landscape, beautiful Regency and Victorian buildings enhanced by tree-lined streets and the extensive open spaces of our parks and gardens. The excellence of the town’s parks and gardens does not rest exclusively on the efforts of the Borough Council but on the many voluntary organisations, friends’ groups and businesses that help to maintain Cheltenham’s green recreational areas to a high standard. This partnership working has enabled the town to win national acclaim in the RHS Britain in Bloom Competition and many gold accolades from Heart of England in Bloom along

with the coveted Green Flag status for Parks. The Council often organises floral trails which frequently include many private residents opening their gardens.

National praise has encouraged many visitors from overseas to see the floral displays at all seasons. Furthermore, parks and gardens are not just a feature of the town centre, but a major feature of life in almost every part of the town, including Pittville Park, Hatherley Park, Naunton Park, Hesters Way Park, Sandford Park, Winston Churchill Memorial Gardens, Jenner Gardens, Springfield Park, just to name a few. Parks also provide venues for events of many different kinds, including musical events.

The town also has a huge countryside recreational area at Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common, owned by the Borough Council and situated within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Formerly used for quarrying and agricultural purposes, it now lends itself to all kinds of activities, including walking, hiking, bird and butterfly watching, horse riding, hang gliding and mountain biking. A designated triple Site of Special Scientific Interest, the land is rich in ecology, geology and archaeology value, with wild flowers/grassland, deciduous and coniferous woodland and scrub which are all of national importance. It also offers spectacular views over the town and Severn Vale.

### **8.5 The retail experience**

Cheltenham is well provided with a wide range of shops, from national and international chain stores to quality independent shops. The Promenade has its own distinctively stylish flavour and is home to long-established retailers as well as some of the UK's best-known fashion houses, shoe shops and bookstores. The High Street offers two major shopping arcades, the Regent Arcade and the Beechwood Shopping Centre, which contain many nationally known stores as well as smaller independent shops.

Towards the West End of the High Street is The Brewery, which offers shopping and a wide choice of family-friendly restaurants. A short walk from Cheltenham town centre are the Montpellier and Suffolks areas, with their distinctively continental feel, combining specialist boutiques, designer shopping, antiques and gift shops, together with pavement cafés and fashionable wine bars. Neighbourhood shopping centres such as Bath Road and the Lower High Street mainly cater for local shopping but have the potential to attract visitors because of their distinctive character and interesting independent shops.

### **8.6 The evening economy**

Cheltenham has a thriving evening and night time economy, which is the biggest to be found between Birmingham and Bristol. The town centre boasts venues and events for all ages and tastes – cafés, restaurants, cinema, theatre, festivals, pubs and clubs. The pubs and clubs alone make a very significant contribution to the local economy and cater for an average of 10,000 people per night.

## **8.7 The cultural offer**

### **The Cheltenham Festivals**

Cheltenham's Literature, Music, Jazz and Science Festivals are unique in being run by a single organisation, Cheltenham Festivals Ltd. All boast enviable international reputations as leaders in their field and have established Cheltenham as one of the leading UK cultural destinations for those seeking the best in literature, music and science. Festival programmes feature the most up-and-coming, controversial and entertaining international performers. Visitors talk about the 'Cheltenham experience' – the unique 'Festival buzz' and inspirational atmosphere that pervade the town when the Festivals are staged.

In 2010 Cheltenham Festivals sold 173,353 tickets in addition to staging many free events across the town attracting an estimated 30,000 more people. The four Festivals increased total ticket sales by 14% on 2009. Turnover and income again increased year on year and recent research estimated the impact on the local economy is around £5.2 million, supporting 139 jobs. Around 60% of Festival attendees come from within the county and of those a third live within Cheltenham Borough.

The Festivals also send out significant and positive cultural messages about the town. Media sponsors such as The Times and SKY Arts dedicate specific coverage to Cheltenham and BBC Radio has broadcast Festival events to around 36 million radio listeners this year alone. In addition, the coverage in newspapers and magazines equates to around £2.5 million of advertising spend for Cheltenham which has a significant impact on the town as a tourist destination. The Times Literature Festival recently won the 2010 Gold Award at the South West Tourism Excellence Awards, for the tourist event of the year.

### **Other festivals**

Over the years Cheltenham has become the centre for a number of events which, though they are not part of the Cheltenham Festivals portfolio, nonetheless brand themselves as festivals. One of these, the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts, is actually much older than the Music and Literature Festivals, dating back to the 1920s, and has a particularly important role in encouraging young talent. The Cricket Festival is another Cheltenham tradition, offering a fortnight of first-class cricket on the Cheltenham College grounds. Other festivals include the Folk Festival, the Wychwood Music Festival, the Greenbelt Festival, the Food and Drink Festival, the Ballroom Dancing Festival and, in 2010 for the first time, the Cheltenham Film Festival. Each of these events draws a significant number of visitors to the town.

### **The Everyman Theatre**

The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham's professional theatre, is owned by Cheltenham Borough Council but managed by the Everyman Theatre Company. It dates from 1891 and was designed by the pre-eminent Victorian theatre designer Frank Matcham. It is a distinguished theatre of national and regional importance, which in 2009/10 sold over

192,000 tickets. A breakdown of its audience has shown that 36% are from Cheltenham, 40% come from other parts of Gloucestershire, and the remaining 24% are from outside the county. It therefore makes a very significant contribution to attracting visitors to the town, with a total of 64% of its audience coming from outside the town. In addition, it is a major venue for Festivals events. The Theatre has now launched a £3m scheme to restore the historic auditorium and refurbish the foyer and catering areas, to which the Borough Council has agreed to make a financial contribution.

### **Cheltenham Town Hall**

The Town Hall has been the major centre for music and cultural events in the town since it was built in 1903. It is the main venue for Cheltenham Festivals and also has its own year-round programme ranging from orchestral music to stand-up comedy for which it sold over 278,000 tickets in 2009 (an increase of almost 20,000 on 2008). The recent installation of a new box office system should mean that in the future we will be able to quantify what proportion of the audience are local and how many are visitors.

