

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10 March 2021
Subject:	The Great Place Programme		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	1. Great Place Evaluation Summary		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To note that the 3-year Great Place Programme delivered between 2017 and 2021 is coming to a close and to report on the results of the independent evaluation on the successful delivery and significant impact of the programme in Gloucester.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) the significant positive impact of the Great Place Programme be noted and welcomed
- (2) everyone involved in delivering the Programme be thanked for the roles they have played in the achievement
- (3) when a suitable opportunity arises, efforts are made to formally celebrate the achievements of the Great Place Programme.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Great Place was a national scheme aiming to put arts and culture at the heart of communities. It was funded by Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and Historic England and aimed to make a step-change in how places valued and developed their cultural offerings.

- 3.2 In Gloucester the mission was not just to put on ‘one-off’ “here today gone tomorrow” events, but to grow, support, connect and champion the creative talent, leadership, and strategic thinking required to make long-lasting change to Gloucester’s cultural offer – and to put Gloucester on the cultural map.

- 3.3 Great Place made grants of up to £1.5m available to places with plans and programmes best able to deliver the Great Place ambitions. In late 2016, with a newly adopted Cultural Strategy, engaged and committed partners with lots of enthusiasm and ambitious plans, and a freshly launched Culture Trust chaired by Councillor Lise Noakes, Gloucester was well placed to meet the challenge of the bidding process.
- 3.4 The City's bid was for £1.5m to help deliver a £3.1m Great Place programme, delivered by a wide range of organisations and partners, that would address seven work strands:
- 1) Development of the Gloucester Culture Trust and the development of cultural leadership in the City
 - 2) A partnership with the Roundhouse Theatre, Camden focussed on engaging communities and transforming the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged young people and exploring the options for a new venue in Gloucester
 - 3) Cultural commissioning – using culture to engage with people and communities and empower people who may not normally participate in cultural activity to take part, self-organise and become 'cultural citizens'.
 - 4) Marketing Gloucester as a Great Place, grow the visitor economy and attract inward investment
 - 5) Achieve regeneration in the city through heritage by engaging with local heritage groups, developing a city heritage strategy and promote volunteering to support the City's heritage sector
 - 6) Festivals and Events review, investment and growth especially signature events like the Gloucester History Festival
 - 7) Developing cultural entrepreneurs by creating a supportive space creating in Gloucester an exemplar resource for incubating new cultural talent and developing cultural entrepreneurs across arts and heritage for a digital age.
- 3.5 Following a competitive bidding process Gloucester was awarded £1.49m. The City Council acted as the accountable body and the Culture Trust led and co-ordinated delivery across the seven strands. Each strand was led by a partner organisation with strong collaboration and effective communications built into the process. The Great Place programme started in 2017 and, allowing for disruption caused by the pandemic, will close in 2021.
- 3.6 As part of the formal programme an independent evaluator was engaged periodically to assess and report on progress against plans. A summary of the key findings is attached at Appendix 1 Overall the independent evaluator found that

“Changing the cultural landscape of a city is a long-term endeavour and Gloucester has made exceptional progress in a short amount of time.”

- 3.7 Each strand of the Great Place Programme has contributed to this exceptional progress:

Strand 1: Gloucester Culture Trust

- Established Gloucester Culture Trust as a new model of cultural leadership. A well-governed and well-managed charity, with a diverse Board of 9 volunteer trustees and a skilled team of 4 employees and 3 freelancers, all of whom are passionately committed to the Cultural Strategy's success.
- Concurrently managed this £3.1million project with 30+ funded partners over four years
- Put public consultation at the heart of Great Place, with a three-year "Big Conversation" to ensure local voices shaped the project and informed the 2021 Cultural Strategy update.

