

Gloucester City Council
Gloucestershire County Council
Gloucester Heritage Urban
Regeneration Company

Towards a cultural strategy

Final report May 2007



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0 Executive summary

About this report

Re-making Gloucester has been formulated by ABL Cultural Consulting as the basis of a new cultural strategy for Gloucester. ABL was commissioned by Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company (GHURC).

The outcomes this report seeks to achieve are:

- a distinctive cultural identity for Gloucester
- a cultural entitlement that Gloucester's citizens and visitors deserve, based upon fun, with relaxed and pleasant cultural activities to be enjoyed by all
- a cultural strategy which links the opportunity for culture to drive the economic, social and environmental health of the community
- an assessment of need and opportunity to develop a new cultural centre within the city.

Methodology

ABL's work was informed by a process of research and consultation which comprised:

- an audit of cultural provision in Gloucester
- benchmarking with three comparator cathedral cities
- a comprehensive programme of desk research
- a limited number of individual consultation meetings with key local and regional stakeholders and partners
- a standing conference which served as a two-part visions workshop with approximately 30 representatives of the local community and cultural sector. This was organised by the City Council and took place at the Guildhall Arts Centre.

Full research and consultation details are contained in attached appendices.

Pre-requisites for a cultural strategy

Gloucester's new cultural strategy must be based on policy which recognises the importance of cultural identity and entitlement developed in collaboration with the city's residents. Chapters 2 and 3 present draft

statements for this policy. These statements present a vision of what the cultural strategy is seeking to achieve for the place and people it is serving. ABL recommends for these statements to be reviewed and formally adopted by the City Council. A cultural identity and entitlement for Gloucester was informed by wide reaching consultation and an analysis of the city's current assets and gaps in provision.

A distinctive identity

The cultural identity proposed by this report seeks to reposition Gloucester as 'the South West's most happening place to live, work and play'. It describes Gloucester as a historic city with a contemporary edge where culture is on the move; an exciting centre of living heritage which is young, diverse, creative and inclusive - a place for learning, play, participation and experimentation. Gloucester is a centre for action which never stands still and should be the county's choice destination for work, fun and entertainment. This vibrant urban gateway for visitors to the south is home to water further inland than any other port in the country. It is not an average cathedral city.

Cultural entitlement for Gloucester

Before agreeing a cultural strategy for Gloucester, the City Council needs to articulate a clear commitment to services and opportunities that a new strategy would deliver to residents and visitors of all backgrounds and generations. This report proposes that Gloucester's residents deserve the following opportunities which should improve quality of life for the city's individuals and communities

- Quality of cultural provision
- Choice
- Lifelong learning
- Individual progression routes
- Access
- Active citizenship
- Representation.

Re-making Gloucester: towards a cultural strategy

The basis for a new cultural strategy consists of seven action points which offer a framework of delivery through which Gloucester's identity and cultural entitlement can be realised. These action points address the key challenges Gloucester needs to tackle over the next ten years if it is to maximise its local assets and become the attractive, enticing and satisfying place it could be.

ABL's strategy reflects Gloucester's people, their voices and their futures but it is not watered down to cover everything through a one-size-fits-

for-all simplification. The strategy singles out developments that will position culture as a driving force in the city's regeneration. The priority action points are as follows:

- Action point 1 – making sense of the city centre including city centre legibility, interpretation and animation of the public realm
- Action point 2 – rethinking heritage and cultural tourism including refurbishment of key heritage attractions, a new orientation centre and a participatory approach to living heritage
- Action point 3 – raising the stakes for creativity and enjoyment including creative industries, a new music and media hub, strengthening of the independent sector and creativity in schools
- Action point 4 – broadening Gloucester's excellence in sports and physical activity including outdoor community facilities and engagement programmes, integration of the new community stadium with the cultural strategy and increased use of Gloucester's water for community activity
- Action point 5 – enjoying and supporting diversity including community consultation and peer networking, capacity building and grants, diverse programming and internationalism
- Action point 6 – planning for a transformational project
- Cross cutting action point 7 – marketing and promoting Gloucester and its new cultural image

Roles, responsibilities, partnerships

The framework for a ten year cultural strategy is accompanied by a route map indicating roles, responsibilities and partnerships that will drive this ten-year process. The City Council must adopt the new cultural strategy and secure the strong leadership it requires. However, the City Council cannot be expected to implement this strategy alone – it will need robust, imaginative partnerships at all levels with the city-county-regeneration company commitment at the core.

The strategy's consistent referencing of initiatives planned by the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company underlines the importance of this driver for public private partnerships which is attracting inward investment to redevelop 100 hectares of derelict land and reuse over 80 historic buildings.

The route map's recommendations highlight national, regional and sub regional opportunities for Gloucester which will complement and further strengthen the local collaborative approach. All of the regional cultural agencies consider Gloucester a priority for investment in spite of limited

available capital funds. Furthermore, Gloucester's collaboration with Cheltenham within a joint planning area for culture, as proposed by the emerging regional People, Places, Spaces strategy¹ will open new opportunities for the sharing of resources and the raising of Gloucester's regional profile.

A new cultural facility for community regeneration

ABL's assessment of need and opportunity to develop a new cultural centre within the city has identified a fit for purpose music and media hub which responds to the needs of Gloucester's young people as the key deficit in the city's current offer. This facility reflects local strengths, demand and the need for cultural infrastructure which will support Gloucester's community regeneration and contribute subsequently to the city's prosperity. The hub would compliment the role of the city's heritage attractions which will be leading on cultural tourism. It would deliver on some of the aims of the County's Local Area Agreement and the City's Community Strategy which seek to ensure that culture, leisure and physical activity are available now and in the future, particularly for young people.

¹ The People, Places, Spaces 20 year strategy is being delivered by Culture South West in collaboration with all relevant regional agencies.

1 About this report

Re-making Gloucester was commissioned by Gloucester City Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company (GHURC) from ABL Cultural Consulting in September 2006. This report begins by describing the kind of place Gloucester wants to be and the quality of life its people should enjoy. It then presents a cultural strategy consisting of seven action points which focus on the challenges which must be faced if this vision is to be achieved. The report concludes by proposing a route map indicating roles, responsibilities and partnerships that will drive this ten-year process. The case for a new music and media hub is presented in Chapter 5 as a pilot project which the steering group could begin to tackle together, signposting their commitment to the cultural strategy.

The high level outcomes this report seeks to achieve are:

- A distinctive cultural identity for Gloucester
- A cultural entitlement that Gloucester's citizens and visitors deserve, based upon fun, with relaxed and pleasant cultural activities to be enjoyed by all
- A cultural strategy which links the opportunity for culture to drive the economic, social and environmental health of the community
- An assessment of need and opportunity to develop a new cultural centre within the city.

A new cultural strategy for Gloucester should

- increase participation in cultural activity within the city
- increase public satisfaction of cultural provision within the city
- increase tourism and visitors
- develop a sense of identity, pride, confidence and ambition for Gloucester's people.

Culture has been considered with reference to the DCMS definition which includes arts and entertainment, craft, individual creativity and creative enterprise, festivals, media, heritage, archaeology and museums, sports, libraries and archives, imaginative intervention in the environment, open space and play.

This working framework was agreed by the project steering group which consisted of

- David Grocott, Head of Life-long Learning, Gloucestershire County Council
- Caroline Leverton, Arts & Festivals, Gloucester City Council
- Chris Oldershaw, Chief Executive, Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company
- Cllr Paul James, Regeneration, Gloucester City Council
- Phillip Staddon, Regeneration, Gloucester City Council
- Marian Tufano, Voluntary assistant, minute taking and administration.

ABL Cultural Consulting is represented by

- Richard Crossland, Director
- Vanessa Reed, Consultant, Arts and Media

Detailed research findings which include the results of an audit and benchmarking research can be found in attached technical appendices.

2 A distinctive identity for Gloucester

A pre-requisite for any cultural strategy is a policy which presents a vision of what this strategy is seeking to achieve for the place or group it is serving. A first component of this policy is an indication of the image Gloucester wants to project to itself and to the outside world.

Based on a broad overview of Gloucester's cultural assets and needs, a draft vision for a distinctive identity for Gloucester is proposed below. ABL recommends for this vision to be reviewed and adapted by the Council for use in public policy statements.

The South West's most happening place to live work and play



Culture is on the move in Gloucester. We are proud of our Roman foundations, our Medieval and Tudor treasures but we are looking to the future, exploring ways to enjoy exciting contrasts between old and new. Gloucester is a historic city with a contemporary edge.

Gloucester's residents and visitors are about to witness and be involved in ten years of radical transformations to our built environment and our communities. This will put Gloucester on the map as a unique centre for living heritage. We are the first city to have created a heritage urban regeneration company. Whilst we will ensure that our historical buildings are treasured and preserved we are determined to open them up. We want more people to use our heritage and to learn about the city's hidden stories on-line, in the streets and through new schemes for interpretation.

We want contemporary culture to infiltrate our historic buildings. The use of Gloucester's magnificent Gothic cathedral for the filming of Harry Potter and contemporary art installations are fine examples of this. Gloucester's history will only have meaning in the 21st Century if it is used as a backdrop for new developments driven by the generations of tomorrow.