### **Pittville Pump Room**

The Pump Room is a magnificent reminder of the glory days as a spa, a Grade I listed building, and the only place in Cheltenham where the spa waters can still be taken. It is open to visitors free of charge when events are not taking place there. In addition, the building is widely used as a venue for Festival concerts and other concerts, with its programme being arranged and promoted alongside the Town Hall programme. It is also an increasingly successful venue for wedding receptions and other private functions. The upstairs rooms have (as yet largely unexploited) potential for small conferences and business meetings.

### **Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum**

The Art Gallery dates from 1899 and the Museum from 1907. Today, its arts and artefacts include a nationally important collection of works from the Arts and Crafts Movement. It also hosts many touring collections. Currently over 65,000 visitors a year come to the Art Gallery & Museum and its outreach work reaches another 6,000 people. However it is hoped to begin on a major refurbishment and redevelopment of the buildings in 2011, which will result in a major expansion of the gallery space. As part of the improvements, a walkway through to Church Walk and St Mary's Church will be created and the Tourist Information Centre will move to a ground-floor location in the refurbished building.

### **The Holst Birthplace Museum**

The Holst Birthplace Museum is the Regency terrace house where Gustav Holst, composer of *The Planets* was born in 1874. It tells the story of the man and his music alongside a fascinating display of personal belongings including his piano. It is also a fine period house showing the upstairs downstairs way of life in Victorian times. It is run by a charitable trust and relies significantly on voluntary help, which means that its

opening hours are limited. However, it is open to parties of visitors by arrangements, and hosts a number of temporary exhibitions and special events each year.

### **The Playhouse Theatre**

The Playhouse Theatre is owned by Cheltenham Borough Council but managed by a voluntary body, the Playhouse Theatre Company. It is Cheltenham's main venue for non-professional drama.

### **The Bacon Theatre**

The Bacon Theatre is owned by and part of Dean Close School. The auditorium seats 566 people and provides a venue for a number of musical and dramatic events and lectures organised through the year by a variety of organisations.

### **The Gardens Gallery**

The Gardens Gallery is Cheltenham's community art gallery for local artists to exhibit their work to the public and for other arts-related activities. It is owned by the Borough Council and run by a public-interest company.

### **Other arts spaces**

The town has a number of privately owned galleries, for example the Darcy Gallery in Well Walk, which have the capacity to put on their own exhibitions.

### **The Parabola Arts Centre**

The Parabola Arts Centre, completed in July 2009, is Cheltenham's newest cultural venue. It is owned by Cheltenham Ladies' College and includes a 320 seat theatre, complete with full orchestra pit. It hosts a diverse programme of drama, music and art.

## **8.8 The sports offer**

In addition to the exciting mix of high profile sporting fixtures and festivals throughout the calendar year, Cheltenham also benefits from a number of high quality community sports facilities. Leisure@ Cheltenham, the towns major public leisure facility boasts a 33 metre pool with separate learner pools and diving pit, providing a fun day out for any visitor to the town. The centre also offers a double sports hall, squash courts, dance studios, a state of the art fitness suite and relaxing health spa.

During the summer months Sandford Park Lido offers outdoor swimming in stunning surroundings, and has recently been refurbished to a high standard thanks to the Lottery Heritage Fund. A number of private leisure and fitness facilities are also located within the town, whilst a number of schools also provide community access to sports halls and all weather pitches.

## **8.9 Cheltenham Racecourse**



Cheltenham Racecourse is a major venue, both for racing and for conferences, festivals and other events. It has 17 days of racing spread over 8 fixtures each season, the most important of which is the Cheltenham Festival in March, which generates around £40 million of income for the town each year. The Festival attracts around 200,000 spectators every year. It has also been estimated that around 10,000 beds are filled each night in the Cheltenham area during Festival week. The Racecourse is therefore an extremely important contributor to the visitor economy in Cheltenham and to the town's reputation nationally and internationally. The Racecourse has become a regular venue for a number of cultural festivals and events, including the Christian festival Greenbelt, and the Wychwood Music Festival.

### **8.10 The Centaur Building**

The Centaur Building is part of Cheltenham Racecourses' facilities, but is also a major venue in its own right for concerts, exhibitions, conferences and meetings of all sizes and ranks as the biggest conference venue between Bristol and Birmingham. Its auditorium holds up to 2,500 people and is frequently used for large Literature and Music Festival events which cannot be accommodated at the Town Hall.

### **8.11 Cheltenham's 'hinterland'**

Cheltenham is marketed as the 'Centre for the Cotswolds', which is intended to tie in with the bigger and wider Cotswolds brand. It is clear that many of the attractions that bring people to Cheltenham are not in the town itself but further afield. They include historic towns like Cirencester and Winchcombe, historic sites such as Sudeley Castle and the many picturesque villages of the Gloucestershire countryside. Cheltenham and Gloucester are often seen as competitors for shoppers and visitors, but in many respects it might be more profitable to regard them as complementary, especially where shopping and culture are concerned.

### **8.12 Eating places**

Cheltenham is well known for the variety of eating experiences that it offers, including more than one hundred restaurants and cafés. Among them are a number of restaurants of true distinction and widespread fame, some of which boast major national and international awards. Cheltenham also has a number of highly rated pubs. Contrary to the widely-held image of Cheltenham as a conservative and old-fashioned place, the restaurant scene in the town is amazingly varied and highly cosmopolitan. In recent years, Cheltenham has developed a relaxed 'café society' ambiance, especially in the Promenade, Montpellier and the Suffolks.

### **8.13 Hotels**

The hotel industry in Cheltenham offers a variety of hotels, ranging from international and national brands such as the Mercure Queens Hotel to a number of budget hotels and small hotels. The standard of accommodation is high.

Capacity is also good. The Hotel Capacity Study prepared for the Joint Core Strategy in July 2009 estimated that Cheltenham offers 20 hotels with 1,098 bedrooms. Since then the Kandinsky Hotel with 60 rooms, has re-opened as the Montpellier Chapter Hotel; and the Hotel de la Bere has undergone refurbishment and is reopening early in 2011 as Ellenborough Park with 60 rooms (although it falls outside the scope of the Study).

The Study found that 270,000 rooms were 'sold' in Cheltenham in 2008, which represents 68% occupancy. It also identified 343 rooms in bed and breakfast accommodation. The main hotels can also provide venues for business meeting and small conferences.

