

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet Council	Date:	10 March 2021 18 March 2021
Subject:	Cultural Strategy 5 Year Update		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Philip Walker, Head of Culture		
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Appendices:	1. Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy Revised (2021-26) 2. Changes to the Original Strategy 3. Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2016-2026		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of progress made against the Cultural Strategy for the period 2016-2020.
- 1.2 To present the revised version of Gloucester's Cultural Vision & Strategy for the period 2021-2026.

2.0 Recommendations

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

- (1) the report is accepted and progress against the objectives and actions noted
- (2) the changes to the original strategy are noted
- (3) the updated Cultural Strategy for the next five years is accepted and recommended to Council for adoption.

2.2 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** that the revised Cultural Strategy is welcomed and adopted.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Need for a Cultural Strategy for Gloucester

In 2015, the Council with a group of individuals and organisations including Gloucester Cathedral, University of Gloucestershire and Arts Council South West took on a

consultant, Nick Dodds of FEI to help develop a Cultural Strategy. The work of the Consultant was part-funded by the Arts Council England (ACE). Extensive consultation with stakeholders and citizens resulted in the production of **Gloucester's Vision and Strategy for Culture 2016 – 2026** (Appendix 3). This strategy was endorsed by Arts Council England's SW Regional Director (Phil Gibby) and the Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure (Councillor Lise Noakes) who jointly provided the foreword to introduce the strategy. The strategy was formally adopted by the council in March 2016.

3.2 The vision for the strategy was;

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.

The strategy identified 6 key objectives and 20 actions to deliver the objectives.

The initial 6 objectives were to;

1. Develop artists and arts organisations so as to build the cultural and creative industries.
2. Broaden the cultural offer to support social and economic development.
3. Develop a vibrant city centre full of cultural activity and things to do.
4. Develop audiences who enjoy the new cultural opportunities being created.
5. Put Gloucester on the cultural map by developing high profile events.
6. Make things happen to continue the momentum for change.

3.3 The establishment of Gloucester Culture Trust

The initial strategy identified the need for a Culture Board which began on an informal basis and consisted of representatives of the local authority, the University of Gloucester, Gloucester Cathedral and others. In order to deliver the strategy, Gloucester City Council made a bold and distinctive move: and acted to devolve the strategic delivery to an independent body and so Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT) was established in 2016 as an independent charitable incorporated organization (registered charity number 1177489). www.gloucesterculture.org.uk . This was one of the key actions identified in the original strategy. The Culture Trust has been the driving force to ensure that the actions and objectives of the cultural strategy are met.

3.4 Reporting on progress

The Cultural Strategy is a strategy for the whole city, not just the City Council and is delivered in partnership with GCT and others. Since GCT was established the council and GCT have worked closely to ensure that progress could be monitored and actions progressed. Progress is reported both to the city council (bi-annually) and the GCT board (quarterly) to ensure that the city council, GCT and partners jointly hold accountability for the successful delivery of the strategy.

3.5 Key Achievements in 2016 -2020

Much has been done to progress the actions in the cultural strategy between 2016 and 2020 - which has helped to deliver the vision of putting culture at the heart of Gloucester

for the good of all. The objectives are being delivered by having a focused strategy, clearly identified resource, leadership and ambition from the Culture Trust and the city council. It has been achieved through funding and commitment from other partners across the city and beyond - resulting in a city where culture connects and enables people and culture is championed. Some of these achievements include;