Gloucester is young, diverse and creative. Amidst our 700 listed buildings, Gloucester is home to one of the South West's most young and diverse populations. We want our city to be their centre for learning,

play, participation and experimentation. Gloucester will become an alternative centre for creativity.

We will ensure that the sounds of our young rock bands can be heard as loudly as our Cathedral choirs and music will be our strongest contribution to performing arts in the South West. We will welcome the most innovative and inventive creative industries to work in historic buildings alongside our local stonemasons. Our diverse communities will help us shape the future of our festivals so that our events become more international. We will offer residents and visitors from the hinterland an experience and understanding of other cultures. All of these groups will guide us in how best to plan for tomorrow.

Gloucester is a place for action. Our city grew through commerce and industry. It will continue to be a place for working and making in a beautiful setting between the Severn valley and the Cotswolds hills. Our world class rugby team, our sports science university courses and our love of climbing, snowboarding and outdoor recreation reflects our energetic spirit. We will build more community facilities for sport and physical activity to ensure that there are opportunities for all to enjoy activity, games and training.



In work we constitute one of the most productive sub regions in the South West. In play, we like to have fun and comedy is one of our favourite pastimes. We will support and do more to harness this energy at all levels. We will invest to stimulate more business growth. More high quality events will animate our parks and public spaces and we will improve our evening economy and tourism strategies to ensure that Gloucester never stands still. We want our students to enjoy the new buzz which will include an improving nightlife around the docks and the redeveloped city centre. Gloucester should be the county's choice destination for work, fun and entertainment.

Gloucester is not your average cathedral city. A brief walk from the cloisters will lead you to water further inland than any other port in the country. This revitalising resource is unique in our northern corner of the south west where Gloucester functions as a vibrant urban gateway for visitors to the south.



We will be making more of our water in the future to strengthen our status as a sub regional centre for commerce, leisure and culture and to develop world class attractions and lively events. Our Victorian docks have been redeveloped to accommodate new dwellings and opportunities for leisure and recreation. Work on the docks is not yet complete like many of our plans for regeneration but we take pride in knowing that we are a new cathedral city in the making - we still have

the space to carve out a new identity for our future and we are inspired by this challenge.

There has never been a better or more critical time to push the boat out for culture in Gloucester. Like the waters around the Docks it will strengthen and direct the flow of the city's regeneration.

Key drivers for a new identity

The identity proposed by ABL addresses the following challenges which are limiting the city's potential as it embarks on a new phase of economic and social regeneration:

- low aspiration and confidence amongst residents
- lack of civic pride
- low expectations amongst visitors
- weaknesses in education attainment
- low levels of participation in culture
- lack of animation in public spaces
- weak self and external image
- limited visibility of city's diverse communities
- need for a stronger city brand
- lack of policy and strategy to champion culture in the city

Improvements in all areas listed above will support Gloucester in its aim to facilitate a step change in dynamics from frustration to celebration as the role of culture in the city's future is recognised.

3 Cultural entitlement

The second policy the Council needs to adopt before agreeing a cultural strategy is a clear commitment to the services and opportunities the strategy will deliver to residents and visitors of all backgrounds and generations. Emerging national agendas articulate this commitment as cultural entitlement.

Identifying criteria for entitlement

Cultural entitlement refers to the needs and rights of individuals

- to participate in and learn about culture
- to benefit from the economic, social and personal well-being this can bring at all stages of life.

Those responsible for local cultural provision should ensure that these obligations are met in accordance with the needs of its communities. Establishing a framework for cultural entitlement is a complex task. In education agendas it has been referred to as “universal cultural offer².” There is also a clear link to Article 27(I) of the UK Declaration of Human Rights which states that “everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.”

In England, there is no national blueprint for cultural entitlement partly because national and regional agencies are hesitant to establish frameworks which may bind them to commitments they may not be able to respect if and when resources decrease. Most importantly, it is fully recognised that needs, cultural infrastructures and activities will vary from region to region rendering somewhat meaningless the notion of a national pledge. This means that cultural entitlement is best negotiated bottom-up between local citizens and those responsible for their access to culture.

In Gloucester, a basis for cultural entitlement can be taken from ABL’s proposal below which is based on consultation with the City and County Council, regional agencies and local residents involved in the cultural sector. This should be reviewed and adapted by the Council for use in public policy statements. However, if the City Council wants to establish more detailed criteria and targets reflecting a broader sample of the city’s population, a wide reaching consultation process with those not

² For example, the aim of the Music Manifesto is to develop a “universal music education offer” to all children, referencing Key Stage 2 music entitlement as an opportunity.

participating in culture would need to be facilitated and analysed. This work on barriers to participation is beyond the brief of ABL's study.

A cultural entitlement for Gloucester: opportunities that residents and visitors deserve

Participation in cultural activity, celebration of our own cultural diversity and contributing to our community gives us a better quality of life. This includes

- confidence
- new skills
- the chance of doing better in education
- improved mental and physical health
- more opportunities to contribute positively to the strengthening of our community
- joy, fun and pleasure, relaxation and stimulation
- a stronger sense of identity
- a greater capacity to learn and develop
- opportunities to express our creativity, produce beautiful or provocative things, develop our talents, change assumptions and tackle isolation.

In Gloucester we will strive to ensure that all citizens can benefit from this improved quality of life by respecting and addressing the following challenges for culture in our city:

Quality of provision



We will ensure that our citizens can all participate in high quality professional cultural experiences as spectators or active participants. Individuals and organisations engaged in culture and cultural participation need to be encouraged and supported with a focus on quality and experimentation. As

participants, people should have the opportunity to widen their horizons, to stretch themselves and to be challenged. We will ensure that our

staff and that of Gloucester's specialist cultural organisations are equipped to engage those who already take part in culture and those who do not.

Choice

We will increase the variety of leisure opportunities for all ages and background. Diversifying and improving leisure activities in the evening will be our first priority so that Gloucester's people can enjoy upbeat entertainment as much as the serene tranquillity offered by our parks and surrounding hinterland. We will strive to meet every generation's play, entertainment, leisure, social and recreation needs and will consider the specific requirements of different faith groups. Everyone should feel at home in Gloucester and should see their identity and favourite pastimes represented in what the city offers.

Lifelong learning

We will ensure that our schools, college, universities, library, archive and museums are committed to delivering programmes that enable all people in Gloucester to learn more about their roots, their culture, their city, their neighbourhood and those of others.

Schools often provide the first cultural experience for our children and a fifth of our population is aged 14 or under. We will ensure that creative learning is more embedded in practice from early years to all key stages so children can enjoy and achieve.



In sports and arts we will provide opportunities for working, learning or playing with people from different backgrounds. For those not able to attend events and programmed activities, we will ensure they can be involved through online cultural resources accessed from home and in the city. All of our citizens deserve understanding and respect and to be part of our regeneration story.

Individual routes of progression

We will guide and support individuals pursuing a career in culture and the creative industries by looking at opportunities to deliver training, placements and continued professional development in collaboration with our sub regional partners. We will strengthen our voluntary sector which offers individuals a direct and live experience of working in culture and we will champion and respect local talent at all ages. We will encourage creative enterprise and give priority to innovative approaches to commerce and retail. Each individual should have the chance to unlock their own creative potential.

Access

We will seek to identify and reduce the impact of cultural, organisational, physical and economic barriers to participation. We will create safer environments in and around our cultural facilities and improve access to our historical buildings. Visitor experience will be of the highest quality.

The city centre will make more sense through improved signage and an orientation centre so that everyone feels safe and at home. We will strive to offer the most comfortable and welcoming surroundings for people of all backgrounds by providing mixed and clustered facilities. Sports and learning, arts and the built environment, heritage and new technologies will be found side by side to maximise the breadth of our citizen's cultural experience.

Active citizenship

It is important for Gloucester's residents to have a say in the future of their city as it is regenerated and redesigned. We will consult regularly with local people of all ages and backgrounds on our use of public space, programming of festivals and events and our building of new cultural facilities.

Individuals thrive from an exploration of culture alone and in the company of other people. We want to ensure that our citizens have access to inclusive forums and networks where they can talk about their cultural experiences and use this to guide us in our planning.

Representation

Freedom to explore and express our own uniqueness and shared cultural heritage enables citizens to develop greater self understanding and in turn to participate actively in local communities. We will ensure that all communities can celebrate, share and develop their own culture regardless of their differences in race, ethnicity, age, sexuality. We will support activities and training that will increase the visibility of our many community groups and we will ensure that the cultural sector workforce reflects our diversity. We want all of our citizens to see themselves in Gloucester's new cultural identity.



Current provision in Gloucester

To inform the cultural entitlement statement presented above, an audit of current provision and benchmarking with three other cathedral cities was undertaken. Detailed research findings are attached in appendix 4. A comparative analysis of Gloucester, Worcester, Chester and Lincoln shows that the size and scope of Gloucester's cultural infrastructure is not dissimilar to these medium sized cathedral cities. In many areas Gloucester's cultural facilities reflect relatively good performance –

tourism and cathedral visitor figures are higher than Worcester and Lincoln's if surpassed by the 'premiere league's Chester³, Gloucester is home to a similar number of museums as these cities, has the distinctive waterways museum and boasts more listed buildings than Chester and Lincoln.

