

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Committee</b>	: <b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date</b>	: <b>8<sup>th</sup> June 2011</b>
<b>Subject</b>	: <b>Cultural Strategy Update - November 2010 – April 2011</b>
<b>Decision type</b>	: <b>Executive</b>
<b>Ward</b>	: <b>All</b>
<b>Report by</b>	: <b>Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Culture</b>
<b>No. Of appendices</b>	: <b>None</b>
<b>Reference no.</b>	: <b>PT10051W (final version 17/5/2011)</b>

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To introduce to members the progress that has been made in achieving the Cultural Strategy's targets over the last six months.
- 1.2 To update members on any new cultural activities and opportunities that have arisen since the Cultural Strategy was developed in 2007.
- 1.3 To remind members of the Cultural Strategy Route Map which sets out the seven main strands of the document of which any activities are focused.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note achievements made in delivering the Cultural Strategy over the last six months, November 2010 to April 2011.
- 2.2 To note some of the significant new cultural activities that have arisen since the creation of the Cultural Strategy in 2007, such as the opening up of Blackfriars.

## **3.0 Background**

- 3.1 Members were last updated on progress against the Cultural Strategy action plan some six months ago in a bid to provide an effective feedback mechanism on how well the city was achieving its cultural targets.
- 3.2 The strategy proposed seven distinct action areas over a ten-year period. The seven areas are:
  - Making sense of the city centre – creating an attractive, legible and vibrant city centre.
  - Rethinking Heritage and Cultural Tourism – improving access, visibility and quality of heritage facilities with a particular emphasis on the water/ maritime history.

- Raising the stakes for creativity – making provision for the growth in creative industries.
- Broadening Gloucester's excellence in sport.
- Enjoying and supporting diversity.
- Planning for a 'transformational' project.
- Marketing and promoting Gloucester and its new cultural image.

A full version of the strategy can be viewed on the City Council's website at [www.gloucester.gov.uk](http://www.gloucester.gov.uk)

#### **4.0 Progress - Cultural Update November 2010 – April 2011**

- 4.1 Progress over the last six months has also been significant and varied. This update is in no way comprehensive but does indicate the extent of cultural activity taking place in our city.

##### **1. MAKING SENSE OF THE CITY CENTRE**

This strand of the Cultural Strategy is all about physical improvements to the city centre and its buildings, as well as the interpretation and animation of the city and its public realm. This strand is also about linking up various areas of the city including the Docks and city centre and providing public art of iconic status in the Docks which leave a strong impression on visitors and residents.

Hotel improvements have seen the refurbishment of the New County Hotel on Southgate Street. Outside of the city centre but still playing an important part in the visitor economy, a new Ibis hotel opened in Barnwood in November and the Hallmark Hotel in Robinswood has also re-opened after a refurbishment programme.

- The upgrade of New County Hotel has added another venue to linkages area and helped improve the look of Southgate Street and extended the café culture in the City.
- The annual Gloucester Cajun and Zydeco Festival was held at the Guildhall in January with significant advance ticket sales for the 2012 event.
- Gloucester 12 – MGL and the GHURC are in the middle of a project which celebrates twelve of the city's most iconic buildings with a set of collector's postcards and guide being designed to appeal to residents and visitors.
- As part of the City Council's museum transformation process a new Dairy Café, Retro Room and Boutique Shop have been completed. Celebrity Chef, Rob Rees also launched the Dairy Café on the 7<sup>th</sup> May.
- Work on the new education centre at the Folk Museum will commence soon and will be completed in September ready for the new school term.
- Works to the City Museum are well underway to transform the ground floor of the building with a complete re-display of the ground floor exhibitions, a new education room, a new café, refurbished shop, toilets and reception.
- New information and interpretation signage has been installed on Alney Island to improve information to walkers and others users of this area of the City.
- Southgate Street public realm works are close to completion.
- Works on English Heritage's Blackfriars site are almost complete and will be re-opened in the summer.

- 'On Toast' opened in Gloucester Docks in February 2011 adding a new catering offer to Docks workers, visitors and tourists.

## **2. RETHINKING HERITAGE AND CULTURAL TOURISM**

The second strand of the Cultural Strategy looks to improving access, visibility and the quality of heritage facilities and attractions in the City. There is a real appetite for heritage and cultural tourism, not only from visitors but also our residents. To address this interest a range of initiatives and projects have been developed that not only put Gloucester on the map but increase residents' pride in their city.