#### **8.14 Educational institutions**

The University of Gloucestershire, the Gloucestershire College and the major independent schools (Cheltenham College, Cheltenham Ladies' College, Dean Close School and St Edward's and a number of other private educational institutions) contribute significantly to the 'visitor economy'. They also provide facilities that can be used for conferences and cultural events. A notable example is the Ladies' College which recently opened its Parabola Arts Centre. Cheltenham also has a number of language schools that bring visitors to the town.

#### **8.15 Twinning links**

Cheltenham has twinning and friendship links with towns in France, Germany, the USA, Russia, China, the Netherlands and Kenya. These links help to promote the reputation of Cheltenham abroad, facilitate educational, cultural and sporting exchanges, and undoubtedly bring visitors to the town. The relationship with Weihai in China is particularly significant for the future, especially as there is considerable interest on both sides in developing educational and business links. Cheltenham is a very popular destination for students from China and France who come to study English or to attend the business school in Gloucestershire University.

## **9. What are the weaknesses of the 'Cheltenham offer'?**

### **9.1 Town Centre**

There is clearly a need and opportunity to improve the town centre, which the Borough Council, County Council and other stakeholders have already identified, with the formation of the Cheltenham Development Task Force in January 2010. The Task Force has been continuing with the work started under the Civic Pride to revitalise Cheltenham's urban environment. Several parts of the town centre fall well below what you would expect to see in a town of Cheltenham's distinction. The route into town along the Tewkesbury Road and Swindon Road looks unprepossessing and devoid of greenery. The former coach station site (now North Place car park) on St Margaret's Road is effectively a derelict site waiting for regeneration. So too is the Portland Street car park, which faces Trinity Church and a pleasant row of 19<sup>th</sup> century residential properties. In Royal Well Road, the impressive sight of Royal Crescent is marred by the

ugly rear of the Municipal Offices which faces it on the other side of the road. All of these unsatisfactory features, so close to the centre of town, undermine Cheltenham's claim to be an elegant and beautiful town.

## **9.2 Traffic and parking**

Cheltenham is notorious for its complicated gyratory traffic system, though the fact that it has survived so long suggests that it is far from easy to come up with something better. One particularly unsatisfactory feature of the traffic system is the way the High Street is severed by the Royal Well/Clarence Street/North Place traffic route. The effect of this is to cut off the High Street west of Boots Corner from the rest of the High Street and add to air pollution in the town centre. This is another issue which is currently being addressed by the Cheltenham Development Task Force.

Although studies suggest that car parking in Cheltenham is adequate for demand, it can be quite difficult for visiting motorists to find car parking spaces, especially at busy times of the year. A bad experience of trying and failing to find a convenient parking space can easily put off a visitor from returning to the town.

Also, the town will suffer the loss of just over 500 car parking spaces when the North Place and Portland Street car parks are redeveloped as part of the Civic Pride scheme. The number will drop from 813 spaces at present to a possible 300.

## **9.3 Signage**

The lack of satisfactory signage is often mentioned by visitors to Cheltenham. It is possible for a stranger to the town to visit without finding their way to the town centre, let alone to the specific attractions they may be looking for. Signage on the approaches is also inadequate and does not do enough to flag up the town's major attractions. For example, signage to Pittville Pump Room and leisure@Cheltenham is particularly unsatisfactory.

# **10. What are the threats to Cheltenham's 'visitor economy'?**

## **10.1 Retail**

In a situation where other towns in the region, for example Bath and Gloucester, are improving their retail offer, there is an obvious danger that the Cheltenham offer will fall behind. In particular, the Borough Council's own research has suggested that there is a need for more large retail units that can accommodate major national and international stores. However it is also important that Cheltenham should not become a 'me too' shopping town or choose to allow major retail development on the edges of the town that could damage the town centre.

## **10.2 Cultural venues**

Although the Town Hall is a delightful venue and has achieved growing commercial success in recent years, it needs significant improvements to bring it up to date with the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Plans have been drawn up to improve the Town Hall but have not yet progressed due to a lack of capital finance. Prolonged failure to improve the facilities at the Town Hall will threaten Cheltenham's position as a major cultural centre.

### **10.3 Conference capabilities**

While the Centaur Building at the Racecourse offers an excellent venue for larger gatherings, the management of Cheltenham Racecourse feel that they are hampered by the lack of a conference hotel on-site. They are therefore considering applying to build a 200-room hotel. This could be a difficult issue for the Borough Council, as the planning issues and the commercial considerations may be hard to balance.

### **10.4 Fear of crime**

The large number of licensed premises in Cheltenham town centre creates a perceived risk of crime and anti-social behaviour in the town, especially late at night.

### **10.5 Global events**

The world economic downturn has undoubtedly hit tourism, and part of the purpose of this strategy is to help tourism in Cheltenham to come out of the recession quickly and strongly. However, there may be other, longer-term issues with their origin in global events that threaten Cheltenham's visitor economy. One of these is a possible reduction in international and domestic travel and a rise in the cost of air travel resulting from the need to respond to climate change and reduce carbon emissions. Another is the possible impact of events such as future terrorist incidents which may create a greater unwillingness to travel. Both of these developments could significantly reduce the number of overseas visitors, thus making it necessary for the Council to intensify its efforts to promote tourism to markets within the UK and to increase spend per visitor as visitor numbers fall.

## **11. How can the 'Cheltenham offer' be strengthened?**

### **11.1 Regenerate the town centre**

The Cheltenham Development Task Force project will regenerate the most unattractive sites in the town centre. It will create new public spaces and better routes through the town centre for pedestrians. All of these improvements will tend to make Cheltenham more attractive for visitors.

## **11.2 Strengthen the retail offer**

The project also has the potential to improve Cheltenham's retail offer without resorting to edge-of-town or edge-of-centre developments that could damage the town centre. The major Civic Pride development sites offer potential for new retail development as part of mixed-use developments. If the Borough Council offices were to be relocated to another site – a possibility which is being considered as part of the council's emerging Accommodation Strategy – this would open up an opportunity to provide more of the boutique-style shopping which is a distinctive feature of the 'Cheltenham offer'.