However, similarity is a concern if we look at Gloucester's demographics. 7.5% of Gloucester's population is of BME (black or minority ethnic background). This means that Gloucester is by far the most diverse cathedral city within this sample and yet there is no real sign of how this population is being catered for if we look at the cultural facilities it offers. Growth figures which show a 40% increase between 1991 and 2001 suggest that Gloucester's population will continue to diversify at a rapid rate. This group must be more strongly represented and included within Gloucester's cultural identity through an entitlement which reflects an understanding of their needs.

Gloucester also seems to suffer from a slightly weaker Higher Education presence with student numbers being significantly lower than those of all other cities studied. The comparator cathedral cities have realised opportunities to develop partnerships with their universities that have improved the facilities they can offer. Worcester and Lincoln's provision for creative industries has been developed in partnership with the city universities as have bold new library facilities⁴. Lincoln University is also opening a public performing arts centre with support from the City Council which is contributing modestly to a strong, mixed funding base⁵. More opportunities for partnering with Gloscat and Gloucestershire University should be identified to embolden and strengthen the cultural infrastructure in Gloucester, serve young people's cultural entitlement and widen choice for all.

A final point which was difficult to gauge from the benchmarking study relates to community participation levels in Gloucester. Whilst Gloucester is likely to catch up and even surpass Worcester, Chester and Lincoln in the next ten years in terms of new facilities, an increase in supply will not necessarily increase demand without outreach programmes, access for all and a strong approach to culture and creativity in education from early years to lifelong learning. Gloucester's low community participation in sport and physical activity is a first warning sign which must be taken into account when considering priorities for entitlement. Cultural entitlement must factor in the importance of local cultural practitioners and creative capital as well as the buildings. These professionals on the ground must be tasked with

³ Locum consulting, discussion paper for a new marketing alliance, 2006.

⁴ Worcester City Council and University have joined forces to deliver a new £50m library and history centre.

⁵ Designed by Rafael Vinoly, a new £31m performing arts and conference centre will be supported by local authorities, ACE and European funds.

stimulating usage of facilities, a widespread, pro active approach to community involvement and bottom up strategies for local ownership.

4 Re-making Gloucester: towards a cultural strategy

Translating policy into action

Gloucester's vision for identity and cultural entitlement as described in chapters 2 and 3 will be delivered through a new strategy for culture which maps key priorities in a ten year framework. The following recommendations devised by ABL are presented as a basis for this strategy which responds to the lack of detailed cultural statements at city and county level.

The strategy will require further elaboration before implementation, particularly with regards financial feasibility and responsibility. However, the key areas of change identified by ABL reflect a comprehensive response to how Gloucester needs to develop over the next ten years if it is to maximise its local assets and become the attractive, enticing and satisfying place it could be.

ABL's strategy reflects Gloucester's people, their voices and their futures but it is not watered down to cover everything that is possible for all people. Rather it articulates a series of priority action points for the next ten years which singles out developments that will position culture as a driving force in the city's regeneration – a new approach to culture is essential to the Re-making of Gloucester.

Action point 1: making sense of the city centre

Aim	Ensure that the built environment does justice to Gloucester's many historical and physical assets Improve interpretation and animation especially around the docks
Outcomes	Gloucester is an attractive and vibrant centre of historical interest Residents are proud of their city, visitors' satisfaction is increased A stronger sense of place is created

City planning and legibility

Addressing the current fragmentation of Gloucester's city centre is the first priority of this strategy. This reflects a need which recurs throughout all aspects of this strategy to ensure that Gloucester makes more of what already exists through sensitive and imaginative approaches to presentation and bolder strategies for promotion⁶.

The city's historical assets – the bedrock of Gloucester's culture - are obscured by post war developments and weak linkages with other sites of interest. Visitors using Lonely Planet will know about this before they even arrive

" The city has suffered greatly from WWII bombing and unsympathetic urban planning but is still worth visiting..."⁷

The next edition of this guide should be talking about corridors of attractiveness between key sites such as the Cathedral and the docks, the visibility of listed buildings and the intrigue of local stories and hidden treasures revealed by new heritage trails and other interpretation schemes. Local people should feel the day to day difference through improved public transport routes, cycle paths and footpaths which increase safety, improve routes to work and support the internal flow of people from one quarter to another. All users of the city should benefit from improved access, quality and city centre legibility.

This may be helped in the future by the impact of the national *Building Schools for the Future* scheme in Gloucester which is likely to bring new school transport routes. Furthermore, improved city cohesion will be an important aspect of GHURC's regeneration plans, particularly with regards routes between the 'magnificent 7' projects including a dramatically improved pedestrian link between the Cathedral and the docks. This route is an utmost priority for improving integration of the

⁶ See cross cutting action point 7 for more details.

⁷ Introduction to Lonely Planet, Britain, 1996 edition.

under used docks with the city centre. GHURC's plans to create themed quarters around culture at Blackfriars, recreation around the docks, open space and residential around Greyfriars will also contribute immensely to the city's coherence, vibrancy and appeal.

The City Council's new cultural strategy should support this agenda by

- encouraging clustering of cultural facilities in line with the emerging Culture South West *People, Places and Spaces* agenda and the experience of other cities where this strategy is a proven success⁸.
- critically evaluating its own planning policies
- encouraging GHURC to lobby for visionary, international approaches to new architectural projects to ensure that Gloucester's regeneration is of the highest and most distinctive quality.

Gloucester's city must be a strong, accurate reflection of Gloucester's cultural identity as described in chapter 2.

GHURC and Gloucester City Council are also responsible for sustainability. Where appropriate and possible the potential of existing buildings and heritage assets to be re-appropriated for new cultural facilities must not be overlooked.

Interpretation and public realm

New and existing buildings and the spaces between need powerful schemes for interpretation. The frequently unnoticed Via Sacra trail is not enough and again Gloucester should make the most of its unsung, unexposed assets - gardens as well as buildings - by improving signage and instigating new schemes which involve residents and visitors in the history of Gloucester's built environment.

A strong strategy for public art and animation will contribute to this understanding whilst stimulating a new atmosphere and breathing life into Gloucester's neglected or new quarters. To address current disappointment regarding the docks development, public art of iconic status would signpost a new phase of development for this part of the city and leave, if provocative, appealing and reflective of Gloucester's cultural identity, a strong impression on visitors and residents. This

⁸ Culture South West, the South West's cultural agencies GOSW and SWRDA are working to produce a regional cultural infrastructure development strategy "People, Places and Spaces" which will help to establish a regional framework for cultural activities in terms of where things go (built facilities) and what happens where (initiatives and events) through to 2026.

should involve consultation with local communities and international artists and should grow from the public art strategy already commissioned by GHURC. Elsewhere, in parks and the new public squares planned within the Magnificent 7, community led public art projects would give local residents a greater sense of ownership in their city's regeneration.

The City Council should take a lead on animation of the docks via a revised events strategy as proposed under action point 3. The footfall around the docks is likely to increase with the relocation of Gloscat at South Quays but more needs to be done to increase the number of active frontages and to offer residents and visitors with a year round festival waterfront. Other opportunities in parks and public spaces to create programmes of activities and relaxation should be planned throughout the next ten years as each quarter is transformed as part of the city's renaissance.

Finally, the public realm will influence and ultimately be determined by the range and quality of businesses which invest in Gloucester. To attract a stronger, more diverse and interesting range of independent businesses and retail Gloucester's dynamics need to change dramatically. GHURC's new quarters if well differentiated will contribute to this challenge but signs of a vibrant and creative atmosphere must be felt as soon as possible if investors are to be convinced of Gloucester's sub regional pull as the local commerce and recreation centre of choice. This will require all involved in the city's regeneration to improve marketing strategies for the city as a tourism and retail destination and to promote the opportunities which make Gloucester unique in its role as an urban gateway to the south. This uniqueness is articulated in the cultural identity presented by this study and can be summarised as affordability, available space, a distinctive identity, a waterfront, a young, diverse and energetic workforce and, most importantly, signs that culture and creativity will be leading the city's regeneration and attracting a creative class⁹.

⁹ Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, 2003.

Action point 2: rethinking heritage and cultural tourism

Aims	Improve access, visibility and quality of heritage facilities Champion water and maritime history Build orientation centre and consider sharing of space and resources with new library, archives and Tourist Information Centre
Outcomes	National and international treasures are rediscovered Information is readily available, the city is user friendly Gloucester has a unique profile in the south west's museum sector

Refurbishment of key heritage attractions

The first priority within action point 2 is to improve and refurbish Gloucester's cathedral and National Waterways Museum which are the most distinctive attractions the city offers in its regional context.

The grade 1 listed cathedral is a stunning early example of the English perpendicular style with the only royal tomb (Edward II) in the South West. However, its visitor figures are not as high as that of Chester cathedral or others in the "premier league."¹⁰ This should begin to change with the city's regeneration but the need to improve access, renovate toilets and the Cathedral's main outer walkway needs to be addressed with support from the City and County councils. The cathedral's excellent artist residencies supported by ACE SW should be encouraged and where possible this programme should be extended to other historical buildings in Gloucester as they are renovated and reopened. This study notes regret that the residency scheme is no longer supported by Gloucestershire County Council.

