

Gloucester City Council

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| Meeting: | Cabinet | Date: | 11 March 2020 |
| Subject: | Cultural Strategy 6 Monthly update | | |
| Report Of: | Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure | | |
| Wards Affected: | All | | |
| Key Decision: | No | Budget/Policy Framework: | No |
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| Appendices: | 1. Gloucester Cultural Strategy Progress Report 2020-02-10 | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress made against the Cultural Strategy for the period October 2019 to March 2020 and to recommend that the strategy is reviewed and updated to reflect changes and new priorities.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) the report is accepted and progress against the objectives noted
- (2) a revision of the Cultural Strategy is undertaken in 2020 to cover the next 10-year period 2021 – 2031.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 **Interim Head of Cultural Services** - Philip Walker began in this role on 18 Nov 2019 on secondment from Bristol City Council on a fixed-term basis of 12 months. During this time, he has worked closely with stakeholders to understand the city's priorities and develop the approach to events and festivals delivery for 2020-21 and support the Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT) in the delivery of the Cultural Strategy. Whilst the responsibility for the delivery of the majority of the actions within the strategy sits with GCT, the city has a critical role to play in supporting this, ensuring the right level of support is provided and the conditions are created for culture to thrive, in order to ensure the success of the strategy.
- 3.2 **Festivals and Events** – as previously reported to Cabinet in January – the function and budget for delivering the city and civic events programme will be delivered in-house by city council staff reporting to the Cultural Development manager. The city council continues to work closely with the Culture Trust to ensure that the strategic

delivery of the cultural strategy is achieved, recognising the role of festivals and events. There are benefits to this delivery model that will allow festivals and events to be delivered in a mixed model in future, with a combination of grant-funded organisation delivery, directly contracted services and some civic events being delivered in-house for 2020. A programme of events for 2020 was agreed at Cabinet on 12 Feb 2020, together with the approved revenue budget (excluding staffing) of £215,000 for 2020-21 and 2021-22.

- 3.3 **Strategic Programming Group** - a city-wide group has been established with representatives from the Gloucester Business Improvement District (BID), Cathedral, Gloucester Culture Trust, Peel Group (who manage Gloucester Quays), and the city council to be chaired by the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure. The terms of reference for these will be agreed at the first meeting, however the intention is for this group to provide a strategic oversight of the city's activity and look further ahead in order to secure opportunities for the benefit of Gloucester citizens. A co-ordinated, strategic approach is in line with the cultural strategy and will enable Gloucester to attract and develop high-quality commissions, events and festivals in the future – maximising the opportunities for residents and businesses as well as developing new events that will attract more people into the city.
- 3.4 **Gloucester Roundhouse Exchange (GRHEX) partnership** – meeting held in Jan 2020 between the leader of the council and Cabinet lead for Culture and leisure, with members of the council executive and the leadership teams of the Roundhouse and Culture Trust in order to maximise the opportunities presented by the partnership. The Gloucester Roundhouse Exchange is a programme that aims to develop young people's participation and access to the arts, develop the leadership skills within Gloucester's own cultural sector and foster partnership working between Gloucester Guildhall, Roundhouse, The Music Works, Your Next Move and Strike a Light. It is funded for three further years by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation More and Better Fund.
- 3.5 **Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF)** – is an organisation that supports innovation and creativity with a particular focus on developing young people and the arts – PHF has supported the city with funding grants. Initial funding to Gloucester City Council of £200,000 for the GRHEX activity taking place between 2017-2019 has been followed up by the news that a further £250,000 has been awarded to GCT to support and develop more access and inclusion of young people in the arts in Gloucester for 2020-2022. This is a significant investment into the city and is a further endorsement of the work of the Culture Trust and the impact that the city's cultural strategy is having in attracting inward investment from national funders. The funds, resources and activity plan are managed by GCT who are responsible for reporting to PHF on progress made.
- 3.6 **Jolt** – creative studios and incubator. Gloucester Culture Trust have taken on the lease of the first floor of Kings House; The Music Works have taken on the lease of the second floor. The first floor is being transformed into different-sized spaces for the purposes of supporting and developing creative and cultural start-ups – creating an environment that will lead to new partnerships and businesses – as well as ensuring a healthy and vibrant cultural sector that is supported, through peer-to-peer networks, both formal and informal. The upper floor is to be occupied by The Music Works, who will create fully accessible, exemplar music studios, teaching rooms and performance spaces.