- Establishment of **Gloucester Culture Trust**
- Gloucester success in winning Arts Council/ National Lottery Heritage Fund/ Historic England **Great Place funding of £1.49m** to deliver a £3.1m, seven-strand, Great Place Programme 2017-2021. Managed by Gloucester Culture Trust, this has funded more than 30 arts and heritage organisations and initiatives over the past four years; hundreds of artists and creative entrepreneurs have been supported through commissions, training, mentoring and performance fees.
- **Successful delivery of the Great Place** programme. The independent evaluator noted: “Changing the cultural landscape of a city is a long-term endeavour and Gloucester has made exceptional progress in a short amount of time.”
- **Increase of inward investment** into the city’s cultural development, in addition to Great Place – including an exceptional £500,000 grant from **Paul Hamlyn Foundation** to support investment in young people as participants, emerging artists, performers, producers and audiences.
- **Partnership** with the Roundhouse London – **Gloucester Roundhouse Exchange**
- Significant financial and professional support of artists and organisations, festivals and events – including Strike A Light, GL4, Culture Matson and more
- The development of **Kings House** into a cultural hub with JOLT studios providing artists studios in central Gloucester and a home for The Music Works – whose mission is to transform young lives through music, from first access to talent development opportunities.
- **Strategic commissioning** and partnership development to bring popular, high quality creative projects to the city (eg. Of Earth and Sky – which raised an additional £1.60 for every £1 invested by Gloucester City Council)
- Commissioning a well-received and insightful **Cultural Venues Demand Analysis report** (AEA report) which sets out a practical roadmap of what Gloucester needs to do if it wants a successful, sustainable, 1,000+ capacity venue in the city
- Systemic growth and development of the **Gloucester History Festival** as a signature event in the City’s calendar and support and development for **Tall Ships, Carnival, Gloucester Goes Retro, Rooftop Festival and Kings Jam**. This investment represented 23% of the Great Place budget, as well as significant match funding from a range of grants and earned income.
- Gloucester’s first ten-year **Heritage Strategy** written and greater collaboration between heritage organisations as seen through the city-wide Looking Up programme in 2020, and an active Heritage Forum
- Gloucester Volunteer Scheme – **Engage in Gloucester** created and hosted by Gloucester Culture Trust as a hub for volunteering – aimed to diversify and pool opportunities for volunteers across the city’s arts, heritage venues and cultural organisations. The site hosted average of 150 volunteering opportunities at any one time (before lock-down; 54 during Summer 2020 lockdown). As at June 2020, there were eight organisations and 353 open individual accounts on the site: 68% female, 30% male; 66% GL1 postcodes; and 51% of individuals were under 30 – a remarkable shift in diversifying volunteering for arts and heritage.
- **Community arts** organisations supported – including Culture Matson and GL4

- **Health and well-being** of families supported during national lockdowns through co-ordination and distribution of art and well-being packs to communities. 1,500 being distributed through to February 2021, coordinated by Gloucester Culture Trust, supported by Museum of Gloucester and Gloucester Community Building Collective and funded through Barnwood Trust, We Can Move and Gloucestershire County Council, with contributions from many creative and activity partners.
- Contribution to the city's **Cultural and Visitor Economy recovery** activity

3.6 The case for updating the strategy at the half-way point

By 2020, the incoming Head of Cultural Services identified that whilst the Vision and Objectives were still relevant, many of the actions stated in the original strategy were either completed or no longer relevant. In addition, the landscape of Gloucester had changed and was continuing to change with major developments in the city centre – the cultural strategy needed to be updated to reflect these changes as well as the wider societal changes. With little mention nor reference to other strategies and policies such as the environment, the strategy the document needed some refinement and updating.

3.7 Process to revise the strategy

It was agreed that the GCT Board of Trustees would undertake a review of the Cultural Strategy at its Away Day for staff and trustees in October 2020 which was to be facilitated by an external consultant, the same person who had worked with the council and others on the Strategy in 2015. GCT then brought back suggestions to a joint strategy working group of city council and GCT members who have held several meetings to develop the final draft of the updated strategy. Part of the process has been for Philip Walker, Head of Cultural Services and Hollie Smith-Charles, CEO of GCT to lead a consultation with a diverse group of people. Over 100 people from across Gloucester and beyond participated in consultations on a new set of actions and one new objective via a series of four focused (virtual) sessions and an online questionnaire. The survey and virtual consultation sessions were open to all. The results of this consultation told us that the strategy was on the right tracks, that the additional objective to embed culture within other city strategies was supported, that there should be a continued focus on young people and that the strategy should ensure representation from Gloucester's diverse communities. The proposed updated version **Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy Revised (2021-26)** is at Appendix 1.

3.8 The changes made to the original strategy

The initial six objectives (as above in para 3.2) are now updated in the revised strategy to the following eight objectives:

1. Embed culture in the city's future plans. **(New objective)**
2. Build the cultural and creative industries by developing artists and arts organisations. **(Reworded from;** Develop artists and arts organisations so as to build the cultural and creative industries)
3. Broaden the cultural offer to support social and economic development. **(Unchanged)**
4. Develop a vibrant city centre full of cultural activity and things to do. **(Unchanged)**
5. Develop audiences for all the cultural opportunities being created. **(Reworded from:** Develop audiences who enjoy the new cultural opportunities being created).