## **11.3 Improve cultural venues**

The Borough Council needs to develop a strategy for improving the Town Hall as a cultural venue in order to secure its position as a major cultural centre, though it may not be in a position to progress this immediately. One option that should be considered is a Development Trust, along the lines that currently exists to redevelop the Art Gallery and Museum. The aim would be to match an amount of capital contributed by the Borough Council with funds raised from other sources such as charitable trusts and lottery funds. Given the strong interest which Cheltenham Festivals have in the future of the Town Hall, it is important that they should be involved in developing this strategy.

It is also important to recognise the positive impact that the redeveloped Art Gallery and Museum can have when completed. It will not only open up a pedestrian route through to St Mary's Church, but will become a centre for visitors as the new location of the Tourist Information Centre. The potential that it will have to host and promote a wide range of artistic and cultural events needs to be exploited.

## **11.4 Promote Cheltenham as a conference centre**

The Borough Council has a continuing, active role to play in promoting conferences at locations, both council- and privately-owned, in Cheltenham. Pittville Pump Room has the potential to provide a venue for small conferences and business meetings in its upstairs rooms, but would require a modest level of investment in order to seize this opportunity.

## **11.5 Support the hospitality industry**

Perhaps the most positive way in which the Borough Council can support the hospitality sector at present is to help it survive and recover from what has been a difficult and damaging recession.

The Hotel Capacity Study published in July 2009 suggests that hotel business will be badly hit by the recession (as indeed appears to be the case) and that hotel capacity in Cheltenham should remain constant for some time. However it suggests that, according to its own projection of demand, Cheltenham may well need 100 rooms coming on stream in 2013 and a further 50 in 2015. At a more optimistic level of demand, 100 rooms might be required in 2012, an additional 100 in 2014 and 50 more in 2016.

Caution is needed in applying these projections to actual decisions about the rate of hotel-building, as the revival in demand could well be slower than forecast. It would not be doing any favours to the hospitality industry or to the local economy generally to allow over-expansion of the hotel accommodation. It is possible that different considerations may apply to any proposal for a conference hotel at the Racecourse, where the developers would presumably argue that the hotel would generate additional conference business and that therefore the competitive impact on other hotels in the area would be correspondingly reduced.

### **11.6 Make car parking easier**

One of the 'quick wins' of Civic Pride could be to install a system of electronic signage to point visitors to car parks where spaces are available. This would considerably improve the experience of visitors coming to Cheltenham by car.

However, the Cheltenham Development Taskforce, which is overseeing the Civic Pride initiative, has also identified an imbalance in the provision of car parking across the town, with a concentration of off-street parking capacity in the north and east of the town and an under-provision in the south and west.

This imbalance will be partially corrected when the North Place and Portland Street car parks are redeveloped, with a loss of around 500 spaces. But in addition, extra parking spaces may need to be provided in areas where they are currently in short supply. The Borough Council is currently working with the County Council on a joint parking strategy which will address this issue.

### **11.7 Improve signage to local attractions**

The Borough Council, working with the County Council as Highways Authority, should review signage to local attractions. It is important that people can find their ways from out-of-centre locations to central points such as the Promenade, High Street, the major historic buildings and cultural venues and the Tourist Information Centre. It is also important that, once in the town centre, they should be able to navigate around it. Greater use of information boards in the town centre should be considered.

In addition, there is considerable scope for improving signage to visitor attractions along the main gateways into the town. For example, there would be benefit in having the town's major attraction listed on one brown sign on the approach roads to the town. These could include Regency architecture, Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, the Holst Birthplace Museum and Pittville Pump Room. It is important that these issues are considered as part of the Cheltenham Development Task Force project.

### **11.8 Develop new transport links**

In recent years there has been growing discussion of creating a light rail link providing easy transport between points within Cheltenham, and between Cheltenham and Gloucester. Cheltenham Chamber of Commerce launched the idea of a community

railway in 2007. Recent advances in transport technology have made this idea potentially cheaper and easier to achieve than would have been the case only a few years ago. Supporters of the scheme say the first phase would connect Cheltenham Spa railway station with the racecourse, GCHQ and Gloucestershire Airport in Staverton. The next stage would be to link up with the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway (GWR), which is currently extending the line north to Broadway.

The project would be well beyond the scope of the Borough Council to accomplish. However, if it proved a practicable undertaking for some kind of public-interest enterprise with Government and commercial support, it would clearly have significant benefits for Cheltenham. It would make it easier for visitors to the town centre to access the Racecourse and vice versa. It would also make it fast and easy for people in Gloucester to visit Cheltenham and vice versa. There would also be benefits in terms of reducing the volume of private cars and easing congestion on the roads. It would therefore constitute a significant enhancement of what Cheltenham has to offer its visitors. It is therefore important for the Borough Council to decide whether it wishes to support further exploratory work on this scheme.

### **11.9 Strengthen Cheltenham as an ‘events town’**

A striking feature of life in Cheltenham is the large number of events, ranging from cultural festivals to racing fixtures and from sports events to food and antiques markets. ‘There’s always something happening in Cheltenham’ could almost be a motto for the town. An inspection of the town’s calendar of events shows very few substantial gaps. However, it is important that the town, especially the Borough Council, should be proactive in attracting new events and welcoming and open-minded towards groups and businesses who wish to establish new events in Cheltenham. The potential for a Design Festival in Cheltenham is already under discussion and there is potential for other festivals such as an Arts and Crafts Festival or a Visual Arts Festival. The town’s brand values (see section 12 below) should serve as a guide to which events are appropriate to Cheltenham and which may not be appropriate.

There may also be potential for retail events, perhaps at weekends during the year. These could possibly link in with existing events such as the Continental and French markets, in order to attract day visitors at times other than Christmas.

### **11.10 Strengthen Cheltenham’s ‘family’ offer**

Cheltenham has many features which make it an attractive place for families to come, including parks, sports facilities, the Art Gallery and Museum, many of the Festivals events, and family friendly shops and restaurants. However, Cheltenham’s image as a sedate Regency town perhaps conceals these strengths. The Borough Council, working with the business and cultural communities, should look for opportunities to strengthen Cheltenham’s appeal to families, especially in the summer holidays and the run-up to Christmas, and to promote the events and attractions that are available.

