

# Gloucester City Council

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>7 February 2024</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Cultural Strategy Progress Report</b>		
<b>Report Of:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure</b>		
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Budget/Policy Framework:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Philip Walker, Head of Culture</b>		
	<b>Email: Philip.walker@gloucester.gov.uk</b>	<b>Tel: 39-6355</b>	
<b>Appendices:</b>	<b>1. Gloucester Cultural Strategy Tracker 2023</b>		

## 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 2023.

### 2.1 Recommendations

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

### 3.0 Background and Key Issues

#### 3.1 Need for a Cultural Strategy for Gloucester

Gloucester's Cultural Vision and Strategy 2021 – 2026 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. Culture is now part of the City Centre Plan and will feature within the City Growth Plan, currently in development. Having a clearly articulated Cultural Strategy for the city ensures that partnerships, funding streams and activity can be aligned to ensure greatest impact. The overarching aim of the strategy is 'Putting culture at the heart of Gloucester, for the good of all.'

#### 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.

### **3.3 Gloucester Culture Trust context**

Following the departure of Adam Jay Coleman in November 2022 the new CEO of the Gloucester Culture Trust, Phil Hindson was appointed in July 2023. As a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) it is governed by a board of trustees with Clair Greenaway Interim Chair since January 2022. The Board agreed at their December 2023 meeting to recruit up to five additional Trustees to bring the board to full strength and that the positions of chair and treasurer would be interviewed for as part of this recruitment process. In addition, GCT achieved a successful bid for funding from Arts Council from 2023-26 as part of its national portfolio (see 3.4).

### **3.4 Outcomes in progressing the Cultural Strategy in 2023**

The most significant change within the past 12 months has been the addition of three new National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) in the city. Gloucestershire Libraries, Gloucester Guildhall and Gloucester Culture Trust all joined the national portfolio in April 2023, as well as Strike a Light securing additional investment in the city annually to expand their programmes in Gloucester communities. The total annual investment into these 4 organisations is c.£900k per annum for the period 2023-2026 and represents a 1039% increase in investment into the city, demonstrating the positive impact of the Arts Council Priority Place scheme. This is a scheme that aims to 'level-up' places across the country that have not previously attracted strong public investment from Arts Council England. It is a recognition of the continued investment of the council and its partners into culture, together with having a clearly articulated cultural strategy. An ongoing commitment to support the work of GCT is key to the continued success of the city's cultural journey.

See appendix 1 for the Gloucester Cultural Strategy tracker. Some highlights are shown in how activity is helping deliver the objectives of the strategy.

#### **3.4.1 Embed culture in the city's future plans**

- Successful Levelling Up Fund 3 bid to government to redevelop the Greyfriars site, includes a significant investment opportunity for a new cultural space/venue in Eastgate
- High-profile visit by Sir Nicholas Serota, Chair of Arts Council England, along with SW Area Chair, Area Director and team, including a meeting with Managing Director of GCC and a round table discussion chaired by GCT with key cultural stakeholders.

#### **3.4.2 Build the cultural and creative industries by developing artists and arts organisations**

- Appointment of Phil Hindson as the new CEO for Gloucester Culture Trust (GCT), bringing thirty years of experience in the arts and cultural sector (including 15 years at Arts Council England in the South West) to Gloucester.
- Three new National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) in the city, following Arts Council England's latest funding round, receiving core funding for the period 2023-2026.
- Significant financial and professional support of artists and organisations, festivals and events – including Strike A Light, GL4, Culture Matson and more
- 100 Heroines - continues to establish itself in the Eastgate centre and provides opportunities for young people to engage with photography and support women's photography.

### **3.4.3 Broaden the cultural offer to support social and economic development**

- GCT submitted bid to UK Shared Prosperity Fund to develop a network of meanwhile use spaces to support Cultural sector and economic development across city centre – outcome due Spring 2024
- 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.

### **3.4.4 Develop a vibrant city centre full of cultural activity and things to do**

- Kings Square cultural programme included community heritage days, Gloucester Goes Retro new 80s and 90s themed area, Gloucester Day parade
- Christmas lantern process and switch on and Tree of Light featuring Bright Nights performance of aerial artist in an inflatable giant heart
- Gloucester Cathedral – Lux Muralis
- Luke Jerram Crossings on Gloucester Docks, presented by Canals and Rivers Trust

### **3.4.5 Develop audiences for all the cultural opportunities being created**

- GCT submitted bid for £500K to ACE Place Partnership fund for a 3-year partnership cultural programme across the city – outcome due February 2024
- VOICES Gloucester's 'Clapham Court' event, exploring the iconic residential landmark through the eyes of residents and local artists attracted thousands of visitors.