6. Put Gloucester on the cultural map by developing high profile events. (Unchanged)
7. Make things happen to continue the momentum for change. (Unchanged)
8. Empower young people to create, experience and participate in culture (New objective)

Changes made to the detailed list of actions associated with the Objective are shown in Appendix 2.

3.9 New objectives

3.10 The new objective 1 is to; *Embed culture in the city's future plans* with the aim being to “ensure cultural policy runs through the heart of the city's wider strategies, recognising the role of arts, heritage and creativity as fundamental drivers of Gloucester's economic, social and community development, as well as health and wellbeing – especially in post-COVID recovery plans.”

The proposed two new actions linked to the new Objective 1 are to;

1. Integrate this Cultural Strategy into the city's future plans for regeneration, environmental sustainability, place-making and community well-being.
2. Work with the city's artists, arts and heritage organisations to integrate environmental sustainability into cultural planning and delivery, and to use creative activity to support and promote a green agenda.

3.11 The new objective 8 is to: *Empower young people to create, experience and participate in culture* and has the following 3 associated actions;

1. Support young people to develop skills and leadership in arts and cultural production – identifying and providing training opportunities
2. Amplify the voices of young people, through encouraging youth-led publications, support on Youth boards and more widely
3. Ensure there are opportunities for young people to participate in and create culture, through supporting, marketing and investing in youth-led programming

3.12 Responsibility for delivery of the revised strategy

There is significant strategic advantage in continuing to devolve delivery of the actions and outcomes set out in the strategy to a broad coalition of engaged partners led and co-ordinated by GCT. This arrangement helps to pool resource, energy, expertise and experience and, whilst possibly not unique, is noticeably rare and is being watched, commended and supported by key funders and potential partners. The city council has a critical role to play in supporting this strategic devolvement; providing or enabling much of the cultural infrastructure; ensuring the right level of support is provided and the conditions are created in order for culture to thrive. A Cultural Strategy working group consisting of members of GCT and GCC will develop an action plan and track progress against this.

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.
- 4.2 A residents survey, which garnered a statistically valid response, with respondents from every ward – and helps us understand local residents' views has shown that 6% of residents feel that there is more to do than in previous years and 7% feel that the city's festivals, arts and culture make Gloucester a better place to live, resulting in an increased (+9%) level of pride in the city.
- 4.3 The updated strategy aims to increase participation in the cultural life of the city – from all areas and communities. A continued focus upon young people and the development of young people as cultural leaders is a central aim of the strategy.
- 4.4 There is an additional ambition to ensure that there is greater representation from diverse communities (BAME, young people, older people and disabled people) both producing and consuming culture in the city. The new objective to embed culture within the city's plans will include connecting where relevant to the work being undertaken by the Race Equality Commission and making links with others within the Voluntary Community Sector.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The original Cultural Strategy does not reference environment nor climate change. The updated version includes actions linked to the environment and a new strategic objective. The inclusion of this within the strategy should ensure that culture plays its role in combatting the climate emergency.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 The original cultural strategy (2016-26) 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 the government funding schemes such as the Cultural Development Fund (CDF) and other cultural funding schemes the city may wish to apply for.

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The current Cultural Strategy (2016-2026) is 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 little reference to the environment in the original strategy, and other city strategies have been published since 2016, so these also need to be taken into account and referenced where relevant.

7.3 Outdated or completed actions could be removed and/or replaced with new actions relevant to the next 5 years.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 Publish a revised and updated Cultural Vision and Strategy action plan for 2021 – 2026 by end March 2021.

8.2 GCT and the council will regularly review and report on progress against the action plan.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 By having a cultural strategy in place has supported the case for investment and funding from strategic bodies including Arts Council England, Historic England, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and other trusts, foundations and businesses investing in Gloucester.

9.2 The city council's cultural budgets are used to deliver services that support the cultural strategy and any additional budget required will be sought from external funding bodies, such as those mentioned above – and by working in partnerships and collaboratively across the city.

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 – Low-Medium in terms of operations. 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 of not renewing the Strategy – Medium to High in terms of attracting additional funding. 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 to ensure ongoing relevance and for the city to 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>