### **11.11 Manage crime and the perception of crime**

It is clear from the statistics that crime in the town centre is being effectively managed. The number of reported crimes the town centre dropped from 5,265 in 2005/6, to 5,038 in 2006/7, to 4,050 in 2007/8, to 3,898 in 2008/9, with a further downward trend in the 2009/10 year. Police are predicting that the figures at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 will show a 45% drop in town centre crime over five years. In terms of violent crime the trend is also downward: 1,260 in 2005/6, 1,184 in 2006/7, 1,016 in 2006/7, 972 in 2008/9, with a further drop in the 2009/10 year. One of the main reasons for crime reduction in this area is a more focussed 'intelligence led' approach to policing the night-time economy.

This effective management needs to continue, with the Borough Council (especially through the use of its licensing powers), the police, the managements of licensed premises and other stakeholders all playing their part. It is also important that the perception of crime is also managed, so that the economy of the town is not damaged by exaggerated ideas of the risks of becoming a victim of crime.

## 12. What can be done to clarify and strengthen the Cheltenham 'brand'?

### 12.1 How important is branding?

A brand is the image of the product in the market. It is a collection of ideas and values which those promoting the product wish people to associate with it. It is also the starting point of any effective marketing programme, because it is the core of the message that we are trying to promote.

### 12.2 What brand values should Cheltenham represent?

It is hard to encapsulate in a single idea or slogan what Cheltenham's offer to visitors is. We are an historic Regency town; an historic spa; a garden town; a town of natural and architectural beauty; a centre for arts, culture and the creative industries; a pleasant place in which to relax, enjoy yourself and go shopping. In that sense, deciding on a brand for Cheltenham is not easy.

However, one important purpose of a brand must be to challenge incorrect perceptions. We have seen in section 6 above that the profiling research which the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean DMO produced in 2008 found that many of the people surveyed who did not know Cheltenham thought it was an old-fashioned place, and not very cosmopolitan. The 'Cheltenham brand', has to address that issue by emphasizing that the town is a **vibrant** and **sophisticated** place.

Another important function of a brand is to emphasize key strengths. Although there are many facets to the visitor experience of Cheltenham, they are all associated in some way with **enjoyment**. They are often about the **beauty** of the natural or built environment. They are often about **high quality**, whether in the general environment, the cultural life, the shopping, or the eating experiences. They are often about



**creativity**, whether we are speaking of the creativity of musicians or the creativity of a landscape gardener, an architect or a cordon bleu chef.

In addition the very **diversity** of the pleasures and experiences Cheltenham offers must itself be an important attraction of the town and a crucial part of any Cheltenham brand.

Already, therefore, we have identified seven quite distinct brand values for Cheltenham:

**Vibrancy**  
**Sophistication**  
**Beauty**  
**Enjoyment**  
**Quality**  
**Creativity**  
**Diversity**

This is probably as many brand values as we need to shape our promotional activity.

### **12.3 The Cheltenham logo and strapline**

A brand is usually associated with a logo and a slogan, though these are strictly speaking only a part of what makes a brand. In Cheltenham's case, our marketing material tends to use the image of a caryatid (the armless ladies of Montpellier Walk) as the iconic image of Cheltenham. It also uses – and has used for many years – the slogan or strapline 'Centre for the Cotswolds'.

The strapline communicates the brand value of beauty and also associates Cheltenham with its very famous and beautiful rural hinterland. Although it does not 'tick the box' for all the Cheltenham brand values, it communicates a genuine selling point in a simple and uncontrived way and links Cheltenham into the well-established and powerful Cotswolds brand.

Furthermore, the current branding seems to work. The DMO research in 2008 revealed that Cheltenham has the strongest associations of any major tourist destination in Gloucestershire in the minds of people surveyed.

### **12.4 Does Cheltenham need one brand or several?**

Branding experts would argue that any product can only have one brand. The workshop convened in Cheltenham by the shadow Tourism Minister in November 2009 made a contribution to developing a 'Cheltenham brand' by arguing that the Cheltenham brand is confused, and that 'Centre for the Cotswolds', 'Cheltenham Spa' and 'Regency Cheltenham' are used in a fairly random way in signage and promotions. This point needs to be taken in the new signage that we suggest should be developed, though there seems to be no compelling reason why the rail station should need to drop the 'Spa' from its name.

However, there is a real practical difficulty in insisting that Cheltenham should always cling to a single brand whatever the circumstances. The difficulty is that a town of well over 100,000 people and many thousands of visitors is not like a chocolate bar or a soap powder. It is bound to have many varied facets and mean different things to different people. Brand cannot be a straitjacket that stops us promoting ourselves to the best advantage in any given situation.

A practical solution to this dilemma is that:

- All of Cheltenham's tourist signage should be consistent with the 'Centre for the Cotswolds' branding.
- All of Cheltenham's promotional material should as a general rule use the 'Centre for the Cotswolds' branding, though there may be a variation when the material is addressing a specialist audience (see below).
- All of Cheltenham's promotional material, whatever the audience it is addressing, should be consistent with the brand values set out above.

In addressing specialist audiences, it might be helpful to see the 'Centre for the Cotswolds' as an umbrella branding from which a number of strands or sub-brands can be drawn out – e.g. 'Centre for Festivals', 'Centre for World-Class Racing', 'Centre for Relaxed Shopping', 'Centre for Famous Restaurants', 'Centre for Parks and Gardens', 'Centre for the West' (when promoting the town as a centre for touring areas outside the Cotswolds) etc. We should also consider developing a cultural sub-brand under a strapline such as 'England's festival town', which would also have the advantage of embracing both the cultural Festivals and the racing Festival.

In practical terms, it is also necessary for the Cheltenham brand to fit within other, broader brands. There is already a strong Cotswolds brand, into which 'Centre for the Cotswolds' fits very well. There may also be a need to create brands for tactical purposes. For example, Cheltenham, Gloucester and a number of other districts have considered bidding as a group to be the City of Culture at some point in the future. For this purpose it might be necessary to go in under the banner of a Gloucestershire brand.