The National Waterways Museum is the only attraction of its kind in the South West and must become a bigger player in culture led tourism around the docks. It is well positioned to champion maritime history in the region and links Gloucester to a potential specialist interest trail via the Waterways trust sister museums in Cheshire and Ellesmere Port. It may also have a role to play in national networks of maritime museums. However, before these goals can be fully realised current weaknesses including fundamental issues such as access, audience development and outreach need to be addressed as soon as possible. In parallel with these organisational developments, and in view of the Waterway Museum's importance, GHURC and the City Council should monitor the impact of the docks development in forthcoming years which must stimulate rather than disadvantage the museum's performance. At

¹⁰ As noted by the Locum consulting discussion paper for Gloucester marketing alliance, 2006.
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present visitor numbers are declining which may be a result of current construction works on the docks.

Some improvements to the City and Folk museums are already being addressed through Lottery bids. The City Council should continue to lead on this to strengthen their community function and build on programming and outreach which reflects the city's diversity. Decreasing visitor numbers are again a point of concern.

A new orientation/visitor centre

Gloucester's museums, 700 listed buildings, historical foundations and Victorian docks are more than worthy of a coherent public access point which would support and stimulate culture led tourism. Heritage attractions, even without the new developments planned by GHURC, are catalysts for regeneration if well promoted and maintained. A new high quality orientation centre could function as a regional reference for heritage assets in Forest of Dean, Cheltenham and Worcester again emphasising Gloucester's function as a gateway between north and south for British tourists from beyond the region.

Integration of this facility within Blackfriars priory earmarked for creative industries should be considered. This would diversify and increase visitors to this unique Dominican building and support the region's current push for multi use facilities and quarters which work across sectors¹¹. The City Council may also like to consider whether the Tourist Information Centre could be integrated with this facility.

If a larger site for new build could be identified for the orientation centre, a more ambitious project could consider inviting the County Council to relocate its city library and possibly county archives provision onto the same site. In this case, the library would be part of a new orientation and learning centre which could draw from the experience of new library developments elsewhere in the UK eg. in Tower Hamlets where hi tech "Idea Stores" have been developed and in Worcester where a partnership between the university, archaeological services and library has been established to deliver a £50m library and history centre. The potential for the involvement of HE to be feasible in Gloucester seems unlikely in view of Gloscat's relocation to the South Quays in a self contained new development and Gloucestershire University's current lack of resources. However, Gloucester would benefit if a more robust and sustained dialogue could be established and sustained with all HE and FE players in the city. The future of the library is one potential area of exploration.

¹¹ Culture South West, People, Places, Spaces Strategy.

A final component of an orientation centre would be a public access point for relevant local authority services such as the archive and archaeological services which are keen to have a new 'shop window' during the city's regeneration. The archive is well positioned to develop a wide range of projects which would contribute to living heritage such as those which relate to popular interests such as the city's rugby history. However, integration of the archive on one site is likely to be difficult in view of vast footprint required which is currently at 3014.92 sq.m. Furthermore, involvement of local authority services is likely to depend on decisions made around the idea for the City and County council to relocate to a shared site.

Participation in living heritage

The history of the city and its archaeology is a powerful story for residents and visitors to Gloucester and if the GHURC scheme runs to plan, a Medieval complex of international significance once closed to the public will be reopened within a creative quarter built on Roman foundations. This transition must be brought alive by programmes and projects which promote participation in excavation and the dissemination of information which maps and spreads news on how this exciting process develops. To achieve this, the city and county council will need to set up partnerships between schools, museums, the library and other resources for lifelong learning. A link with the Arts Council's Creative Partnerships scheme, limited formerly to Forest of Dean now spreading to more parts of the region, could strengthen the city's creative outreach programmes. The link to this tried and tested programme should be made by the heads of children's and young people's services, the schools improvement teams or the museums that will need to approach the Creative Partnerships team in Bristol.

Existing resources can also be exploited to maximise the impact of a participatory programme. The county council should draw on the experience of their Heritage Lottery Funded *Young Roots* programme which involved young people working on mock and learning excavations. The Gloscat Heritage academy could be a key stakeholder as its course in heritage skills matures. The city council will have a key role to play by providing a starting point for online coverage of the archaeological process and all associated projects and programmes through its Living Gloucester website. Interest in this site will grow in forthcoming years if it can be extended to document fully the city's regeneration between now and 2020.

Action point 3: raising the stakes for creativity and enjoyment

Aims	Address current lack of provision and strategic frameworks for arts and creative industries Ensure that more opportunities for participation in the arts support creative learning and community regeneration Develop infrastructure for new music and media hub aimed primarily at young people
Outcomes	Young people are more satisfied by what Gloucester has to offer Creative individuals are attracted to the city Gloucester is cool, Cheltenham is refined

Action point 3 is based around four approaches to stimulating creativity in Gloucester which should be given equal importance in view of their potential impact on the city's economic development and workforce skills.

Creative industries

The UK creative economy is growing faster than others worldwide. Creative industries are growing faster in the South West than in any other region of the UK and creative industries are the fastest growing sector in the South West.

Culture South West and SWRDA commissioned a Regional Mapping and Economic Impact Study of the Creative industries in 2004¹² which found the following through analysis of labour market and economic performance data:

- Growth in South West creative industries employment is considerably faster at 8.2% in the period 1998-2002 than the national growth rate of 2.6%. Growth in the number of businesses in the period 1998-2001 is faster in the region (9%) than nationally (5%).
- In 2002 the creative industries provided direct employment for 89,000 people representing 3.6% of the total regional workforce. Of these nearly 59,000 were employees (67% full time) and the remaining 30,000 were self-employed.
- The South West creative industries sector generated revenues of £5.54 bn and GVA of £1.63 bn in 2001. This is 3.6% of regional

¹² Regional Mapping and Economic Impact Study of the Creative industries. Burns Owens Partnership and the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds, May 2004.

GVA. GVA per employee in the sector was £25,800 compared to a regional average figure of £14,900.

- Two thirds of all businesses in the sector have ambitions to grow and business start-up rates are nearly twice the national figure for the sector.

Gloucester has been slow in tapping in to this regional strength. Stroud is the nearest neighbour to have surpassed Gloucester as the choice home and working place for artists and creatives. This owes in part to the lack of arts facilities, workspaces, networks and support systems in Gloucester but is linked also to the city's general lack of appeal to creative individuals. As the city's image and cultural identity is addressed by the city's regeneration and the recommendations of this cultural strategy, the potential for creative industries to contribute to Gloucester's economic regeneration must be fully exploited.

The development of creative industry workspaces is the first goal which must be realised by GHURC in consultation with the City and County councils. The results of the feasibility study for Blackfriars and the Fleece should be assessed by the established creative industry taskforce in collaboration with the City Council but other sites such as any available space around the docks should not be overlooked. Public frontages and opportunities to cluster specialist crafts and arts retail must be included in any development brief. This would have a particularly strong impact if located in the docks which is suffering from limited footfall. The flexibility of the warehouses and waterfront location would provide an ideal environment for the sharper, hi tech end of the creative industries as has been the case at the media focused Watershed in Bristol.

Networks and support systems for creative individuals will also be needed if Gloucester is to grow this sector. GANET, GMG and Artsmatrix, the regional body which deals with continued professional development for creative practitioners, are useful local resources which are currently involved in consultation for the new creative industry workspaces. These organisations should be better promoted, networked and strategically aligned in anticipation of new creative capital in Gloucester. A new creative network as proposed by the Ginko public art strategy could contribute further but GHURC and local authorities must be cautious about creating additional intermediary infrastructures before the function of this network is clearly defined in relation to existing organisations and the local cultural forum that has been built through the public consultation undertaken to devise this cultural strategy¹³.

Finally, the City Council should start planning now for the integration of new creative businesses within the existing retail offer and liaise with

¹³ See action point 5 for more information about this forum.
[ABL Cultural Consulting](#)

sub regional colleagues in Stroud for examples of best practice in setting up services and spaces for artists whilst nurturing a complementary creative retail sector. The *Made in Gloucestershire* shop and the beginnings of a farmer market in Gloucester will need to be part of a much broader creative retail and leisure offer.

A new facility for music and media

A second project to be developed around creativity and fun is a new or revamped music and media hub which would meet the needs of Gloucester's young population who express their disappointment in the city's lack of cultural facilities and are particularly keen to have access to more rehearsal space, studios and a funky place to perform.

At present Gloucester's creativity is most clearly expressed through its young music scene which boasts at least 30 bands. The city and county council should recognise, capture and respond to this immense resource and support its future growth. By doing so Gloucester would be carving out a unique profile in music, media and youth to complement Cheltenham's association with theatre and more classical festivals. This facility would also assist the city in its aim to retain more of its graduates.

A more detailed outline of the rationale for this project is presented in Chapter 6 where the music and media hub is presented as a pilot joint project for the City Council, County Council and GHURC to take forward with the launching of Gloucester's cultural strategy.