Strand 2: Gloucester Roundhouse Exchange

- Enabled local arts organisations to increase their participation, talent development and performance platforms for local young people and, in turn, help those organisations become more confident, resilient and ambitious – working with Guildhall, Strike A Light, The Music Works and Your Next Move. For example, recognising the lack of behind-the-scenes skills locally, 30 x "Future Producers" have been trained to upskill local people in event management, producing, technical production and leadership.
- Tested demand for a major (1000+ seater) new performance venue in Gloucester and set out a roadmap for how to achieve this, working with Roundhouse and AEA Consultants for expert advice.
- Put on Rooftop Festival, a collaborative, creatively ambitious event particularly targeted at younger (U30) audiences and emerging artists, to address a gap in demand. Doubled its audiences between year 1 (2018) and year 2 (2019).

Strand 3: Cultural Commissioning

- Delivered training for new cultural leaders, called Creative Catalysts. Create Gloucestershire (the official 'sector support' organisation for the county) is developing this as a national programme, which started in Matson and was piloted and tested through Great Place. It covers the principles of how to bring creative activity to your community as well as practical information around self-employment, insurance for freelancers, safeguarding and data compliance.
- New projects were delivered by Creative Catalysts in Matson and several Gloucester Libraries. For example, Matson Library and Robinswood Primary School worked together on flag, carnival costume and dance workshops for 230 x KS2 students and CPD and materials for KS1 teachers to work with another 200 x KS1 students. Plus 438 x children took part in projects linked to the Library, which led to an artist-in-residence there and further funding.
- Culture Matson, a group of local residents, artists and community stakeholders (Police, Redwell Centre, Glos City Homes, Library etc), worked together to put on the first ever arts festival in Matson in March 2018, Festival of Hope, which attracted an estimated 1,400 attendance, with follow on activity over the next two years.

Strand 4: Promoting Gloucester's cultural offer

- Great Place provided funding (to MGL) to design and test new 'digital totems' which can provide interactive information that promotes the city's offer to visitors. This work is now being picked up by Gloucester BID with installation expected later this year.
- Gloucester Culture Trust employed an expert consultant to deliver marketing and communications training to 30 x attendees from the city's arts and heritage organisations during the summer 2020 lockdown. This included six 2-hour workshops, 16 x hours of private mentoring for 6 organisations, and up-to-date profiles and data about Gloucester audiences within a 60-minute drivetime.
- Updated and improved Visit Gloucester website, to be delivered in Spring 2021, co-funded by Great Place.

Strand 5: ARCH – Achieving Regeneration in the City through Heritage

- Commissioned and produced the city's first Heritage Strategy, which was formally adopted by the Council in July 2019.
- Initiated a shared volunteering system (Engage In Gloucester). By June 2020, this had hosted 377 volunteering opportunities ("challenges") at, an average of 150 live at any one time before lockdown (54 during lockdown). As at June 2020, there were eight organisations and 353 open individual accounts on the site: 68% female, 30% male; 66% GL1 postcodes; 51% under 30. Gloucester Culture Trust is now hosting and managing this.
- Created an education brochure for the city, written in collaboration with local history teachers. It has information about all the city's heritage sites and periods of history, suggested timetables and practical maps. It is aimed at encouraging teachers and their school trips to visit Gloucester and to visit multiple sites that support the curriculum. <https://gloucesterculture.org.uk/education-resources/education/>

Strand 6: Festivals & Events

- Invested in the growth of a suite of Signature & Growth events for the city, aiming to make them more popular (to a variety of audiences), creatively ambitious, diverse, resilient and better promoted. Gloucester Culture Trust created a Strategic Producer role (funded by Great Place to December 2020) to support this complex work, connecting across local and national organisations, artists and communities.
- Funded an Innovation Fund offering local artists up to £1,500 for 'R&D' to create new content for festivals and events and to help us discover new or hidden talent in the city. 21 x projects were supported between January 2019 and July 2020.
- Commissioned new work, which is vital if we want to "put Gloucester on the cultural map". Of Earth And Sky by Luke Jerram, in autumn 2020 took place at 31 x Gloucester locations, featuring 30 x local poets, of all ages and backgrounds, whose words were inscribed in the landscape. There were more than 89,000 meaningful engagements over 10 weeks and 15 funding partners enabled it to happen. Gloucester Culture Trust managed this commission and its delivery.