- The Guildhall continues to bring in a range of household names to perform at the venue including its speaker programme and bands such as The Feeling, Echo and the Bunnymen, Bluetones and Kate Nash. The Guildhall also welcomed Sir David Frost, our first Live Nation Show, Wild Beasts.
- The Guildhall added further new events to its programme including Smooze – a Valentines themed event and new Dance themed nights.
- The Guildhall successfully staged its Cajun Festival once more in January 2011 and has sold 82 tickets for next year's festival already.
- As part of the Cajun Festival museums staff opened up the Eastgate Viewing Chamber and provided tours to Cajun Festival customers, expanding their experience of the City and providing alternative recreation.
- The popularity of the Kings Speech meant that the Guildhall was able to welcome 1300 customer to their cinema over the two weeks that it was screened.
- The Llanthony Priory Trust has got funding to establish a business plan to decide the future for the site in terms of restoring the buildings and getting it used by the public.
- The Museums Christmas event, Bright Lights Dark Nights, celebrated our communities' colourful celebrations whilst the City's Christmas celebrations were focused on the Quays with a Victorian themed market.
- The Folk Museum worked in partnership with BBC Gloucestershire to stage two events linked to the BBC's television themes - History on the High Street and the Ancients which welcomed new customers to the museum on Westgate Street.
- As part of the museum transformation process, the City Museum opened its doors for one weekend to show its Mosaic floor which had been uncovered during the building works to the Price Memorial Hall.
- Gloucester Tall Ships Festival was confirmed in this period for the 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> August along with a Food and Drink Festival in the Quays with 2 celebrity chefs on 23rd July. The Cultural Services and Tourism Group have also confirmed that they will delivering the Summer Carnival and Fireworks in July and August.

## **3. RAISING THE STAKES FOR CREATIVITY**

Raising the Stakes for Creativity is about increasing opportunities for participating in arts including increasing activity in our schools and developing creative industry workspace in the city. The Cultural Strategy also recommended the development of a new music hub and suggested that Gloucester develops an image of being cool in contrast to Cheltenham's Regency representation.

- The Safer Gloucester Partnership hosted Gloucester Youth's Got Talent at the Guildhall which was sponsored by Tesco and other local businesses. 65 entries

were reduced to 16 who performed in the final in November 2010. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the harm caused by substance abuse.

- The Guildhall also hosted a civic variety show in the Spring of 2011.
- Guildhall provides equipment to enable partners to put on events (e.g. staging for Café Rene to put on music festivals).
- In this period there was an expansion of supported workspace for the creative and innovative sectors.
- The Sula Lightship opened in Gloucester Docks.
- In partnership with the GODS the Guildhall hosted a very different pantomime last Christmas with Dracula which proved to be highly successful.
- The University of Gloucestershire hosted its own Theatre Production at the Guildhall.
- Gloucestershire College's live music course also staged their own version – Raiders of the Glost Ark.
- As a result of consultation the Guildhall opens Lala Lounge during the week starting 9<sup>th</sup> May. This is aimed at the Under fives and their parents who can come to the Guildhall and watch children's TV on the cinema screen, meet their friends and have access to the Café Bar.

#### **4. CONSOLIDATING GLOUCESTER'S REPUTATION FOR SPORTING EXCELLENCE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

This element of the Cultural Strategy requires the right balance between developing world class provision of sporting facilities and achievement with access for all. Gloucester has the lowest participation rates in sport in the County and therefore, increasing participation is important. One way of achieving this is through outreach events such as those in Matson and the StreetGames. GL1 and the Tennis Centre have also been highly successful in attracting national and international sporting events.

- It has been confirmed that Race for Life will take place in Gloucester in June 2011- a health walks programme has also been in place around the City.
- A new snooker club has opened in the City during this period.
- A Step and Dance Competition was hosted at GL1 in April 2011.
- GL1 and Oxstalls Tennis Centre are regional and national event venues and have hosted the following in the last six months:
- British University & Colleges Fencing Individual Championships - November 2010
- American Wrestling Rampage – November 2010
- National Synchro Age Group Championships – December 2010
- GB Boys Preliminary Water Polo Competition – February 2011
- Samurai Martial Arts Competition – February 2011
- Veterans National Fencing Championships – March 2011
- Modern Pentathlon GB Youth International – March 2011
- Roller Derby League – April 2011
- British Swimming Synchro Championships – April 2011-04-26
- The University of Gloucestershire was awarded £164,163 from the Sport England Lottery Fund. The aim is to get more students active, aimed at the 'not so sporty' students and focussing on alternative sports and exercise. The university bid was supported by Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust and will enable improved use of GL1 and Oxstalls Tennis Centre by students.