Strengthening of the independent sector

The independent sector is very weak in Gloucester as there are no public funds available for cultural organisations. Funds allocated to community groups are very limited and there is no overarching strategy for arts development or culture. All City Council arts staff function in operational roles running the Guildhall and the festivals. This means there are no officers developing consistent and targeted strategies for events, outreach or audience development. This is a concern if the city has serious aspirations to become a more distinctive, cultural city and to stimulate creative production and enterprise throughout the city's regeneration and beyond. The creative sector cannot flourish without appropriate public resources even if the private sector is a significant stakeholder.

The city council should review its current arts structure and where possible reallocate resources to nurture local creative capital and home grown talent. This would imply consideration of how the Guildhall could be run as a semi independent body and if the festivals and other events may be better placed if delivered through a (semi) independent entity

responsible for a new events strategy with a sub regional remit. The Cheltenham Festivals should be considered as a partner here in view, historically, of its stronger infrastructure and its need to tap into the grass roots approach in Gloucester. However, a thorough options analysis will be required to identify the most feasible approach.

Creativity in schools

The source of Gloucester's local creativity will come from children and their experience of learning. This has implications not only for the future of the cultural sector in Gloucester and the nurturing of local creative practitioners but also for the capacity and value of the city's future workforce.

The success of Creative Partnerships – a scheme for creative learning supported by DCMS and DfES and delivered by the Arts Council – explores how creativity in schools can help to create more flexible and imaginative individuals with a range of transferable social and interpersonal skills. Recent reports have proven that creative learning improves achievement in key skills (literacy, numeracy and ICT) develops pupils' personal and social skills and encourages young people to improvise and take risks¹⁴.

The City and County Council should maximise opportunities to improve learning in its schools by tapping into this national resource which is about to be made available to a wide range of stakeholders via regional agencies throughout the UK. Local education authorities will need to be mobilised as their buying in to partnerships will determine the scope of Gloucester's access to this service.

¹⁴ Ofsted inspection of Creative Partnerships, published in September 2006
ABL Cultural Consulting

Action point 4: broadening Gloucester’s excellence in sports

Aims	Broaden and build on current strengths by encouraging new sub regional partnerships for community sports Balance world class professional provision with access for all Increase participation
Outcomes	High quality indoor sports facilities are complemented by a new focal point for outdoor recreation Gloucester’s support of physical activity and energy for all complements Cheltenham’s focus on relaxation

A focus on outdoor community facilities and engagement programmes

Gloucester has a strong reputation in sport primarily because of its internationally renowned rugby team. More recently, with the opening of GL1, the city has proven it can succeed in the delivery of community sports facilities based around a cross sector partnership. GL1 attracts high level of use amongst local residents from three of Gloucester’s most disadvantaged areas. However, Gloucester’s overall scoring in participation for sports and physical activity is lower than any other area in the South West apart from the Plymouth unitary authority. Only 18.9% of Gloucester’s population participate regularly in sports and physical activity (3 days a week, 30 minutes, moderate intensity)¹⁵. This is particularly concerning when set against Gloucester’s relatively young population. Therefore, the development of community facilities and more importantly outreach schemes which address levels of participation must be a priority for Gloucester in line with the Regional Strategy for Sport’s objective to

change the culture and community view of sport in the South West so we can increase activity levels by all ages and across all groups¹⁶.

Plans for community facilities which would contribute to this objective are underway through a partnership involving the city council, Bishop’s College and the University of Gloucestershire in the development and delivery of a ‘Hub Club’ concept. This concept which integrates current facilities available on each of the three sites includes a multi use dry side sports complex encompassing proposals for an athletics track, high performance netball and tennis courts, trim trail, jogging and cycle track. Such outdoor facilities represent the strongest current interest for

¹⁵ Active People survey carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Sport England.

¹⁶ Life’s out there...Be active in the South West, The Regional Plan for Sport, 2004-2008.

development as indoor facilities have already received substantial investment via GL1.

The City and County Council should support this development which has been identified as one of fourteen other multi sport hubs to be established in the region by 2008¹⁷. This addition to the sports infrastructure will certainly strengthen Gloucester's identity as an energetic centre for action and is a good example of a project which could have a sub regional dimension by ensuring that residents of both Cheltenham and Gloucester are factored in as target users. However, this should not distract the local authorities and sports organisations from addressing the most important aspect of the equation – ensuring that Gloucester's existing and new centres for sport attract a wider range of users resulting in more of Gloucester's communities participating in sports, games and fitness. Strong leadership and growth of social and community enterprise in relation to public infrastructures for sport must be explored as a priority by the City Council with support from Active Gloucestershire and Sport England.

Integrating any plans to refurbish Kingsholm Rugby ground with components of this cultural strategy

There is no doubt that Gloucester's rugby team are a strong component of the city's identity and one of its most popular distinguishing characteristics in the south west. Any plans to refurbish their existing ground or to build a new one should be integrated with the results of feasibility and design studies.

The City Council's role will be to ensure that the community dimension of the city's rugby facility is well thought out in consultation with a wide range of Gloucester's communities, with reference to this cultural strategy and with a clear understanding of the existing site's capacity. The stadium must be exploited for its cultural entertainment potential in addition to its suitability for hosting international rugby fixtures.

Maximising use of Gloucester's water

Gloucester's people enjoy and are proud of their proximity to water but its potential for sport and recreation has not been realised or considered strategically in response to shared recognition amongst regional agencies that water, the docks and maritime history are Gloucester's unique sub regional selling point¹⁸.

¹⁷ Life's out there...Be active in the South West, The Regional Plan for Sport, 2004-2008.

¹⁸ This was expressed by several regional stakeholders including MLA South West with reference to the National Waterways Museum.

Experts should be assigned the task of devising a strategy for the future use of the docks which are in close proximity to the new campus for Gloscat, already home to a tall shipyard and flagged up as a new site for Gloucester Rowing Club as part of GHURC's magnificent 7. This should contribute to an improved public realm as underlined in action point 1 which underlines the need to animate the docks.

Action point 5: enjoying and supporting diversity

Aims	Improve visibility of Gloucester's wide ranging community groups Account for needs of different faiths and cultures Explore opportunities for international residencies and collaboration
Outcomes	Increased social cohesion and intercultural understanding Gloucester's cultural scene is more varied and stimulating Gloucester's celebration of grass roots activity balances Cheltenham's more elitist reputation

Community consultation and peer networking

Gloucester's identity, as described in Chapter 2, celebrates the fact that Gloucester is the second most diverse city in the South West after Bristol. The city is home to a reasonable number of registered community groups representing different faiths, cultures, genders, generations and areas of personal interest. These groups must have increased visibility in a city which still seems mono-cultural to the occasional visitor. The energy and value of diversity should not be under estimated and in accordance with citizens' cultural entitlement as described in chapter 3 all communities should have a voice in the future of their city and be connected to others through peer networks which would improve the city's social cohesion.

The first priority here is for the City Council to use the forum established for ABL's standing conference as a starting point for a "cultural parliament" or "people's cultural forum." This would begin as the City Council's route to consultation with local people and could develop into a self sustaining, cross sector network which would consider joint projects, facilitate dissemination of information and function as an advocate for culture in Gloucester's economic and social future. Young people or "young consultants"¹⁹ should be involved in this forum including representatives of Gloucester's youth movement. It will be essential for Gloucester's people to share the vision of this cultural strategy and that of GHURC's plans for the city's renaissance.

¹⁹ ACE's Creative Partnerships programme in the East Midlands has championed the role of young people as "young consultants" who are being encouraged to shape their own education. For more information see CP in Leicester at www.creative-partnerships.com

Capacity building and grants

Gloucester's cultural network will only be as strong as its parts. Therefore, a parallel priority for local authorities is to support capacity building, mentoring, skills sharing and professional development tailored for the third sector. Whether for arts organisations as mentioned under action point 3, or for community sports, faith or youth groups, resources need to be made available to this mainly voluntary layer of Gloucester's cultural sector.

The local authority has a key role to play in providing leadership in the imaginative development of resources to nurture culture and in leveraging resources from a range of different sectors to which culture can contribute. The voluntary and community sector must be supported and enabled to grow as this is the vital human resource which should fuel and define the spirit of Gloucester's cultural identity.

Programming for diversity

According to the 2001 census, 7.5% of Gloucester's population is of Black or minority ethnic background. As mentioned in Chapter 3 with reference to cultural entitlement and Gloucester's current infrastructure, this statistic is not reflected sufficiently by the city's events, cultural strategies or arts programmes. The City Council must ensure that this is addressed over the next 10 years when the city's population will grow and diversify further. The festivals are the most obvious starting point in their capacity to bring together large numbers of people to celebrate each others' cultures.

Whilst this is already happening to some extent via the community led festivals which takes place annually, resources and professional input are needed to ensure that diverse acts and attractions of the highest quality reach and stretch the imagination of a broader cross section of Gloucester's population. The Arts Council of England has just announced substantial new funding streams for street arts following the success of the Sultan's Elephant in London. Why should Gloucester not be ambitious and investigate how it could host a smaller scale but monumental event of this kind for the launching of new facilities and regeneration projects?