### **3.4.6 Put Gloucester on the cultural map by developing high profile events**

- Seeta Patel's 'Rites of Spring' – produced with Strike a Light and presented at Blackfriars Priory (also delivering on Objective 4 by attracting a diverse audience).
- Christmas Lights switch on and lantern procession attracting thousands to city centre.

### **3.4.7 Make things happen to continue the momentum for change**

- Gloucester History Festival, Gloucester Day and Gloucester Goes Retro successfully supported and delivered by city council teams.
- VOICES Gloucester Threads project which included the 'Costume for Gloucester; was launched at Gloucester Day.
- Successful review of the 'Priority Place' three cultural priorities for the city with Arts Council SW representative Sophie Moysey, the new lead officer for Gloucester area.

### **3.4.8 Empower young people to create, experience and participate in culture**

- The Music Works continues to run a highly successful programme for young people throughout the year, including a series of industry days to connect young local musicians with industry professionals.

## **3.5 Cultural Partnerships**

- 3.5.1 **Voices** - during this period the Museum team collaborated with VOICES Gloucester, Gloucester Rugby Club, Gloucestershire Archives and others to bring an exhibition

*Buttons Badges and Blazers.* With additional funding from Arts Council the exhibition provided an opportunity to commission artists to produce new works that were included in the displays along with the city's costume collections. It also provided the chance to improve the documentation and conservation of the collections, whilst supporting the continued decant of the museum collections held at the Folk of Gloucester.

**3.5.2 Royal Photographic Society** – the Museum of Gloucester's three-year partnership with the RPS to be a recipient of a limited venue national touring exhibition continues. The International Photographer Exhibition is an annual international competition that attracts the world's best photographers. This year's exhibition saw an increase in attendance building on the audience from the first year and interest growing in the city for photography. 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.

**3.6 Festivals and Events** - The council supports a number of festivals and events to take place either by direct funding, in-kind support through use of public space within the city or through partnership delivery. This activity continues to provide an ambitious, varied and inclusive programme for the residents of Gloucester. The programme of events during this period directly aligns with the vision for the Cultural Strategy to put Gloucester on the cultural map. Coronation event, Gloucester Goes Retro, Pride in Gloucestershire and Gloucester History Festival and the Tour of Britain all went ahead. Early in the year the Knife Angel sculpture was an important and poignant opportunity for the city to reflect on knife crime and resonated with the city's communities. Other significant events include Gloucester Cathedral's immersive light installation Lux Eternal by Lux Muralis that sold out every ticket, attracted thousands and was critically acclaimed.

**3.7 Rites of Spring** by the award-winning dancer, director and choreographer Seeta Patel was presented by Strike a Light at Blackfriars Priory. This unique event used projection and live dance to transform the priory into a spectacular immersive experience. By working with experienced creative producers and artists, the city is building its capacity and ambition to present high-quality work with diverse communities in line with the aims of the cultural strategy. The event was supported by funding from Arts Council and the council. Strike A Light bring exciting work to the city and present these in a wide range of settings from community spaces or outdoors and in the city's venues. Their commitment to co-curation and partnerships within the city as well as with national organisation city raises the profile of Gloucester and supports the delivery of the cultural strategy, by putting Gloucester on the cultural map.

#### **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 The 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. Objective 7 is about *empowering young people to create, experience and participate in culture*.
- 4.3 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 objective 1 - *to embed culture within the city's plans* includes 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 Gloucester Guildhall continues to benefit from reduced operating costs and improvement to the carbon footprint through the installation of LED theatre and stage lighting.
- 5.2 Museum of Gloucester is implementing a programme of capital works that will result in reductions of energy consumption, through the Arts Council funded MEND project. This includes replacement of older heating systems, improved systems and equipment and replacement of lighting with LED throughout the museum. The impact of this investment will be realised from 2024 onwards.
- 5.2 Gloucester Guildhall, Gloucester Culture Trust, Strike a Light and Gloucestershire Libraries all committed to recording and reducing their environmental impact as part of their Arts Council NPO reporting agreement.

## **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, National Lottery Heritage Fund, 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 council has successfully used its investment as match funding to attract larger sums from grant-givers such as Arts Council England. Match funding for MEND project at Museum of Gloucester is provided by Museum Bequest reserves using £80k to attract £387k of Arts Council funding. Match funding for the Place Partnership project is within the annual Festivals and Events budget and is £150k per annum for 2024 – 2026 with expectation of attracting £750k over 3 years.
- 9.4 GCT do not receive any direct funding from the council, but as does The Music Works, they benefit from peppercorn rent on their occupancy of one floor of Kings House.

## **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.

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

## **11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications**

- 11.1 The successful delivery of the Cultural Strategy requires the support of multiple partners in the city and continued leadership of Gloucester Culture Trust.

## **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](#)