

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	9 March 2022
Subject:	Cultural Strategy Progress Report		
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		
	Email: Philip.walker@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel: 39-6355	
Appendices:	1. Gloucester Cultural Strategy Tracker 2021		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of progress made against the Cultural Strategy for the year January to December 2021.

2.0 Recommendations

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

(1) the report is accepted and progress against the objectives and actions noted.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 Need for a Cultural Strategy for Gloucester

The revised Cultural Strategy was adopted in March 2021 for the period 2021 - 2026. The revised strategy continues to be an effective mechanism that provides focus and context for the development of culture in Gloucester. The renewed emphasis on embedding the strategy in other city council priorities has been made evident in the Council Plan.

3.2 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.

3.3 Gloucester Culture Trust context

Following the departure of Hollie Smith-Charles in April the new CEO of the Gloucester Culture Trust Adam Jay Coleman was appointed in August 2021. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) it is governed by a board of trustees with Neil Hopwood as acting Chair since January 2021. The Board agreed at their November 2021 to recruit three additional Trustees to bring the board to full strength and that the positions of chair and vice-chair would be interviewed for as part of this recruitment process. In January 2022, the recruitment process commenced with all positions expected to be filled by mid-April 2022.

3.4 Key Achievements in progressing the Cultural Strategy July 2021 – Dec 2021

See appendix 1 for the Gloucester Cultural Strategy tracker. Some highlights from this include;

- Appointment of Adam Jay Coleman as the new CEO for Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT), bringing over twenty years of experience in the arts and cultural sector (with organisations including Tate and the National Theatre) to Gloucester.
- Successful application by GCT to Arts Council England's (ACE) Cultural Recovery Fund (Emergency Resource Support) fund for stabilisation funding of £80k to protect the the Trust during a continued period of transition.
- Announcement by ACE that Gloucester is one of 54 'Priority Places' in England, meaning that ACE will devote additional staff resource to support the city to access funding. Anneliese Slader has been appointed as Gloucester's lead officer at ACE.
- Successful and high-profile visit by Darren Henley, CEO of Arts Council England, along with SW Regional Director and team, including a meeting with Cabinet member and visits to key cultural stakeholders.
- Agreement between ACE, GCC and GCT of three cultural priorities for the city over the next three years, which will be used by all parties to guide investment choices and fundraising activities during the city's period as a 'Priority Place'.
- Confirmation that GCT will lead upon the development of an application to ACE's 'Place Partnership Project' fund, which is a new fund for projects over £100k that "aim to make a step change in the cultural and creative opportunity in places".
- The continued development of Kings House in central Gloucester into a cultural hub, with JOLT providing artists' studios and co-working space and a home for The Music Works. Continued scoping of options for the roof at Kings House.
- The Music Works launched with a series of industry days to connect young local musicians with industry professionals.
- Cultural Recovery Funding – the city council, Strike a Light and Gloucester Culture Trust were all recipients of Arts Council England's Covid recovery funding across 3 separate rounds between late 2020-22.
- Visit & presentation from the Historic England – independent Historic Places advisory panel – assessing Gloucester's success in developing areas of the city.
- Transfer of Bishop Hooper house to Gloucester Historic Buildings and the management of the site by Gloucester Civic Trust. This will enable the continued removal, care and audit of the museum collections still housed there.
- Development of Kings Square, including lighting and sculptural features that can be used as a new cultural space for the city, with a programme in development for May 2022 onwards

- Delivery of Creation Fund by GCT to support local artists who are delivering cultural projects that benefit local residents.
- Bright Nights festival – successfully delivering engagement to audiences across the city – and supported by ACE, Gloucester BID and partners.
- Globoscope – produced with Strike a Light, international artists and communities local to Robinswood Hill
- Christmas Lights switch on and lantern procession attracting thousands to city centre
- Continued partnership with the Roundhouse London, through Gloucester’s Roundhouse Exchange (GRHX) project, which has been funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.
- Significant financial and professional support of artists and organisations, festivals and events – including Strike A Light, GL4, Culture Matson and more
- Strategic commissioning and partnership development to bring popular, high quality creative projects to Gloucester – new fund announced in Jan 2022.
- Gloucester History Festival, Gloucester Goes Retro, Rooftop Festival and Kings Jam successfully supported and delivered by city council teams.
- Contribution to the city’s Cultural and Visitor Economy recovery activity
- Submitted bid to develop Gloucester Guildhall to ACE Capital Investment Fund – outcome due April 2022
- Submitted bid to support Museum of Gloucester to ACE MEND fund – outcome due Spring 2022

3.5 Cultural Partnerships

3.6 **City Voices** - during this period the Museum team have collaborated with City Voices, Gloucestershire Archives, Fresh Air Foundation and others to bring an exhibition of the work of the celebrated and respected photographer, Vanley Burke and a number of Gloucester photographers. The resulting exhibition *His Story, Her Story, Their Story, Our Story* was presented in the Museum of Gloucester main gallery for the Autumn – Winter 2021 period.

3.7 **Royal Photographic Society** – the Museum of Gloucester has negotiated a three-year partnership with the RPS to be a recipient of a limited venue national touring exhibition. The International Photographer Exhibition is an annual international competition that attracts the worlds best photographers. A committee of experts selects the winning entries to produce an exhibition of exceptional quality. Bringing world-class art and culture to Gloucester meets the ambitions of the cultural strategy and provides further opportunity for schools, residents and visitors to engage with and be inspired by art and culture in Gloucester.

3.8 **Festivals and Events** - The Bright Nights programme for the period has directly aligned with the vision for the Cultural Strategy by bringing world class artists into the city, to work directly with the communities. An example of this was the Globoscope installation on Robinswood Hill, by French artists Collectif Coin. Globoscope was an immersive installation made up of over 200 luminous spheres that transformed the site into a multi-sensory, changing terrain and attracted over 3,000 visitors in one weekend, with local schools and community participation from the neighbouring area.

3.9 **Globoscope** was presented by Strike a Light in partnership with Bright Nights, and supported by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. By working with experienced creative producers, the city is building its capacity and ambition to present high-quality work with local communities in line with the aims of the cultural strategy. Part 2 of Bright

Nights festival takes place between Feb to end March 2022. Bright Nights brought together multiple partners from across the city's cultural, health, business and visitor economy sectors and was supported by funding from Arts Council, city council and the Gloucester Business Improvement District (BID).

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. GCT will continue to work in partnership with GCC to repeat the residents survey in 2022.
- 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 Should the submitted funding bids to Arts Council England be successful for investment into the Museum of Gloucester and Gloucester Guildhall, improvements to the carbon footprint will be achieved on both sites. LED lighting will replace the high-power consumption of the existing theatre and stage lighting at the Guildhall.
- 5.2 Improvements to ventilation and air handling at Museum of Gloucester and Gloucester Guildhall will result in improvements to air quality lowering risk of transmission of covid-19. Works funded by the Covid Outbreak Management Fund.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 None

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 Update report.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

8.1 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 2021-2026 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 None

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: Update to Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2021-26
[gloucester-cultural-vision-and-strategy-gct-gcc-min.pdf](#)