

Gloucester City Council

GLOUCESTER'S CULTURAL VISION AND STRATEGY 2016 - 2026



PUTTING CULTURE
AT THE HEART OF
GLOUCESTER FOR
THE GOOD OF ALL



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FOREWORD



Gloucester is clearly a city 'on the up' but we still have a long way to go to have the cultural offering that residents deserve, not just for their own enjoyment and wellbeing but also for the economic benefit of the city.

That is why the City Council has been instrumental in setting up a Culture Board. It knows that it can't act alone to develop culture in our city. It is also vital that we develop culture alongside the bricks and mortar regeneration which is already underway.

I'd like to thank the key players who worked so hard to produce this updated cultural strategy which will help continue the cultural growth in Gloucester. The new Culture Board will have a lot of work to do to deliver the aspirations identified, but by continuing to work in partnership with the support from Arts Council England as well as so many local organisations, then surely culture will be at the heart of the city for the good of all. I'm sure you're as excited about the future as I am.

Lise Noakes
Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure
Gloucester City Council



Gloucester is a city with a famous history: what this strategy aims to do is ensure that it also enjoys a famous future.

The city council understands the transformative role culture can play in our lives: it creates jobs and economic growth; it builds stronger communities; it offers hope and aspiration to children and young people; it puts places on the map.

The key to this strategy will be effective partnerships. As well as the city council, the university, the cathedral, the business community, the city's arts organisations and its schools and colleges – all have a role to play in making Gloucester an exceptional place to live, work and play. We look forward to playing our part in making those partnerships, and that exciting future, become a reality.

Phil Gibby
Area Director, South West, Arts Council England



OUR VISION

Putting Culture at the Heart Of Gloucester for the Good of All.

We are committed to making Gloucester a better place to live, work and play by engaging and empowering local communities and leaders to transform the city.

Gloucester will be known for its distinctive culture; which will be innovative and excellent, quirky and edgy, diverse and community-based with a strong focus on young people.

DEVELOPING OUR STRATEGY

Gloucester is changing, things are happening, but we have not yet realised our cultural potential; too often seen as a cultural desert and poor relation to our neighbours, we recognise that we have a long way to go. This ten-year cultural plan is a positive statement of our ambition, building on the strengths of our diverse communities and pointing to the opportunities for development of culture in the City.

This strategy is integrated with the City Council's other strategic plans, particularly the City Vision 2012-2022 and the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy whose vision is that 'Gloucester will be a flourishing, modern and ambitious City which all residents can enjoy'.

A cultural plan cannot be delivered by the City Council alone and we have developed our vision and strategy after consultation with a wide range of artists, arts organisations, community leaders and the public. Without these people, groups and organisations the scale of change envisaged will be impossible to achieve. We need to develop new ways of working which will ensure that the whole community is engaged in developing culture in Gloucester.

OUR DEFINITION OF CULTURE

For the purpose of this strategy the term Culture focuses on arts and heritage and is used to describe activities such as the visual arts, music, the performing arts, crafts, the creative industries, the arts-science interface and the provision of facilities and services such as theatres, museums and galleries, cinemas, community halls and archives in addition to the protection of the historic environment and the inclusion of artworks in the public

realm. Sports and leisure, whilst vitally important are not so underdeveloped, and are not therefore included in this current strategy.

WHY CULTURE MATTERS TO GLOUCESTER

Culture should never be a privilege; it is a birth right that belongs to us all ... and if you believe in publicly-funded arts and culture, as I passionately do, then you must also believe in equality of access, attracting all, and welcoming all.
- David Cameron, Prime Minister, January 2016

Great cities are defined by their culture. They are defined by their history; through their local heritage, museums and archives, historic buildings, festivals, food and local traditions. But a great city is also defined by its contemporary culture; its artists and arts venues, film and music, photography and crafts, fashion and design, and its buzzing restaurants, pubs and night clubs.

Great cities are also defined by their ambitions for the future.

The arts, culture, and creative industries are widely acknowledged for their positive impact on the economy and society. Employment in the the creative industries is recognised by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) as one of our most powerful tools in driving growth. The latest economic growth figures released by DCMS confirm that the creative industries are booming, growing by 8.9 per cent in 2014, almost double the wider UK economy's growth as a whole. The creative industries were worth £84.1bn to the UK economy in the year 2013-2014, up from nearly £77bn the year before, with employment also up by 5.5 per cent to 1.8 million jobs.