## **13. What needs to be done to promote Cheltenham more effectively?**

### **13.1 Create a single marketing department for the Borough Council**

Budget provision for marketing Cheltenham is not insignificant, with the Borough Council making an annual revenue budget allocation in 2010/11 of £104,000 to directly fund the marketing function. The budget is primarily used to fund officers who have a direct responsibility for marketing (2.5 FTEs). However it also includes an operational budget of £32,000 for the Council's marketing and promotional activity. This budget

should not be confused with the £306,000 allocation that the Council also makes for the management and operation of the Tourist Information Centre.

Whilst this sum is not small, the marketing function within the Council has become fragmented and diluted over recent years as a result of organisational changes that have taken place throughout the authority, which has left the function being spread thinly across a number of service areas and teams. This, coupled with the lack of a marketing and tourism strategy to provide vision and focus, has resulted in the marketing budget being spent year after year on the promotion of campaigns, events and activities that have no strategic alignment or justification.

This needs to be addressed. The Council's marketing needs to be reviewed with a view to creating a single marketing department which would not only co-ordinate the Council's own activities but work with partner organisations such as the major cultural providers and the business community.

### **13.2 Develop the role of the Tourist Information Centre**

The Council's aspiration is to relocate the Tourist Information Centre to the redeveloped Art Gallery & Museum, which could become the centre of an information hub for visitors the town, as well as being virtually on the doorstep of the town's oldest building, the St Mary's Parish Church. But whether or not the relocation takes place, it is important to recognise the sheer quantity of day to day work the TIC does in attracting people to the town and making their stay pleasant. In 2009 it dealt with roughly 99,000 enquiries and placed over 800 bookings for accommodation, while our Visit Cheltenham website received well over 1.172 million hits. All of this work makes a measurable impact on the local economy.

It is also important to ensure that the TIC is well signposted; and also to look for opportunities to set up 'baby TICs' – displays and information boards – at other council buildings and other venues where visitors are likely to come, such as the railway station.

### **13.3 Make effective use of media and public relations**

The Tourism section work hard to promote Cheltenham, its events and attractions, through media and PR work. It is important that the existing in-house resources for doing this work are protected. It would also be desirable to be able to buy in additional resources and expertise from time to time, in order to make a bigger impact nationally and regionally. One obvious opportunity to do this would be during the period around the 2012 London Olympic Games, when there will be an unusually large number of overseas tourists in the U.K.

### **13.4 Promote Cheltenham as a conference town**

The Tourism section of the Borough Council has already established a conference desk and a conference guide as marketing tools, and has recently launched a conference website. The need now is to consolidate and build on this work in order to encourage conferences to come to Cheltenham.

### **13.5 Promote Cheltenham as a film location**

Cheltenham is now known as a film-friendly destination and in recent years we have had the filming of Casualty and a film These Foolish Things as well as many reality TV shows and documentaries. The use of Cheltenham as a film location not only brings business to the town, but also generates publicity for Cheltenham which in turn helps to attract visitors.

Cheltenham Borough Council's Tourism section has been a front runner in the region in promoting film-friendly training for its staff and has also instigated film-friendly training for the whole of the county by South West Screen through the Destination Management Organisation (DMO). It also operates a Film Desk and website. Cheltenham also led on the research for the Movie Map produced by the DMO.

The national tourism body VisitBritain has identified film tourism as one of its key focuses for the future. This being the case, this is an excellent time to build upon our efforts to promote Cheltenham as a film location and the Borough Council as a film-friendly local authority.

### **13.6 Co-ordinate and improve the availability of information**

With such a wide variety of events and activities being available to local people and visitors to the town, it is important to provide them with a simple, easily accessible guide to what is happening in Cheltenham. The Council should consider creating an events website, which might have the potential to be a revenue-earner. At present the nearest thing that we have to an events website is the privately run SoGlos.com.

On a more tactical level, Cheltenham must do all it can to promote its attractions at key times of the year. In 2009 and 2010 the Borough Council produced a promotional leaflet for Christmas and an Autumn in Cheltenham pdf. It will help the local economy if these and similar campaigns can be continued in future years.

### **13.7 Develop online communications**

The Visit Cheltenham website, which already receives well over a million hits a year, is sure to become an even more important tool for promoting Cheltenham in the coming years. It is therefore very important that it is 'fit for purpose'. Considerable work has been done to improve the Visit Cheltenham website, but it is important that its effectiveness is kept under review. Not only must it be comprehensive and provide easy access to a wide range of information about the attractions of the town. It must also provide easy and effective links with related sites, especially those that carry information about events and facilities that might interest visitors and make their visit more enjoyable.

It will also becoming increasingly important that the Borough Council should make more use of emarketing in general, for example enewsletters, twitter and facebook. With a procurement process currently under way for a new Town Hall box office, it is also

important for the potential of this system for creating opportunities for emarketing to be explored and exploited.

### **13.8 Adopt a more commercial approach**

It would be putting our heads in the sand to deny that the Borough Council, like all other public authorities, is going to face very straightened circumstances in the next few years. The Council is therefore going to need to rely on support from other partners to promote and market the town – and maybe even to keep the local environment in good condition for both residents and visitors. For example:

- The Council's relationship with Cheltenham Festivals Ltd and perhaps other cultural providers should be more commercial and more focused on identifying opportunities for income generation that could benefit both parties.
- The Council needs to review its policy on sponsorship, particularly in the light of recent disagreements over the sponsorship of roundabouts. It may be that the Council should be more flexible in regard to sponsorship and advertising than it considered appropriate in the past, subject to appropriate environmental safeguards. For example, the Council should consider drawing up a list of sponsorship that it is prepared to make available, clearly outlining the benefits to sponsors.
- The Council should consider the potential for introducing some new chargeable services, for example for permitting advertising signs at key locations. Many offers of sponsorship from businesses are not really sponsorship but a way to buy what is not currently available. Again, appropriate environmental safeguards need to be in place, together with some degree of control over the suitability of the messages that are permitted.
- The Council needs to further explore the scope for collaboration with other organisations in the town that have significant marketing budgets (see below, paragraph 13.9).
- The Council has the potential to earn a modest income from fees by encouraging film-makers to use the town as a location and maintaining its film-friendly attitude.
- The Council should work with Cheltenham Festivals and the business community to develop 'cultural packages' for attendees at major conferences.
- The Council, working with the business and cultural communities, should explore the possibility of arranging and offering special promotional deals for family and friends of students at the University and other major educational institutions.

