

Shadow BID Board
28 March 2017
Albert's Chophouse

Marketing of the city centre was essential in the first BID because of the nature of the transport works. There was a major focus on ensuring the 'business as usual' message was transmitted, primarily within the region. Alongside specific marketing of the BID (and other) events, the BID worked with Marketing Manchester to produce seasonal campaigns for a relatively local audience. We also worked with MM and the airport, where appropriate, on engaging with international audiences. With the hosting scheme, we provided a welcome for visitors that has become increasingly well-used. We also produced a number of stand-alone marketing pieces such as a guide-book.

With no transport works affecting the central core of the city centre and therefore fewer direct challenges, the meeting explored how we might help market the city centre as part of the next BID. All agreed that this was still a very important role. In the past five years, the number of international visitors (both tourists and students) has grown substantially, while the staycation market in the UK is having an increasing impact on hotels, retail and F&B.

The meeting agreed that the BID should continue to have a role in marketing the city centre, but not necessarily in the way it has done in the recent past. The MM Destination Director gave a presentation on their priorities, and there was broad support for working across the regional markets, staycation visitors and international visitors. A comment was made, and strongly supported, that it is essential not to alienate the domestic customer by focusing too much on the international visitor.

Exploring the BID's potential role, it was agreed that more work should be done on supporting MM's work with content. This was seen in a number of areas—

1. Providing incentives for new visitors on new routes (the 'free pint of beer for US visitors' model)
2. Providing content to fill the itineraries of visitors—travel trade visitors tend to require their itineraries to be full before they leave home. The potential of the growing cruise ship market landing in Liverpool was explored.
3. Improving the culturally-aware experience for visitors once they arrive—menus translated into mandarin, travel guides likewise.
4. Helping promote the city centre as somewhere to use as a base while visiting the Lakes/Peak District, etc.

The new MM M-Drive was promoted as a solution for gathering material from businesses that could feed in to MM work.

The meeting also explored the visitor welcome. There was support for the hosting scheme, and for its potential expansion. There was concern raised about the state of the airport (which might be met by new investment there), and by the various ways into the city. There are two areas of work here—on providing orientating content at points of arrival ('the airport is only fifteen minutes from the city centre, so get people into the centre') and on operational activity to improve the look and feel of the street-scape—the subject of the next shadow board.

Finally, the meeting supported improvements in the way the brand of Manchester is expressed globally, feeling that a more emotional resonance needed to be created for this city of music and football.

The meeting endorsed a broad move away from campaign collateral to working even more closely with MM and providing content and detail to help support their activity. This would suggest more co-ordination and detailed work, getting content from individual stores and restaurants.

The next meeting is on 26th April at Arndale House. At 3.15pm, and will focus on operational issues. Please contact Rachel Walker for further details Rachel.Walker@cityco.com