From diversity to internationalism

Gloucester's diversity offers a starting point for a consideration of how the city can internationalise its cultural offer through exchanges, residences and events which link local groups to their cultures of origin. This is likely to require external expertise and could be achieved in a number of ways:

- the new facilities highlighted by this cultural strategy could factor in space for artists in residence of Chinese or Afro Caribbean backgrounds

- within the cultural sector, links could be made between the rugby or other international sports fixtures and an accompanying international arts programme
- by working with Cheltenham Festivals a European project could be developed and appropriate funds sought
- Creative Partnerships in the South West may be supportive if local authorities wanted to commit to setting up an international exchange around creative learning
- the value of longstanding twinning links should not be underestimated even if not currently active.

Several of these initiatives would fit with cultural plans in south west England to prepare for the London 2012 games with a wide range of activities which seek to promote the “wedding of sport and art,” and to examine international friendship, creativity and connectivity²⁰.

With the step change Gloucester will experience over the next ten years it is an appropriate moment for the city to reposition itself on a European and international stage. The city will have a big story to tell and European partners will be interested to learn from its experience of regeneration.

²⁰ Legacy South West, update from Guy Lavender, South West Director for 2012 games.
ABL Cultural Consulting

Action point 6: planning for a transformational project

Aims	Realise Gloucester’s potential as a host for striking events or attractions of international and global importance
Outcomes	<p>Gloucester confirms its position as a city with innovative and ambitious visions for the future.</p> <p>Strong public-private partnerships prove Gloucester’s ability to deliver</p> <p>Gloucester is on the map.</p>

As an exciting culmination of the city’s regeneration process, this strategy proposes a transformational cultural project as a long term goal. Following ten years of reshaping, constructing, promoting and delivering new cultural services for Gloucester, the city will be ready to host a bold, project of national and international importance based on visions for the future. It is too early to predict what this project might be but imagination and ambition should be harnessed at an early stage so that this opportunity is not missed. This foresight will be needed to broker the necessary public private partnerships at the highest level.

In Gloucester, a transformational project which makes use of the city’s assets and responds to the strongest selling points of Gloucester’s identity could take the form of a commercial living heritage attraction based, for example, around the idea of historic shipbuilding on the docks and an adjacent film centre. Alternatively, opportunities to broker deals with creative industries and arts through commercial or institutional partnerships could be explored. The market for the Tate may be saturated but there are other institutions and events which have not yet established the regional presence achieved by the Tate.

A real opportunity that may offer the most suitable starting point for a transformational project will be announced in forthcoming months by Culture South West. In each of the South West’s ten local planning areas it is expected that an inspiring ‘culture park’ or quarter fit for the next century will be developed. Cheltenham and Gloucester represent one of these local planning areas and Gloucester will be well placed to lead on this initiative by using the momentum of its regeneration, interest from investors and support from public funders.

Whichever route transpires to be the most productive, the City and County Council will need to work closely with all agencies involved with GHURC to plan for this objective. Of primary importance throughout this strategy is to retain a bold vision for what is possible in Gloucester and to ensure that the city finally punches above its weight as an inspiration to its visitors and residents.

Cross cutting action point 7: marketing and promoting Gloucester and its new cultural image

Aims	To ensure that Gloucester makes more of what already exists To raise aspirations amongst residents, businesses and visitors To maximise the social and economic impact of regeneration projects
Outcomes	The planning for and results of action points 1-6 in this cultural strategy have been promoted and are widely understood and appreciated Residents feel a sense of involvement and ownership because of regular communications and public events Gloucester's brand positioning is radically improved, the city has emerged as a stronger regional player

The strongest message that came from ABL's consultations with local communities, public authorities and regional agencies was that Gloucester has to make more of what already exists – it is a city of missed opportunities which has had no clear understanding of its own identity.

The cultural identity and framework for entitlement presented in Chapters 2 and 3 propose ambitious statements which seek to address this problem and should be considered in relation to existing and future branding of the city. However, these ideas like those of GHURC's renaissance strategy will only be felt by Gloucester's visitors if they are translated into a bold marketing and advocacy campaign which will anticipate and accompany the realisation of each key action point for culture. The campaign must work effectively across all sub sectors supported by this cultural strategy so that heritage or contemporary culture, sports or arts, outdoor recreation or lifelong learning are not ghettoised and accessible only to the already converted specialist target groups.

The City Council will need to take into account recommendations of Locum Consulting's recent options analysis for the marketing alliance discussion paper and the needs articulated within this cultural strategy to determine the most appropriate vehicle for the delivery of a new message. Most importantly it must be noted that to be a "premier league" cathedral city, more investment in marketing will be needed. At present Gloucester's City Council tourism section spends approximately £32 000 net on marketing. This amount needs to grow and is contextualised by LC's discussion paper which points out that it is less than the cost of a full page advert in the Sunday Times.

To promote local ownership, a volunteers or culture ambassadors scheme should be established so that the process is shared at all levels, contributing in turn to the city's cohesion and vitality. These objectives should be achieved with the utmost urgency and for each action point a careful communications strategy must be developed.

5 Roles, responsibilities, partnerships

A collaborative approach

The breadth and cross cutting relevance of this cultural strategy to Gloucester's future economic and social strength means that all organisations represented by the steering group must be involved. The City Council must adopt this strategy and secure the strong leadership it requires which has been absent in Gloucester in recent years. Without convincing, competent advocates for culture, the strategy and the cultural identity it supports is unlikely to become a reality.

However, the City Council cannot be expected to implement this strategy alone – it will need robust, imaginative partnerships at all levels with the three-way City-County-Regeneration commitment at the core. Amongst those working in culture, a silo mentality must be displaced by cross sector thinking and brokering of joint projects. Whether for sports, arts, libraries, heritage or the public realm, the Council should be committed to stimulating the imaginative deployment of resources for culture based on its contribution to a wide range of social, economic, health and learning agendas. This is essential when traditional resources for culture may be on the decline.

Of utmost importance is a sustained involvement of the community in key decisions made and new facilities built. The community must be a priority stakeholder in all working partnerships for Gloucester's cultural sector. The UK discovered the problems with the empty building, "Castles in the Air" phenomenon after the height of the first waves of regeneration in the early 90s. This year, the arts sector has just launched a nation wide campaign to gauge the public value of the arts. Sport England is critically analysing rates of participation as compared with a community's facilities. All of these factors mean that there is no excuse for neglecting the importance of inclusive, alternative approaches to community ownership and social enterprise – especially in the lead up to the Olympics when capital resources are likely to be so limited. The regeneration of Gloucester and the realisation of this cultural strategy will not be possible unless local citizens drive and engage with these processes and participate in the outcomes.

National and regional opportunities

It should not be overlooked that Gloucester's location on the edge of the South West, Midlands and South Wales could make it difficult for the city to convince some stakeholders of its regional role. However, current circumstances suggest that Gloucester has never been in a stronger position to lead and broker strong sub regional partnerships and to establish a clearer regional identity and function in the South West.

All of the regional cultural agencies including SWRDA, ACE, the Government Office of the South West and Sport England consider Gloucester a priority for investment. This coincides with the potential impact of the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company which is attracting inward investment to redevelop 100 hectares of derelict land and reuse over 80 historic buildings.

The regional strategies as outlined in appendix 6 push for agencies and local authorities to find new ways of working together. Culture South West presents a 20 year framework in which Cheltenham and Gloucester represent one of ten planning areas for culture. As illustrated in the route map presented at the end of this chapter, many components of the new cultural strategy can be delivered with these regional opportunities in mind. Gloucester City Council must ensure that all opportunities to deliver the new cultural strategy in collaboration with regional partners are carefully examined and exploited where appropriate. GHURC, which is already well aligned with the most significant regional agencies, should support Gloucester City Council in this role.

In the national context, the Olympics and the Music Manifesto are relevant to Gloucester's potential strengths. The Cathedral choir has already received funding through the singing fund which was instigated by the Music Manifesto. The new music and media hub should be planned with the Music Manifesto hub model in mind – that which brings together local music education providers, the music industry, children's services and schools.

Gloucester's bid to deliver aspects of the South West's Olympics strategy should also be encouraged and supported. GCC have put in a bid to host international squads for the 2012 pre-training Olympic camps which would be hosted by GL1, the tennis centre, University of Gloucestershire and the athletic track and rowing club to be realised between now and 2012. Alongside this bid, a sustained drive to increase community participation particularly with young people would reflect South West England's Olympic Ideal to ensure that the Olympics encourage more people across the region to be involved in sport.

Route Map

n.b. short term refers to 1-3 years, medium term 4-6 years, long term years 7-10.