### **13.9 Work in partnership**

It is important to recognise that Cheltenham Borough Council is not the only organisation which, in one way or another, is marketing and promoting the town. In fact

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the marketing resources of many local businesses and organisations dwarf those of the Council. It is therefore essential that the Council works with all the organisations that are promoting events and services in Cheltenham to achieve the best use of resources and the biggest 'bangs for bucks'.

The Council should consider creating a Marketing Forum, to which businesses, public-interest companies, traders' groups and voluntary organisations that have a significant marketing resource would be invited to come to discuss opportunities for collaborative work to promote Cheltenham. This could explore (among other things) the potential for making cross-selling offers (e.g. offering cultural or leisure opportunities for conference visitors, or one organisation offering introductory discounts to customers of another).

There is also a need for an Entertainments Forum in which the town's main cultural providers can come together with council officers to discuss joint promotional activity. It is important to recognise that, though the Council is an organiser of its own entertainments and events (principally at the Town Hall, Pittville Pump Room and the Art Galley & Museum), it also has an interest in promoting those events that are organized by other providers such as Cheltenham Festivals, the Everyman Theatre and the Holst Birthplace Museum.

### **13.10 Work more closely with other public bodies**

It is unrealistic to imagine that Cheltenham can be marketed entirely separately from the attractions of the surrounding area. This is particularly true in an internet age where people can trawl widely for information. It therefore makes sense to work collaboratively with other councils in Gloucestershire where appropriate on particular campaigns and publications.

#### **(1) The Destination Management Organisation (DMO)**

The Cotswolds and Forest of Dean Destination Management Organisation (DMO) is the county-wide body that provides a joint forum for Gloucestershire local authorities and the private sector. It is one of nine similar organisations in the South West of England. The cumbersome title reflects the fact that it recognises the commercial wisdom of promoting two distinct marketing brands for different parts of the county – Cotswolds (including Cheltenham) and Forest of Dean – rather than a single Gloucestershire brand. Since it was formed in 2005 it has run some valuable campaigns, as well as helping councils achieve economies of scale in print. It commissioned the first-ever county-wide visitor/non-visitor survey. It owns a marketing database, DMS, for which Cheltenham is the lead authority.

In 2010 the DMO restructured itself, slimming down the size of its board and identifying itself more closely with the economic development of Gloucestershire First, which will now set its overall strategy. As a result of this, it is now playing a more active role in promoting tourism in Gloucestershire, especially by facilitating the sharing of services between local authorities. For example for the first time ever, the five local authorities from Cheltenham, Cotswold, Gloucester, Stroud and Tewkesbury have come together to produce the new 2011 Visitor Guide which will provide a comprehensive overview of attractions, events, and

accommodation across the destination rather than each producing their own. Continuing down this road of shared services could bring considerable benefits for Cheltenham – not least in the form of financial savings.

## **(2) Regional and national organisations**

Cheltenham Borough Council has strong links with VisitBritain and EnjoyEngland, both through the DMO and directly. It is important that these links continue, as they provide important contacts for key promotional activities including press and PR. VisitBritain and EnjoyEngland also operate important websites.

### **13.11 Promote research**

The Borough Council's most recent Tourism Economic Impact Assessment was carried out in 2006. This gives a good picture of the impact of tourism on the local economy before the recession, but it is not a wholly satisfactory basis on which to base policy and strategy in 2011 and beyond. If the Council takes tourism seriously, it should adopt a policy of carrying out new impact research, at sensible intervals – say, every two or three years. There should be a small revenue reserve from which to pay for this research.

The Borough Council should also encourage our partners in the town to conduct their own research into where visitors are from and how they heard about Cheltenham. This could help to give us a wider picture of the number and type of visitors and how well our marketing is working.

## **14. What are the financial implications of this strategy?**

This strategy does not assume that significant extra resources will be available from the Borough Council to allow Cheltenham to achieve its tourism and marketing objectives. It would be unrealistic to present the Council with a shopping list of growth bids in the present financial and economic climate. In fact this document suggests a number of areas where economies might be made (e.g. shared services) and additional income raised (by adopting a more commercial approach). Savings could be used to supplement the Council's very modest promotional budgets.

However, it is important for the Council to recognise that visitors are, and will remain, a very important part of the local economy. Supporting tourism is one of the most effective ways in which the Council can aid economic development. This needs to be reflected as far as possible in the Council's budget priorities.

It is important to continue and build on what has been done with considerable success to promote Cheltenham as a centre for visitors. Furthermore without either additional revenue resources or occasional input of one-off funding, it will be impossible to continue activity such as the Christmas promotional leaflet, let alone more ambitious marketing and PR activity.

It is particularly important that funding should be provided for economic impact research, otherwise it will be difficult to measure the effectiveness of what the Borough Council and its partners are doing to enhance and promote the town.

The development of the Tourist Information Centre's role, including the creation of new displays and information boards, will require some one-off funding. So too will improving signage. Tourism signs are the County's responsibility, but are funded by the organisation providing the attraction (which for the most part would be the Borough Council). The Borough is responsible for the pedestrian finger signs in the town.

Some of the broader aspirations referred to in this strategy are part of the Civic Pride initiative and will be funded as part of that programme.

## **15. How will we know our strategy is effective?**

We will know our strategy is effective when:

- There is measurable evidence of an increase in visitor numbers and visitor expenditure.
- There is measurable evidence of the level of employment in tourism-related activities being maintained or actually increasing.
- There is a greater awareness of what Cheltenham offers among actual and potential visitors and non-visitors, as measured in research.
- Visitors are satisfied with their experience of coming to Cheltenham.
- Residents are satisfied that they benefit from the work that is done to attract visitors, both in terms of its economic impact and in terms of their own quality of life.