Strand 7: Cultural entrepreneurs

- Gloucester Culture Trust has set up Jolt, which aims to be the home for creative start-ups in Gloucestershire www.joltgloucester.com. It comprises the first floor of Kings House, with 6,500sq ft of dedicated cultural entrepreneurship space at the heart of Kings Quarter, including 13 x subsidised, private studios (with bespoke mentoring and training programme for tenants), 8 x studio pods, 22 x capacity co-working space, a meeting room, and 2 x bookable spaces (rehearsal/workshop). The building was in a state of severe disrepair and Great Place-funded work has included new heating, lighting, plumbing, fire safety and electrics. We have worked with The Music Works to raise more than £300,000 towards a lift for the building. Gloucester City Council is the landlord and has gifted a 20-year peppercorn rent to GCT to support Jolt; it has invested £50k into the lift.
- 238 x individuals had taken part in various Jolt creative entrepreneurship programmes – training, workshops, networking, mentoring – between November 2017 and March 2020. Gloucester Culture Trust has worked with the University of Gloucestershire to develop many of these programmes.
- 4 x Creative Leadership Trainees from Gloucester, won paid, year-long training placements at four cultural organisations – Art Shape, Three Choirs Festival, Gloucester Library / Strike A Light and Gloucester Culture Trust. These placements included work experience, training and mentoring to support emerging cultural leaders in Gloucester.

3.8 As part of the evaluation process statistically valid residents' surveys were conducted in 2019 and 2020. These have shown that:

- residents recognise that the city's festivals, arts and culture make Gloucester a better place to live (up from 67% to 74%)
- recognition that there is more to do in the City Centre than there was last year and the City is more welcoming (each up by 6%)
- increased pride in living in Gloucester (up from 52 to 62%)

3.9 The evaluation also showed that Great Place has led to a significant increase in funding and inward investment in Gloucester's Cultural development. Direct investment through Great Place and the Culture Trust since 2016 has reached £2.2m and significantly more indirect investment has occurred through the activities of the City's independent arts and heritage organisations, for example, was £1.6m raised by The Music Works for their new studios in Kings House and ticket sales income to the History Festival (which quadrupled during the three years of Great Place investment). 15 funding partners contributed to the delivery of last years Of Earth and Sky poetry walking trail meaning that for every £1 invested by the City Council in that event £1.60 was invested by others. Arts Council funding to Gloucester based artists and organisations increased by 170%

“For every £1 invested by Gloucester City Council into Gloucester Culture Trust’s core funding since March 2016, an additional £15.70 has been directly raised to support culture”

4.0 Social Value Considerations

4.1 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) has formed a fundamental part of the approach taken throughout the Great Place programme and has been a very specific feature of several of the strands. As part of the Cultural Commissioning strand the evaluator said about Culture Matson:

“The people in the room bring the collective resources of the group to bear on each issue. People either solve the issue in the room or identify who can solve it and one person takes responsibility for the next steps. There is a belief that pooling people’s skills, networks and connections is sufficient to solve most problems, or move them to the next stage.”

4.2 *The report also noted that*

“Great Place has created a network of artists, businesses, local authority officers and cultural and heritage organisations, and created structures for and a habit of collaboration.”

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

5.1 None

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 To note and welcome the significant positive impact of the Gloucester Great Place programme.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

7.1 The Great Place Programme will conclude in the next few months. The work to continue the legacy left by the programme is being reflected in the revised Cultural Strategy.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 None. The Programme will deliver within budget. The additional funding leveraged as a result of the work of the programme is set out elsewhere in this report

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.)

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 None

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

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 None arising from the content of this report

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA) and Safeguarding:

11.1 None arising from the content of this report

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

12.1 None arising from the content of this report

Sustainability

12.2 None arising from the content of this report

Staffing & Trade Union

12.3 None arising from the content of this report

Background Documents: None