Economic development

Culture is a vital component of economic growth. The number of jobs in the creative and digital sector elsewhere in the country is well documented and often strongly connected to the cultural sector. Culture helps to attract visitors and investment, creates jobs and generates economic activity. Culture is important as a means of attracting and retaining talent and as part of a high quality education experience that helps to attract further and higher education students.

Community regeneration

Culture can be an important tool in community regeneration projects. It can bring communities together, attract investment and help to foster a strong sense of place and identity. Culture can also improve health and education and whilst enhancing the economic profile of an area, can

help ensure that these changes are sustainable. Increasingly, the arts and culture are also used to foster social inclusion, promote mental health and wellbeing, and inspire children and young people. Across all public services from education to health, from inward investment to community, culture can act as a catalyst for human and city regeneration and growth.

A way of life

We believe there is a real opportunity for culture to increase the liveability of Gloucester, from providing entertainment and intellectual pursuits, to expertise in areas such as heritage and inclusion. We also want the intrinsic value of culture and creative learning to be at the heart of our community. We believe that culture should be integral to the way we do things in Gloucester as part of the core fabric of our city; we believe in culture as a way of life.

When I arrived in Gloucester in 1981, I thought it was a cultural desert. How things have changed in recent years with the introduction of concerts and festivals (Tall Ships, History, Food, Street performances etc.) throughout the year. Keep going Gloucester and make our city a centre of cultural excellence!

John Smith, Resident of Longlevens



KEY FACTS ABOUT GLOUCESTER

HISTORY

- Gloucester has been variously described as "The Gateway to the West" and "The Crossroads of England"
- It is the cathedral city and county town of Gloucestershire located in the South West of England. The City lies close to the Welsh border, and is on the River Severn, approximately 32 miles (51 km) north-east of Bristol, and 45 miles (72 km) south-southwest of Birmingham
- In 1827 Gloucester became a port city following the completion of the Gloucester and Sharpness canal. On completion it was then the longest, deepest and widest ship canal in Britain. The Docks contains fifteen Victorian warehouses which make up what is Britain's most inland port and are now a major tourist attraction
- Gloucester was home to iconic manufacturing firms including the Gloucester Aircraft Company and Fielding & Platt
- The City contains 707 listed buildings including 37 Grade I's
- The City is the birth place of Robert Raikes, the founder of the Sunday School Movement and John Stafford Smith, who composed the American National Anthem
- The historic Roman streets, magnificent Norman Cathedral and Victorian Docks have been used for various films and TV productions including Harry Potter and Doctor Who. Disney recently shot scenes for the sequel to Alice in Wonderland at the Docks.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- The City has a population of 123,439 (ONS Mid-Year Population Estimates 2012). It is the most populated conurbation within the County of Gloucestershire and has the highest population density
- Gloucester will experience the greatest population growth of all county districts, expected to increase by 20.1% or 23,800 people between 2010 and 2035
- Gloucester is a relatively young city with 25% of the population aged 19 and under (highest in the South West) and 39% under 30. The City is expected to experience the greatest increase of Gloucestershire's

districts in the number of children and young people between 2010 and 2035, with an increase of 16.4%

- It is a diverse City, the black and minority ethnic population (BME) stands at 9.8% with approximately 100 languages and dialects spoken.

EDUCATION

- The City boasts high performing schools and over 17,000 college and university students
- It is home to top education providers including further and higher education campuses for the University of Gloucestershire, the University of the West of England and Gloucestershire College
- Over 30% of Gloucester's working age population has achieved NVQ level 4 or higher.