## 5. ENJOYING AND SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

Gloucester is the second most diverse city in the South West after Bristol. In light of this, the consultants developing the Cultural Strategy in 2007 found that the city had a reasonable number of community groups representing different faiths, cultures, genders, generations and areas of personal interest.

A key element of this strand of the strategy was to increase community consultation and programmes for diversity. It also suggested using sport as a way of achieving this through international sporting fixtures and maximising any opportunities that the 2012 Olympics may offer.

- The Safer Gloucester Partnership held a Forced Marriage, Honor Based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation Conference in March 2010 to improve prevention, support and prosecution.
- A new North African style café (replacing Café Roma), El Bahadla opened up in December diversifying the eating the City has to offer.
- Artshape has offered over 2000 individual opportunities to artists facing disabling barriers in the county to engage in the arts of which 1270 were in Gloucester city.
- Artshape has also put on a number of art exhibitions on throughout the county which have been well attended.
- The Guildhall took on a Community Marketing Assistant with funding from the Future Jobs Fund for six months. This post has enabled the Guildhall to carry out some valuable work in extending our services out to different communities in the City and tailoring our services and a result of what we have learned.
- The Folk Museum continues to welcome thousands of school children each year who take part in our education sessions. The Museums Service has also increased the number of people that it reaches through its outreach programme – this has been particularly important whilst the City Museum has been closed for refurbishment.
- The TIC hosted Anne-Vidya Borne from our twin town Trier who came to Gloucester and spent three weeks at the TIC to learn from how we operate here. She also helped us in Gloucester through translation of publicity information into German.
- The Gay Pride Ball took place at the New Inn in December 2011.
- The Holocaust Memorial event at the City Council took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011.
- The City Council took part in LGBT History Month during February by displaying information boards in Herbert Reception.
- International Women's Day was celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011.
- The community safety team continue to promote 'stay safe' messages in a wide variety of means including radio interviews on GFM community radio (which has strong and extensive links across diverse local communities), talking newspapers for the blind, talks to community groups (usually older people or people with learning difficulties) and by using theatre in local schools.

## **6. PLANNING FOR A TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECT**

The Cultural Strategy suggests that the transformational project should be of international importance and be based on a strong public and private partnership. At the time of developing the Cultural Strategy in 2007, it was not clear what this project should be, only that it should put Gloucester on the map.

- Major development works are currently taking place on the Blackfriars North and East Ranges that will open up the site as a visitor attraction and venue for meetings, performances and weddings. The site is almost ready and will be open to the public in the summer.
- The Cultural Services and Tourism Group has completed a draft Business Plan which proposes that it operates the site as the commercial operator and will actively seek out opportunities for income generating activities on the site such as weddings and performances but also as a site for education and community uses.

## **7. MARKETING AND PROMOTING GLOUCESTER AND ITS NEW CULTURAL IMAGE**

The consultants involved in helping to create the City's Cultural Strategy felt that Gloucester should make more of what already existed in the city and that the cultural message should be woven into Gloucester's marketing collateral.

In tandem with this, residents should feel involved in their city through regular communications and public events. They also advised that Gloucester's brand should be significantly improved. This is one of the purposes in the creation of Marketing Gloucester Limited who have worked in consultation with partners to develop a brand for the city. The success of the Guildhall through its ability to gain coverage in national media is also responsible for improving the city's image at a national and regional level.

- A number of staff at the TIC were chosen as the faces of British Tourism Week – MP Richard Graham also spent a day in the TIC to increase the awareness of tourism and the services that the TIC offers.
- The TIC sold a range of Royal Wedding souvenirs with an amazing success rate and is now selling official merchandise for the 2012 Olympics which has seen income levels increasing in this level of the business.
- The Wanted are performing at Kingsholm in May – one of Britain's newest boy bands.
- In November 2010, the TIC was the sole ticket agent for the BBC Christmas celebrations event held at Gloucester Cathedral and sold 900 tickets for the event.
- TIC is also working with the Cathedral to sell Glorious Gloucestershire tickets due to the success of the BBC event – building closer relationship with the Cathedral team.
- The TIC won a gold award in the South West Tourism TIC of the Year and went on to the nationals where they won a silver award at the Enjoy Excellence Awards 2011 (in top 4 TICs in England). Following on from this the TIC won an outstanding achievement award with 5 other TICs who have worked together to raise the standards in TICs.