Action point 1: making sense of the city centre					
What	Key issues	Lead partner(s)	Other key partners	Action required	Timescale within 10 year strategy
Improve linkages between and visibility of listed buildings	City centre needs greater coherence and legibility Certain heritage assets are obscured and hard to find	GHURC	City Council English Heritage Significant freeholders Cathedral	Commission façade survey Establish list of priority actions Integrate with GHURC development of quarters around the magnificent 7	Initiate steering group for planning immediately Implementation should be ongoing with development of GHURC Magnificent 7
Future development of the docks	Docks area regeneration still underway - opportunity to plan for long term success as a destination	GHURC and City Council planning	County Council, English heritage, British Waterways, Developers	Devise action plan for diversification of use based on vitality and activity. Explore increased usage of water for community sports	Immediate with implementation as medium term objective

<p>Develop and implement uncompromising public art strategy</p> <p>(refer to Gingko public art strategy for more details).</p>	<p>The city would benefit from increased animation and a strategy for public art</p> <p>Iconic and community scale projects are needed</p>	<p>GHURC and City council as joint stakeholders</p>	<p>County Council and Quality Design Initiative ACE SW, Gloucestershire University (Knowledge Transfer Partnership project), Public Art South West, CABE, Artsmatrix, Sabre art (developing art trail)</p>	<p>Follow Gingko public art strategy's recommendations to set up public art steering group to include GHURC, GCC, local artists and Public Art South West</p> <p>GCC to publish city wide public art strategy based on Gingko proposal</p> <p>Appoint public art consultancy to progress implementation of programmes as soon as possible and in accordance with regeneration framework</p> <p>Plan in long term for integration of public art practice within GCC via specialist Public Art officer post</p>	<p>Short term with sustainability through medium term objective of establishing GCC public art strategy and officer</p>
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Action point 2: rethinking heritage and cultural tourism

<p>Refurbish and improve existing heritage attractions</p>	<p>Access, quality of visitor experience, scope of audience development and education programmes</p>	<p>Gloucester City Council (Heritage and Museums service)</p>	<p>City Council hotels and attractions group, County Council museums group, MLA South West, South West Museums Hub, Waterways Trust, Facilities and operations manager of Folk and City museums.</p>	<p>Draw up five year museum development strategy</p> <p>Prioritise Waterways Museum with reference to L&R consultancy findings</p> <p>Waterways trust to seek partnership funding and coordinate bids to HLF with support from City Council. External support may be needed for HLF applications</p> <p>HLF bid for June 2007 to be finalised for Folk and City Museum</p> <p>Explore potential of Waterways Trust specialist interest trail (linking Cheshire and Ellesmere Port)</p> <p>Consider national opportunities for linking to or even stimulating network of maritime</p>	<p>Immediate initiation; medium term realisation</p>
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				museums with MLA SW	
Establish new heritage orientation centre	Need to improve legibility of the city centre and interpretation of its' unique heritage assets	Gloucester City Council	GHURC, County Council including Library & archives services, Culture South West	Draw up brief for options analysis and benchmarking research	Planning to begin immediately Medium term realisation
Ensure that Gloucester's physical regeneration is a participatory process	Need to focus on process as much as product, instilling sense of ownership amongst residents and visitors	GHURC and County Council including archaeological services	City Council, schools, museums, MLA, Creative Partnerships South West, Voluntary sector including Gloucester society for industrial archaeology and other local interest groups	Establish working group to publish inclusive archaeological strategy Identify partnerships for delivery e.g. through museums, schools/FE Platform and integrate process with online <i>Living Gloucester</i> digitisation project	Ongoing throughout implementation of GHURC's Magnificent 7 To be instigated at earliest possible stage

Action Point 3: raising the stakes for creativity					
Develop workspaces for Creative Industries	<p>Lack of provision for individual artists in a city of this size</p> <p>Gloucester lacks creative edge</p> <p>Stroud has captured the market but Gloucester is cheaper with more opportunities for growth</p>	GHURC	<p>City Council, SWRDA, Gloscat, Gloucestershire University, Gloucestershire First, GANET, GMG, Artsmatrix, Wired, Artnucleus, Culture South West</p>	<p>Await results of Blackfriars and Fleece feasibility study commissioned by GHURC, due in May 2007</p> <p>Look at suitability of alternative sites such as warehouses on docks</p>	Short to medium term realisation depending on results of feasibility study
Create new music and media factory with existing or new infrastructures	Strong local demand, current facilities are not adequate	<p>GHURC and City Council</p> <p>Must be a strong and evenly weighted partnership to ensure sustainability</p>	<p>Key partners: ACE, SWRDA, Gloucester Guildhall, Gloucestershire Music Services, Wired, Gloscat</p> <p>Other potential stakeholders: Cheltenham and Gloucester Music Libraries, BBC, Screen South West, Culture South West,</p>	<p>Develop specification Carry out market assessment</p> <p>Identify appropriate site including consideration of Guildhall and adjacency/synergy with Creative Industries proposals for Blackfriars</p> <p>Identify local ambassador or patron</p>	Medium

			European Blues Association Gloucester University, GMG, Acoustica, Big Laugh Café, Colston Hall, County Council	for new centre e.g. Simon Pegg (local film actor) and steering group.	
Align resources to establish strategic framework and support to development of creative projects	Current emphasis of City Council resources focused on operating the Guildhall Limitation of resources for independent sector.	City Council		Undertake organisational review Consult with third sector and Gloucester Cooperative Futures Create cultural funding and service plan Examine potential for delivery of Guildhall and festivals through arms length body.	Medium term to coincide with results of feasibility study and decisions made on music and media hub

Action Point 4: consolidating Gloucester’s reputation for sporting excellence & physical activity					
Ensure that any refurbishments to Kingsholm rugby ground compliments this cultural strategy and offers opportunities for all	Need to balance professional sports fixtures with community relevance and usage	GCC	County council, Sport England, Active Gloucestershire, Rugby club	Scope potential cultural entertainment content Establish community and non sports deliverables for project	Immediate
Realise potential the multi club concept for outdoor sports to be delivered by GCC, University of Gloucestershire, Bishop’s College.	Low levels of participation in sports suggest need for new community facilities and strategies for participation	City Council	University of Gloucestershire, Bishop’s College, Sport England, Athletic club, Culture South West	Secure and drive forward the three way partnership for delivery Establish community and civic stakeholders Prioritise exploration of alternative management models through options analysis and research into appropriate forms of social enterprise and community leadership	Medium
Explore how best to develop water sports offer in Gloucester	Local asset of water is currently under used Potential for increased community relevance	City Council	GHURC, Sport England, British Waterways, Culture South West, Active Gloucestershire, local water sports representatives eg. Gloucester Rowing or Swimming club	Establish working group Commission feasibility study on sports use of urban water in Gloucester and need for infrastructure development	Medium term

				Link with Magnificent 7 plans to relocate Gloucester Rowing Club to the docks	
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Action Point 5: enjoying and supporting diversity					
Ensure that all community groups in their diversity are involved in consultation on music and media hub and regeneration projects	Planning of the facility needs to consider needs of different faiths and culture and be available for local hire and commercial use	City Council	County Council, GHURC, community sector representatives	Create diverse cultural forum growing out of standing conference organised by ABL Widen membership City council to call forum together to discuss this draft cultural strategy	Immediate – on completion of this study
Stimulate international exchange and residencies through new cultural facilities and twinning links and festivals	Need to: raise aspirations, broaden local horizons and ambitions recognise value of international collaboration for local diverse population contribute to changing image of city as tourism	City Council	ACE, County council, GANET, Cheltenham Festivals, Olympics cultural programme, Culture South West, Visiting Arts	Identify overseas partners Organise work visit/forum for interested partners Develop appropriate project/programme e.g. international artists residencies in new workspaces, involvement in festivals in Gloucester and Cheltenham, sports club exchange based on twinning links, schools exchange project involving Creative	Medium to long term

	destination			Partnerships Source appropriate funding	
Action Point 6: planning for a transformational project					
Identify and test market for significant commercial attraction	Time for Gloucester to punch above its weight Completion of successful series of regeneration projects	GHURC and City Council	City Council, County Council, ACE, SWRDA, Culture South West, Significant private/national institutional partners	Commission visions and opportunities study Create public private partnership steering group as embryonic delivery vehicle	Long-term
Cross-Cutting Action Point 7: marketing and promoting Gloucester and its new cultural image					
Reformulate Gloucester's brand positioning Get cultural message into city's marketing collateral	Low aspiration and lack of civic pride City has not fully exploited and sold its unique assets	City Council (including tourism and events management), County Council (including county DMO), GHURC – in accordance with relevant cultural	Central Gloucester Initiative, Gloucestershire First, Cheltenham Tourism, Tourism South West	Consider recommendations of Locum Consulting's marketing alliance paper Follow outcomes of <i>People places spaces</i> strategy on nomination of joint areas for planning	Ongoing

		projects and programmes		Consider with sub regional partners potential of the joint Cheltenham-Gloucester brand Use pilot project such as festivals to experiment with this partnership	
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6 A new cultural facility for community regeneration

A semi commercial music and media hub

ABL's assessment of need and opportunity to develop a new cultural centre within the city has identified a fit for purpose facility which responds to the needs of Gloucester's young people as the key deficit in the city's current offer. The facility type - a music and media hub - reflects local strengths, demand and the need for a cultural facility which will support Gloucester's community regeneration which will in turn contribute to the city's prosperity. The hub would compliment the role of the city's heritage attractions which will drive cultural tourism and deliver on the aims of the County's Local Area Agreement and the City's Community Strategy²¹.

The Gloucester Guildhall has a loyal following and is fulfilling, as well as it can in its current building, some of the functions a new music hub would deliver. However, it is likely that more a fit for purpose facility may offer a more satisfactory platform for this local musical strength both in terms of users' experience and cost effectiveness. A new facility would guarantee better facilities and enable music to take on a new life in the city. On a new site, opportunities for clustering could also be explored.