ECONOMY

- Gloucester is home to world leading advanced engineering companies providing cutting edge technical products and services e.g. Prima Dental
- Gloucester has a strong finance and insurance cluster including being the location for the HQ of the specialist insurance company Ecclesiastical Insurance Group
- Gloucester has the headquarters of EDF Energy, one of the largest energy companies in the UK
- The City supports a growing cluster of information security, web hosting, CAD/CAM development, defence communications and security, ICT infrastructure development and IT content management businesses
- The City has a strong independent retail and leisure sector with over 100 independent city centre shops
- Gloucester attracts 5.9 million visitor trips each year. Annually, visitor spend is £207 million
- The City's physical regeneration continues apace, having secured over £700 million of private sector investment, and Objective 7 of the Council's 2016 Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy is to 'Recognise and Improve the City's cultural offer; hand in hand with the successful regeneration of the city'.

CULTURE IN GLOUCESTER

Gloucester is, in many ways, a vibrant progressive city that is forging ahead with an exciting redevelopment and regeneration programme. The Gloucester Docks development has been largely successful and is now attracting 5 million visitors a year. Further regeneration projects are in train, notably the redevelopment of the areas known as Blackfriars, the Kings Quarter, the University's Oxstalls Campus and the Cathedral's Project Pilgrim.

However, with respect to cultural provision, Gloucester lags behind cities of similar size and status, nor does it compare especially well with regional neighbours. This is evidenced, in part, by not having any organisation, venue or performing company that is included in Arts Council England's National Portfolio. There is, despite some new and notable exceptions, a real lack of high quality arts and cultural provision in the City; the night-time economy, outside the new Docks, is generally underdeveloped; heritage interpretation, despite some outstanding assets and investment, does not yet provide an exciting visitor experience; and the cultural sector generally is underdeveloped, fragmented and feels undervalued.

The extensive research and consultation exercise, undertaken as part of our planning, has confirmed this assessment and a willingness to help lead the required change. It has also identified a very positive range of activity, organisations and community events on which to build for the future, including:

- Gloucester's Music Scene: one of the City's strengths ranging from the Three Choirs Festival, the Gloucester Blues Festival, the SportBeat Music Festival to a diverse pubs and clubs sector. Music training and development is delivered strongly by organisations like Music Works and Gloucester Academy of Music
- History and Heritage: with its 700 listed buildings, historic Roman streets, magnificent Norman cathedral and Victorian docks, Gloucester has some of the best heritage assets in the country, many the subject of successful Heritage Lottery Fund bids. The annual History Festival and Heritage Open Days are growing significantly and the City has four main museums with potential to develop
- Festivals and Events: Gloucester has some extraordinary public spaces in which to stage events and Marketing Gloucester and Gloucester Quays organize a large range

of successful events, supported with funds from the Council, including the biennial Tall Ships and the Victorian Christmas Market

- Strike a Light Festival: of new, cutting edge theatre and dance is now staging its sixth edition and runs two festivals a year (April and October). Developing as a producer that supports artists, recently supported Marketing Gloucester in the delivery of the cultural programme of the Rugby World Cup in Gloucester
- Inclusive Art and Dance: championed by G-Dance and Art Shape through initiatives like the Arts Inc Academy, designed for disabled and disadvantaged young people, giving them access to an exciting arts programme alongside their non-disabled peers
- Gloucester Cathedral: for many the heart of the City, the Cathedral stages over 110 cultural events a year including the hugely popular Crucible sculpture exhibition organised by Pangolin Gallery. It is currently embarking on a 10 year programme of regeneration and community engagement
- University of Gloucestershire: has recently opened a new performing arts and events venue at its Oxstalls campus and plays an active part in the cultural life of the city. It plans a significant increase in the number of students based in Gloucester's Oxstalls Campus
- Gloucester Guildhall and Blackfriars Priory: managed by the City Council these two venues present an increasingly vibrant programme of music, comedy, film, visual arts, dance, theatre and events at capacities up to 400
- Create Gloucestershire: made up of over 130 members and associate members from across the county's arts and cultural sector who think, research, test and share ideas to encourage arts to become "everyday" in Gloucestershire
- Gloucestershire Arts Council: a thriving creative community, including individual practitioners, small businesses, small professional organisations, amateur and voluntary groups making use of community venues like the King's Theatre, the Olympus Theatre and St Barnabas Hall.