- The TIC achieved the highest score across the country in the national mystery shop scheme with a score of 98.2%.
- TIC footfall figures for April 2010 to March 2011 were up by 14%.
- The TIC won the 'complete customer focus' award in the Driving Gloucester Forward awards 2011, whilst the Guildhall won 'putting Gloucester on the map and a commended award for 'communication'..
- From April 2011 the City and Folk Museums brought in entrance charges following significant benchmarking and research. For those customers who visit the museums on a regular basis we have introduced a membership scheme which means that for a one-off fee the customer can visit both museums as often as they wish and will receive regular newsletters, invites to special events and previews and social events.
- The TIC took part in a national Economic Impact Study into the financial impact that TIC have on the spending of customers visiting TICs. This research was able to prove that visitors do indeed spend more money in the city as a result of visiting the TIC and will visit more attractions and stay longer in the City.
- The TIC is generating more group bookings with a recent booking bringing in £7000 into local economy through accommodation bookings.
- The Civic Trust has welcomed 300 Women's Institute visitors through their group tours in this period.
- The Guildhall created new designs for several advert boards across the City during this period which were highly visible.
- The Guildhall continues to increase its Twitter and Facebook followers and aim to have 5000 followers by 2012.
- The City Council has sponsored (platinum) the Cathedral's Flower Festival that will take place in July.
- The Cultural Services and Tourism Group has just completed its Customer Service Excellence assessment for 2011 and hope to maintain its fully compliant status with each of the 50+ criteria. We will find out the result shortly.
- The Cathedral launched their new book – Gloucester Cathedral (Faith, Art and Architecture: 1000 years) in April 2011.

## **5.0 Future Work**

- 5.1 Members will receive the next cultural update in November 2011 which will update them on progress made during the period April 2011 to October 2011.
- 5.2 Over the next six months the Cultural Services and Tourism Group will focus on completing the Museums transformation process, achieving the opening of Blackfriars and delivering the Summer Festival.
- 5.3 At a broader level MGL will deliver two high profile brand building events for the City in the form of the Food Festival in July and the third Tall Ships Festival in August.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 The progress made during the last six months has been significant and has certainly contributed to both putting Gloucester on the map and contributing to the city's regeneration.

6.2 The Museums has seen major progress during this period and by the time this report comes back to members in November 2011 the development process will be complete with two museums which are fully fit for purpose for the coming years.

6.3 The opening up of Blackfriars – not only as a visitor attraction, but as a venue for weddings, meetings, education and performances will be a significant addition to the City’s portfolio of visitor attractions and will draw in visitors from across the country and will be such an achievement for the City.

**7.0 Financial Implications**

7.1 None at this stage. The Council is not committed to any additional expenditure. Future projects may have financial implications for the council which will be investigated individually.

**8.0 Legal Implications**

8.1 None.

**9.0 Risk Management Implications** *(Authors to complete) Identify all key risks (scoring 8 and above) for the recommendation including the impact and likelihood of the risk occurring and what measures will be taken to mitigate the risk.*

9.1 None at this stage. Appropriate risk management will be undertaken for each city council project as they arise.

**10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):**

Please ensure you complete this section even if a PIA is not required.

Is a PIA required?	Yes	No	Explanation: This is not a new policy or action. It is purely a document which has collated various actions across the City which may or may not have been carried out by the City Council.
		X	
Has an initial PIA screening been completed?	Yes	No	Explanation:
		NA	
Has a full PIA been completed?	Yes	No	Explanation:
		NA	
Is the PIA available?	Yes	No	Explanation:
		NA	
Has the PIA identified any negative impacts on any protected characteristic or community cohesion?	Yes*	No	*Please ensure PIA is available
		NA	



### **Any Further Relevant Information:**

As part of the People Impact Assessments the Cultural Strategy will need to be reviewed shortly in terms of best practice. A full review will take place at the point and an overarching PIA will be produced.

The Cultural Strategy encompasses all areas of our community. A key strand of the strategy is 'enjoying and supporting diversity' – action point 5.

### **11.0 Other Corporate Implications (this may include Community Safety, Environmental, Staffing, Trade Union)**

1. Community Safety - There remains a perception by some that the city is not a safe place in the evening – work still needs to be achieved in promoting the city as a safe place to visit to enjoy cultural activities in the evening and night-time.
2. Environmental - Environmental implications will be addressed within individual projects within the action plan.
3. Staffing - Work on the operation of the Blackfriars site will become part of the role of the existing staff at the Guildhall.
4. Trade Union - N/A

**Background Papers** :

**Published Papers** :

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