A decision on this development cannot be taken until the market case is proven and an alternative use found for the Guildhall. A thorough feasibility study is needed to investigate impact of reallocating local authority resources, exploring potential for the cultural facility to be independent and sustainability of a new music and media hub in Gloucester. The City Council, County Council and GHURC should move forward with commissioning a feasibility study to address this pilot project which would help to launch and raise awareness of Gloucester's new cultural strategy.

Content

A detailed specification is beyond the brief of this study. However, the audit and consultation process suggest consideration of the following components:

²¹ See appendix 5 for more details of the strategic context.
[ABL Cultural Consulting](#)

- A flexible performance space (capacity: up to 600 for regional impact) to host all styles of music and comedy
- Rehearsal spaces and recording studios (potential use by Gloscat students in addition to other group/individuals)
- Meeting and workshop facilities for community groups
- Cinema – mixture of main stream and arthouse as programmed currently at Guildhall
- Media workshop space
- Bar and non alcoholic coffee house
- Office space for music/media organisations such as Wired, GMG
- Relevant information resources e.g. Gloucester and Cheltenham music library including hi tech resources for composition, European Blues Association archive.

Site

Refurbishment and adaptation of the Guildhall could be considered if the lower floor and frontage can be reclaimed from the *Cheltenham and Gloucester*. However, new build may be more appropriate to signpost a step change in Gloucester's ambition and image. Space available on the docks or adjacent to the creative industry development in Blackfriars may offer exciting possibilities. The possibility of relocating the city library into premises shared with other service providers, and of providing electronic music resources in Gloucester and Cheltenham libraries²² present a further opportunity for sub regional clustering if a large enough area could be identified. The libraries' consideration of new approaches to their music resources is particularly relevant to the proposed music and media hub in its factoring in of music technology resources targeted at young people. Stakeholders in the new music and media hub should instigate discussions with library representatives at the earliest stages of planning.

²² GCC Libraries & Information has submitted a bid to the Big Lottery Fund for £1.4 million to create spaces and facilities suitable for and attractive to young people. These would include hi-tech music resources in both Cheltenham and Gloucester libraries .

Rationale

Consultation with a wide cross section of Gloucester's cultural sector has revealed

- a lack of facilities for young people including studios, performance and rehearsal spaces
- strong general support for a new facility which would champion music and media in line with Gloucester's aspirations to be known as a diverse, young, energetic city.

The city is home to a lively music scene which includes the Three Choirs Festival, the International Rhythm and Blues festival, the Cajun festival and Gloucester Guildhall's music programme which includes 'Jumpin at the woodside' Jazz Jive festival. The youth music scene is particularly strong. At present, approximately 50 bands including 30 young groups depend on the Guildhall Arts Centre and two independent recording studios – Lo Fi Recording Studio on Stroud road and Studio 52 on the Morelands Estate. Facilities at the Guildhall are not fit for purpose for popular music and music technology. Regular sell-outs suggest that a slightly larger venue would be beneficial.

The strong local scene has grown from the Youth Music Action Zone which was set up by Youth Music in 2002 but was not sustained because of competition with Bristol and a lack of local resources and public sector commitment across the two local authorities. Wired, an independent young band development project is the only supportive structure for music in Gloucester which has also grown from its involvement in the management of the Youth Music Action Zone. Wired has just become a community interest company having functioned as a voluntary organisation since the action zone ended.

The Youth Music history has created another example of how Gloucester has not been able to make the most of its strongest assets by competing for national funds, missing opportunities to celebrate the immense appetite for music amongst the city's young people. This would be resolved quite logically by ensuring that a new facility is built or the Guildhall revamped to capture the Youth Music legacy and to maximise Gloucester's role as a champion for what is considered to be one of the most democratic forms of culture in the 21st Century²³.

²³ As the Music Manifesto underlines, singing "has the potential to involve children and young people in music on a scale that we have not witnessed before....It is in the grasp of all of us, whatever our ability."

Regional and national significance

A music and media hub would fill a gap in provision in Gloucester's northern corner of the South West and would not be competing with any other facilities of this type. The hub's music offer would complement Cheltenham's focus on theatre and the media component could be linked to Cheltenham's film studios and the Gloucestershire Media Group. This would present an example of how Cheltenham and Gloucester could share and contrast in their offer of cultural services. The hub may also have a role to play in Culture South West's *People, Places, Spaces* strategy if it can be clustered with other facilities.

In accordance with Gloucester's aspirations to be a centre of living heritage, Gloucester's national profile as a cathedral city would become more distinct if it were to champion edgy rock, pop and media in its historical setting. The benchmarking research carried out for this study suggests that recent developments in other cathedral cities such as Worcester and Lincoln have focused on multi use community facilities and new libraries built in partnership with universities. These projects are of the highest quality but also make way for Gloucester to make an alternative statement about what a cathedral city can be in the 21st century.

Gloucester's networking into programmes of national significance will be improved by the establishment of a music and media hub which could link to the Music Manifesto and other key music organisations with a vested interest such as Bristol's Colston Hall and Camden's Roundhouse. Re-establishing Gloucester's link to Youth Music via this new facility is obviously another priority.

Comparator venues

It was difficult to identify exact comparators for the facility proposed as music and media may be spilt between specialised venues as is the case in Bristol with the Colston Hall and Watershed. Alternatively, music and media can be found at a lower profile within the multi-use community arts centre mix where facilities tend to be less fit for purpose.

However, we have researched three examples of semi commercial venues which offer instructive examples of current practice. These are:

- The Quad, Derby – a contemporary visual arts and media centre based on a merger of two independent organisations. The venue, which includes two cinemas, galleries, multimedia studios, education rooms and creative industry business units will open in Spring 2008
- The Junction, Cambridge – an innovative centre for youth culture which opened in 1990 and expanded to encompass three spaces

by 2005. The Junction combines popular rock band and club events with performing arts, education, workshop, new technologies and production studios. Its establishment was instigated by hundreds of teenagers frustrated by the city's lack of a venue for them. They lobbied police and authorities for a disused building to be converted into an entertainment facility. It became the first purpose built venue for young people in the UK.

- The Roundhouse, Camden – a cultural landmark of international standing with a large performance space available for commercial hire and a wide range of rehearsal spaces and studios for film, music, digital arts, radio and TV.

A detailed overview of these venues is attached at appendix 5. The following points are relevant to the case for a music and media hub in Gloucester

N.B Quad figures referred to are projections for its opening year in 2008

- Each facility welcomes more than 100 000 visits per year
- Jobs created range from 35 – 70 with substantial teams of volunteers
- Income generated ranges from 50% - 80% (the national average is around 60% for a music venue)
- Turnover ranges between £2- 4m per year
- Principal funders are ACE, RDAs, City and District Council, Local economic partnership, regional media agencies, private foundations and, for the Roundhouse, DfES
- Each venue has space for presentation combined with workshop and /or rehearsal space, creative industry units and/or recording studios
- Size of the closest comparators (the Quad and the Junction) is 2600 m²
- The Junction and the Roundhouse are run by charitable trusts with a subsidiary trading company
- Each facility focuses unapologetically on young people as a priority with 80% of the Junction's audience being under 30. However, facilities are open to all and in the Quad and the Roundhouse audiences will depend on programme. Studio or media suite users are more likely to be young
- Spend on education programmes is prioritised above marketing

- The Quad has succeeded in brokering a partnership with a national cultural institution – the British Film Institute – to host its first satellite mediatheque. A similar coup in Gloucester would be advantageous
- Both the Junction and the Roundhouse have grown significantly suggesting growth in demand and access to capital resources. A similar phenomenon should not be ruled out in Gloucester which would be able to accommodate growth in view of available space and incomplete regeneration process
- The projected economic impact of the Quad is that it will attract an additional £4m expenditure into Derby and 100 000 additional visitors per year.

Partnerships

A detailed operational model and business plan for this facility is beyond the brief of this study. However, aspects of the comparators' operational models as described above offer useful indications of how a music and media hub could operate in Gloucester.

The route map presented in chapter 5, proposes the City and County Council, GHURC, SWRDA, Gloscat, the library, Wired, Gloucestershire Music Group and the Guildhall as the initial working group for this project. ACE South West should be involved in planning at the earliest stage and professional support should be sought for scoping of private sponsorship e.g. from the music industry, at least for equipment.

Potential impact

As suggested by national data which demonstrates the impact of culture on regeneration²⁴, a new music and media hub should contribute to the following economic benefits in Gloucester

- inward investment
- higher resident and visitor spend
- job creation (direct, indirect, induced/wealth creation)
- employer location/retention
- more graduates remaining (includes artists and creatives)
- a more diverse work force (skills, profile)
- new business, retail, and leisure areas

²⁴ The contribution of culture to regeneration in the UK: a report to DCMS, Evans/Shaw 2004. See Appendix 6, for more details of the strategic context.

- more public –private-voluntary sector partnerships
- more corporate involvement in the cultural sector
- increased property prices

This is in addition to benefits in social generation:

- A change in residents' perception of the place where they live
- Greater individual confidence and aspiration
- A clear expression of individual and shared ideas and needs
- An increase in volunteering
- Increased organisational capacity at local level
- Increased social capital
- A change in image and reputation
- Stronger public-private-voluntary sector partnerships
- Reduced school truancy and offending behaviour
- Higher educational attainment
- New approaches to evaluation, consultation and representation.