THE STRATEGY

OBJECTIVE 1 DEVELOP ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANISATIONS

Develop artists and arts organisations so as to build the cultural and creative industries

- Attract and nurture creative people to the city, developing a creative factory of talent whilst acting as a catalyst for growth in the hospitality sector and the creative industries
- Create affordable workplaces for artists and micro-arts organisations to develop new work in the City as equally important to big bricks and mortar projects
- Develop the quality of the Guildhall and Museum's programmes to attract a broader audience and releasing the potential of our cultural venues for innovation, entrepreneurial development and fundraising
- Invest in Gloucester's existing artists and arts organisations who can produce high quality work and the leaders who can deliver

ACTION

1. Develop an arts, culture and creative industries hub and incubator in one of the City's many underutilised buildings
2. Consider an alternative delivery model such as a charitable Trust for the Council-run cultural venues - the Guildhall, Blackfriars Priory, the City Museum and Art Gallery, the Folk Museum - to release their potential for innovation, entrepreneurial development and fundraising
3. Encourage grass-roots community arts activity that works with the NHS and others to deliver health and wellbeing outcomes
4. Develop a Cultural Leadership Group to ensure a future generation of cultural leaders in the city
5. Fundraise to support investment in high quality projects and fundraising capacity building in the sector

Gloucester has so much to offer culturally. To see people working collaboratively and to see artists making work from Gloucester and touring it nationally is so exciting. Gloucester is on the cusp of becoming a city with a high cultural offer, where work is programmed, where festivals are common place, where young people have consistent and high quality activities in their city and Gloucester residents are able to affordably access brilliant arts on their doorstep.

Sarah Blowers, Strike a Light

OBJECTIVE 2 BROADEN THE CULTURAL OFFER

Broaden the cultural offer to support social and economic development

- Improve the quality of life of the people of Gloucester by increasing cultural provision and participation, leading to increased social cohesion, civic pride, confidence and ambition and ultimately improved health and wellbeing
- Ensure that the City's cultural plans match the ambition of its physical regeneration and are embedded at the heart of the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and the G-First Local Enterprise Partnership
- Ensure that proper cultural infrastructure is in place for the long-term to enable the City to benefit fully from the regeneration improvements, thereby realising the full economic and social benefits that cultural regeneration can achieve
- Support young people to develop their musical talent and participation by investing in a place for them to develop, rehearse and record new work and learn new skills
- Build partnerships with national cultural organisations that have the potential to bring large-scale projects to the city whilst home grown infrastructure matures

ACTION

6. Work closely with the Council's Economic Development team, the Media and Culture Group of G-First LEP and Marketing Gloucester to ensure that cultural planning is aligned
7. Scope the potential for a new large-scale arts and cultural venue in the city centre that could also be used as space for other commercial activity
8. Make contact with national cultural organisations that have the potential to bring substantial projects to the city, particularly for young people and in the areas of music and heritage
9. Support the development of Gloucester Carnival as the most inclusive carnival in the UK and create a greater sense of community ownership and quality
10. Support Gloucester based arts organisations like G-Dance and ArtShape to collaborate further, making inclusive art and dance programmes for the community

THE STRATEGY

OBJECTIVE 3 DEVELOP A VIBRANT CITY CENTRE

Develop a vibrant city centre full of cultural activity and things to do

- Encourage all communities, and particularly young people and families, to use the city centre as a safe and enjoyable focal point to their lives, building a sense of place and community
- Find a better way of telling Gloucester's heritage and history story involving our museums, tourist information centre and other attractions, including consolidating the expected impact of Project Pilgrim

ACTION

11. Commission a regular programme of high quality outdoor arts events, including street arts and parades, using the city's fantastic outdoor spaces
12. Review the current programme of events and festivals supported by Marketing Gloucester and the Council to ensure they meet the objectives of this strategy, including economic impact, pride in the city and community cohesion
13. Scope the potential for a new visitor orientation centre in the city centre that could include the Tourist Information Centre and heritage interpretation involving the museums



OBJECTIVE 4 DEVELOP AUDIENCES

Develop audiences who enjoy the new cultural opportunities being created

- Build audiences for new cultural developments by stimulating local appetite and demand for quality cultural experiences through a long term audience development strategy
- Attract visitors to Gloucester's new high quality cultural activity