## **16. What does the strategy mean in practice? A 3 year action plan**



**MARKETING & TOURISM ACTION PLAN 2011 -13**

<b>Corporate Objective</b>	<b>What is our aim?</b>	<b>How will we do it?</b>	<b>When will we do it?</b>	<b>Where will the money come from?</b>	<b>How will we know when we have succeeded?</b>	<b>Responsible officer</b>
Strengthening our Economy	To focus Cheltenham's tourism marketing more effectively	By creating a single marketing department	Complete by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Existing revenue budget resources	Increased tourism and visitor numbers. Greater awareness of the 'Cheltenham offer' through feedback received from external stakeholders and business partners.	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To exploit the potential of the Art Gallery & Museum as a visitor attraction	By implementing the planned development of the building	Closure of AG&M planned – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011	Existing capital resources and continuing external fundraising	When visitor numbers increase following redevelopment.	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To make better use of Pittville Pump Room as a visitor attraction	By improving conference facilities	Business case delivered by November 2011	'Invest to save'	Increased turnover from conference sector.	Gary Nejrup
Strengthening our Economy	To involve businesses and community organisations in ensuring that Cheltenham remains a beautiful town	By reviewing the Council's policy on sponsorship and related advertising	Review complete by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Existing resources	When the Council establishes an income stream from sponsorship which can then be used to improve the local environment.	Sonia Phillips
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To promote more effective working between the major cultural providers in Cheltenham	Investigate the creation of establishing an Entertainments Forum	Feasibility study complete – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Existing resources	Performance data in respect of customers visiting Cheltenham for more than one type of cultural event	Gary Nejrup

					increases. Economic impact study in relation to cultural provision.	
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To co-ordinate and pool the resources of organisations that are promoting Cheltenham	Investigate the creation of establishing a Marketing Forum	Feasibility study complete – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	Existing resources	When a greater awareness of the Cheltenham offer is reported through business partners	Jane Lillystone
Strengthening our Economy	To communicate better with our target markets	By reviewing what our best market sectors are and reviewing our PR, advertising and marketing to ensure that it is targeted to these sectors	Review complete by 31st December 2011	Existing resources	When awareness of the Cheltenham offer and visitor spend increase	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	To work towards improving the events facilities at the Town Hall	By developing a strategy for investing in the Town Hall	Strategy complete by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2013	Existing resources – capital resources still need to be identified	When Town Hall facilities are improved and income increases	Gary Nejrup
Enhancing and protecting our environment	To make parking an easier and pleasanter experience in Cheltenham	1. By introducing an electronic signage system to direct motorists to the most convenient car park 2. By redistributing car parking capacity throughout the town	2011-13 aligned to Cheltenham Development Task Force.	Capital released by Civic Pride and other disposals	When traffic movements across the town are reduced and car park capacity is more closely aligned with demand	Grahame Lewis
Strengthening our Economy	To improve the visitor experience by improving visitor information throughout the town	Devise proposals for creating 'baby TICs' and greater use of displays and information boards at key locations, as part of the Cheltenham Development Task Force project.	2011-13 aligned to Cheltenham Development Task Force	Capital released by Cheltenham Development Task Force project.	Performance data in respect of visitor satisfaction levels.	Grahame Lewis

Strengthening our Economy	To improve website information and maximise e-marketing opportunities.	Investigate proposals to create an events website	Proposals complete by 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2011	Existing resources.	Increased turnover through on line sales.	Gary Nejrup
Strengthening our Economy	To have robust and accurate information in respect of the economic impact of Cheltenham's unique selling points	Undertaken economic impact assessments on a regular basis (3 yearly) Establish a reserve to fund periodic economic impact research to measure the contribution of tourism to the local economy.	Complete by March 2012	Existing\partnership funded	Comparative & up to date data is available.	TBC
Strengthening our Economy	Enhance and improve Cheltenham's retail offer.	Explore potential of redevelopment of Cheltenham's key town sites as part of the Cheltenham Development Task Force.	2011- 13 aligned to Cheltenham Development Task Force project plan	Capital released by Cheltenham Development Task Force project.	When key town centre sites are improved and Cheltenham's position within retail sector improves.	Grahame Lewis
Enhancing and protecting our environment	Enhance Cheltenham reputation as attractive town & safe town	Seek to ensure the quality of parks and gardens is maintained and that opportunities are taken where possible to add to the town's green open spaces. Continue to work with the police and other partners to control crime in the town centre especially late at night, and to	2011-13 Align improvements to the council's Green Space Strategy & Crime & Disorder Partnership	Existing resources \ partnership funding opportunities	Visitor satisfaction data. Crime reduction statistics.	Rob Bell \ Trevor Gladding

		ensure that Cheltenham is perceived as a safe town.				
Strengthening our Economy	Further enhance Cheltenham's visitor experience and develop the town's offer.	Continue and build on the current activity to promote Cheltenham as a conference centre and film location.	January 2012	Existing resources	Increase in conference bookings and accommodation bookings.	Jane Lillystone
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	Enhance Cheltenham reputation as an events town	Review gaps in Cheltenham's events calendar and actively seek to attract suitable new events to fill them	Review complete by March 2011	Existing resources	Production a year round calendar of events. Reduction of no. of weeks\months where an event is not taking place.	Gary Nejrup
Enhancing the provision of arts and culture.	Develop and expand Cheltenham's cultural offer to a broader market.	Consult with cultural and commercial partners to devise proposals for improving Cheltenham's 'family offer' and explore the potential to work more closely with Cheltenham Festivals on joint revenue-earning activity.	Review complete by March 2012	Existing resources	Increased turnover\visitor numbers of target audience\ market.	Gary Nejrup
Ensure we provide value for money services that effectively meet the needs of our customers.	Explore joint \shared service working opportunities with tourism sector and providers across the county.	Explore with the Cotswolds and Forest of Dean DMO and with other district councils in Gloucestershire the potential for shared services in the field of tourism and marketing.	March 2011	Existing resources	Cost reduction with retained service standards	Sonia Phillips

Ensure we provide value for money services that effectively meet the needs of our customers.	Ensure the council continues to strategically review tourism and marketing	Conduct a major review of this strategy using the most recent tourism economic impact assessment and other recent research.	Review complete by March 2013	Existing resources	Implementation of 3 year action plan	Sonia Phillips
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