- 3.7 **The Music Works** is an organisation that are specialists in working with young people in challenging circumstances to help them reach their full potential in music, in learning, and in life. They have attracted £400,000 capital investment from the Arts Council to support their move into Kings House. The plans for this move are being supported by the Roundhouse, who themselves run a suite of studios at their base in Camden.
- 3.8 **Kings Square** – the physical redevelopment of this site began in Jan 2020 with site clearance and preparatory works. The construction group Midas are working with schools to create some digital artwork to animate hoardings that will be used to surround the works. The construction works are anticipated to last on site until late 2020. The Square presents both an exciting opportunity as well as a challenge. Occupying a footprint that is larger than Leicester Square in London, Kings Square will be a high-quality city centre site that will be able to be used for concerts, events, festivals and other mixed uses. The challenge is to keep the square active and lively through the year – and one way to do this is to hold cultural events and activities on the square at key moments during the year. Work has begun to develop a programme of cultural events for the first 18 months to 2 years (late 2020 – 2022). An allocation of funds will be made from the city council Festivals and Events budget to support a launch event within the first few months of the square’s completion.
- 3.9 **City of Culture 2025** – the Cultural Strategy describes the city’s aspirations to become the UK’s City of Culture in 2025. Development work has begun in order that the city can submit a bid, should the city decide to proceed with this. Work to scope out a roadmap to 2025 and beyond has begun – with key milestones that the city needs to meet in order to be a credible candidate city. It is the view of Gloucester Culture Trust and a wide range of stakeholders who have been consulted that Gloucester is extremely well-positioned to make a strong and convincing bid for this title. Research into both successful and unsuccessful previous contenders has shown that the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages of being a bidder. Those cities that developed bids which were unsuccessful, managed to transform their city’s cultural offer and sense of place and reaped the rewards of taking part in the process, even where they were unsuccessful. Those cities which have been given this title have attracted considerable investment – both directly and indirectly as a result – the economic impact on Hull (City of Culture 2017) is estimated to be in the region of £676m of new private and public investment that was generated for the city. However, within Gloucester, concerns have been raised as to the cost and risk to the council if it is to front such a bid. The challenge for the council is to develop relevant and strategic partnerships, across the cultural, business and public sectors, to support a bid in a cost-effective manner. Details have still to be released on the process for bidding, however, there is likely to be a two-stage process, with an initial expression of interest in 2020 followed by a period in which a worked-up bid could be submitted in 2021.
- 3.10 **Gloucester’s Cultural Vision and Strategy** – was developed in 2015 and is currently a 10-year strategy that describes the period 2016-2026. It has identified 20 Actions to deliver against the 6 key Objectives. For progress against these objectives see Appendix 1 of this report. As we approach the half-way point of a 10-

year strategy, it is appropriate to review and update it for the next 10-year period. This is because changes arising from the actions taken to date have created new opportunities and challenges. In addition, the changing political, social, environmental and economic situation since the writing of the current strategy, means that the strategy requires review and updating in order to reflect the changed and changing context. An example of where the current strategy is out of date, is that it does not reference the climate emergency nor the city's aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. The City would like to work with the Culture Trust and others to update the current strategy.

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 Social value is integral to the delivery of the Cultural Strategy and this will continue to be a focus for the strategy in future. Culture and cultural activity in the city can provide far-reaching benefits to citizens' health, well-being, skills and help develop social cohesion and a sense of place. Cultural participation in activities such as Events and Festivals can bring disparate communities together to celebrate and collaborate.

5.0 Environmental Implications

5.1 The existing Cultural Strategy does not reference environment nor climate change. Future updates to the Cultural Strategy should address this omission.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

6.1 The cultural strategy is still a functioning strategy and could be left unchanged for the remainder of the 10-year period, however, it will become increasingly out of date. There is a small risk of reputational damage with this approach. The larger risk is that an up to date strategy will be required in order to field successful bids for both the Cultural Development Fund (CDF) and City of Culture.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The current Cultural Strategy (2016-2026) is nearly half-way through the 10-year period. Significant progress has been made, but changes have occurred that require the Strategy to be updated and refreshed.

7.2 There is no reference to the environment and climate change, and other city strategies have been published since 2016, so these also need to be taken into account. These omissions should be addressed.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Conduct a review of the current strategy, with key partners in the city (March – October 2020).

8.2 Publish a renewed Cultural Vision and Strategy for 2021 – 2031 by end 2020.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 Cultural Strategy review can be done with existing resource. An updated strategy will require additional budget to complete – source to be identified from GCC and GCT.

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 The delivery of the objectives of the Cultural Strategy 2016-2026 are the responsibility of the Council and its partners. Any collaboration or new delivery models with outside bodies will need to ensure compliance with relevant legislative requirements and the Council's Contract Rules.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 Risks of not renewing the Strategy - the strategy is still operable - but there is a low-level reputational risk of not renewing this. GCT has strong governance and leadership and has a good and growing reputation with stakeholders nationally and regionally, as well as within the city.
- 11.2 Risk to achieving additional investment from CDF and City of Culture success. There is a medium-to-high risk that the city will fail in attempts to draw external funding and will be at a disadvantage if it does not update its cultural strategy and continue to demonstrate progress, ambition and commitment.

12.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

- 12.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

13.0 Community Safety Implications

- 13.1 None

14.0 Staffing & Trade Union Implications

- 14.1 None

Background Documents: Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2016 – 2026
<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/media/1372/cultural-strategy.pdf>