ACTION

14. Map out and raise investment for a long term audience development strategy that sits alongside the developing cultural infrastructure
15. Work with Marketing Gloucester to develop a cultural tourism marketing strategy and campaign, collaborating with neighbouring towns and regions, to promote the existing and newly developed, quality, heritage and cultural attractions of the City

OBJECTIVE 5 PUT GLOUCESTER ON THE CULTURAL MAP

Put Gloucester on the cultural map by developing high profile events

- Develop distinctive Signature Events that raise the image and profile of the city to attract visitors, building on our strengths in heritage and music
- Consider bidding for UK City of Culture 2025 as a Major Event to inspire the sector and the City, acting as a beacon to signal the cultural regeneration of Gloucester

ACTION

16. Invest in and develop one or two existing Growth Events, and encourage the creation of new events with potential, into a small portfolio of nationally significant Signature Events. Examples include the existing Strike a Light Festival, the Gloucester History Festival and a potential Folk Festival
17. Evaluate the potential investment required and return on investment to develop a bid for UK City of Culture in 2025 as a Major Event to inspire the sector and the City, acting as a beacon to signal the cultural regeneration of Gloucester

OBJECTIVE 6 MAKE THINGS HAPPEN

Make things happen to continue the momentum for change

- Develop a new way of making things happen where people feel involved and create the right level of cultural leadership in the city who can deliver
- Bring together Gloucester's thriving creative community, empowering them to collaborate effectively and take charge of developing their own cultural future
- Develop and implement a fundraising plan to support the initiatives in this strategy, commissioning and funding local arts organisations to deliver

ACTION

18. Set up a Cultural Partnership consisting of a wide Cultural Forum and led by a Culture Board acting as a Taskforce to make things happen
19. Develop an online platform to support and advocate for the development of the cultural and creative sector to engage and build creative and art based communities and to promote cultural activity in Gloucester similar to the Creative Assembly websites of Torbay, Swindon and others
20. Apply for funding from Arts Council England and other fundraising to support the strategy



This cultural strategy cannot be delivered by the City Council alone and must involve a wide range of artists, arts organisations, partner organisations and community leaders if it is to be successful.

It is these people, groups and organisations who will have to bring about the change to which we aspire and a new way of working which we believe will engage the whole community in developing culture in Gloucester.

We intend to set up a new cultural partnership to bring together all of these groups and to delegate delivery of this Strategy to them. This will be a strategic development organisation, facilitating and fundraising for projects and then creating partnership or commissioning for delivery. This partnership will consist of two distinct elements; the Cultural Forum and the Culture Board.

THE CULTURAL FORUM

The Cultural Forum will be a vital part of the partnership whose purpose is to support the development of culture in Gloucester; contribute to the strategy of the Culture Board and to receive updates on its delivery. This will be an open, self-selecting group of those with an interest in the success of culture in Gloucester. It will involve representatives from the broad culture sector and the public. The Forum will meet twice a year with meetings organised and chaired by the Culture Board. One of these will be an annual meeting, open to the public, where the Culture Board provides a progress report to the Forum.

THE CULTURE BOARD

This will be the leadership group tasked with delivering this strategy by identifying partners and holding them to account to deliver what has been agreed. This will include working with such organisations as the City Council, Marketing Gloucester, the Cathedral and University as well as a whole range of smaller organisations. A group of approximately twelve people with an Independent Chair and a nominated representative of the Council, they will act as the trustees of a proposed new charitable organisation that will manage the cultural partnership. An open call for trustees will be made with a formal appointments process. A key role of the Board will be fundraising, from both the



public and private sectors, to support the development of this Strategy with delivery commissioned from existing and new cultural organisations in Gloucester.

Having undertaken an appraisal of the options for delivery of this cultural partnership we have concluded that a new Charitable Incorporated Organisation or CIO is the right vehicle to achieve our aims of leadership by the sector; focusing on the City of Gloucester; effective fundraising and rapid progress towards our goal of putting culture at the heart of Gloucester for the good of all.

DIRECTOR

The partnership will engage a full-time Director to raise funds directly, support the fundraising work of the Board, develop cultural activity through partnership and oversee the day to day administration of the Forum and Board. It is expected that one of the members of the new partnership will host the Directorship and a small office.

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