

Gloucester City Council

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| Meeting: | Cabinet | Date: | 8 March 2023 |
| Subject: | Cultural Strategy Update Report | | |
| 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 Delivery Tracker 2022-23 | | |

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide an overview of progress made against the Cultural Strategy for the period April 2022 – March 2023.

2.1 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be accepted and progress against the objectives and actions be 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 2022-24.

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 Gloucester Culture Trust (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 (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.

3.4 Gloucester Culture Trust context

The trust has continued to make progress in relation to the Cultural Strategy over the past 12 months and has undergone some personnel changes during that time. The chief executive officer Adam Coleman left in order to take up a new strategic position with the Arts Council in October 2022. The trust has since been led by an interim CEO, James Garrod, seconded from within the organisation. The Board appointed five additional Trustees to bring the board to full strength in November 2022. In addition, the board are seeking to recruit a new chairperson to lead the trustees. In January 2023, the recruitment process commenced for the CEO and Chair with both positions hope to be appointed by April 2023.

3.5 National Portfolio Organisations

One of the biggest funders of the arts in England is from Arts Council England (ACE). During 2022 ACE invited applications from organisations working within arts and culture in all forms to apply to join the national portfolio. Gloucester Culture Trust developed and submitted an application that was successful. This means that from 1 April 2023, GCT joins some notable arts and cultural organisations, with three years of annual funding of £150,000 per year secured from April 2023 until end March 2026. In addition to funding the ACE NPOs are eligible for support in combatting climate change and in understanding audiences and impact of their work. This a notable achievement for the trust and demonstrates the confidence placed in them by the Arts Council and helps meet the Council Plan 2022-24 objectives to increase the number of NPOs in the city.

3.6 National funding Context - Priority Places

In response to the Levelling-Up agenda Arts Council have used data and research to identify places that have been historically under-served and have lacked investment into their cultural offers. These 'cold spots' for investment is being redressed and a number of places across the country have been recognised as having lacked investment. Gloucester is one of 11 in the SW region to become a priority place. This means that ACE provide a dedicated Relationship Manager for Gloucester, who's role is to provide advice, guidance and support to the NPOs and the wider cultural organisations in the city. The other advantage of being a Priority Place, is that some of the ACE funding schemes will use this as a 'weighted' criteria that give a greater opportunity for successful bids.

3.7 Local Government Commission on Culture 2022

During 2022 the Local Government Association (LGA) commissioned a report into Culture. In the introduction Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey, the Chair wrote that "A vibrant cultural ecosystem creates jobs, supports health and wellbeing, enhances learning and opens up opportunities for young people. It draws people to the high street, underpins the visitor and night-time economies, supports the growing creative industries and helps to make places unique." The report draws together evidence of the ways in which local culture contributes to resilient places, inclusive economic recovery, social mobility and in addressing health inequalities. It concludes that local culture can be important in delivering against these agendas

and that councils have a vital role to play - in funding and supporting local cultural infrastructure and as place shapers.

3.8 Strategic Objectives for the Gloucester Cultural Strategy

The council and GCT have continued to work closely over the past year along with other key cultural providers in the city. The focus of the work stems from the delivery of the Cultural Strategy. A shared Cultural Strategy Action plan is used to track progress against the 8 key objectives and the overall vision to ‘Put Culture at the heart of Gloucester, for the good of all.’

3.9 Notable Successes

Objective 1: Embed culture in the city’s future plans – the Council Plan 2022-2024 refers to culture and the cultural strategy and the emerging City Centre vision references culture, arts and heritage within the 5 year vision. Increase in the number of NPO funded organisations from April 2023. These are Gloucester Culture Trust and Gloucester Guildhall as the new NPOs that join Strike a Light - the only other organization in the city already within the NPO scheme.

Objective 2: Build the cultural and creative industries by developing artists and arts organisations - Jolt studios opened in June 2021 and The Music Works have completed the capital works required to fit-out the second floor and since then Kings House has developed into a thriving cultural hub for musicians, artists and creative start-up organisations as well as GCT providing a free creative co-working space. Occupancy levels are exceeding expectation with 100% of Jolt studios rented for the majority of 2022.

Objective 3: Broaden the cultural offer to support social and economic development - Gloucester Roundhouse Exchange (GRHX) programme complete with strong relationships now existing amongst partners and the Roundhouse. All partner organisations are still in touch and able to ask advice. GCT has recruited a new Trustee from Lyric Hammersmith in London. 100 Heroines (a charity promoting awareness and the heritage of women in photography) have established themselves in the city and have opened a gallery in the Eastgate centre.

Objective 4: Develop a vibrant city centre full of cultural activity and things to do - Kings Square was launched with a day of events including a internationally acclaimed high-wire artist, contemporary dance acts working with local communities, a commission of new music from The Music Works to go with the fountains, circus skills activities with Circomedia. Other events on Kings Square included the inflatable Luminarium by Architects of the Air, Gloucester Goes Retro and weekly music pop-ups by young performers as well as the Tree of Light and related Christmas activities. A series of bids are being developed to animate the square in future with more cultural and commercial activity.

Objective 5: Develop audiences who enjoy the new cultural opportunities being created - Gloucester’s cultural offer has been more effectively promoted via the Visit Gloucester website, combined with marketing campaigns that drive up a wider awareness of Gloucester’s cultural offer as well as footfall to the city from visitors.

Objective 6: Put Gloucester on the cultural map by developing high profile events - in addition to the development and delivery of Gloucester Tall Ships Festival in May 2022 the council with GCT have identified a robust process for distributing funding to support emerging and new festivals and events through the New Projects and Commissions fund which provided funds for Strike a Light and through distribution of funds to support key festivals and events such as Gloucester Goes Retro and Gloucester History Festival.

Objective 7: Make things happen to continue the momentum for change
- The latest Arts Council England (ACE), National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) have been announced. 3 Gloucester based organisations were successful with 2 more county-wide NPO's operating heavily in Gloucester. Direct Gloucester funding has increased by 760%. Previously £255,000 now £650,000.

Objective 8: Empower young people to create, experience and participate in culture - Jolt's Colab young networking group has provided support to young people (under 30) attending. Training has been provided through the Future Producers Course resulting in a high-quality event with marketing targeted to attract young people to these opportunities.

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 resident's 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 2023.
- 4.3 The strategy aims to increase participation in the cultural life of the city – from all areas and communities. A focus upon young people and their development as cultural leaders remains a central aim.
- 4.4 There is an 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.
- 4.5 The 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 and the City Council Plan 2022-24 – which aims to tackle inequalities.

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 NPOs are expected to meet stringent standards in relation to tackling Climate Change and will
- 5.2 Targets to reduce the energy use and consumption in Jolt Studios have been set by GCT and energy efficiency measures implemented.
- 5.3 Criteria for the allocation of funds by GCT include identifying measures to reduce waste and energy use.

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 None

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 This report provides an update of progress in relation to delivery of the Cultural Strategy and the recommendation is to note the progress being made.

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.
- 9.3 The city council provides the first floor of Kings House to GCT at peppercorn rent. Charges are made for utilities and facilities management.
- 9.4 A fee has been paid to GCT which ceases from April 2023.

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.
- 10.2 Gloucester Culture Trust are an independent Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Charity number 1177489) separate from the city council.
- 10.3 The Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into force in January 2023 and applies to any financial assistance given by the council to an 'enterprise' this includes grants and

land transactions at undervalue. An evaluation may need to take place to establish if the Gloucester Culture Trust fall within the definition of an enterprise (i.e. an organisation that offers goods and services on a market). Where necessary advice will be sought from colleagues at One Legal.

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

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 The funding from Arts Council for GCT for 2023-26 is an opportunity for the organisation to develop and consolidate its position as the organisation to lead the city's strategy.
- 11.2 The successful delivery of the Cultural Strategy requires the support of multiple partners in the city and continued leadership of Gloucester Culture Trust.
- 11.3 Recruitment of a CEO, Chair and other key roles will support the delivery of the NPO funded programme of works from April 2023 – 2026.

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](#)