

UPDATE TO GLOUCESTER'S CULTURAL VISION & STRATEGY, 2021-2026

GLOUCESTER CULTURE TRUST
GLOUCESTER CITY COUNCIL





WELCOME

Rooftop Festival 2019

Gloucester's Cultural Vision & Strategy 2016-2026

is at its midway point. A lot has happened in the last five years, including the hugely successful Great Place project which helped us to achieve many of the strategy's early objectives.

By working in partnership, these included: setting up Jolt, a new creative hub in Kings House; growing a diverse City Voices programme within Gloucester History Festival; increasing creative opportunities for young people by linking The Music Works, Strike A Light, Gloucester Guildhall, Your Next Move and London's Roundhouse; working alongside Create Gloucestershire to connect residents, artists and community partners through Culture Matson; and investing in Gloucester's signature and growth events, such as Tall Ships, Carnival and Kings Jam.

Throughout this first phase, we have invested in and supported opportunities for artists, participants and audiences of all ages. But there has been a particular focus on children and young people, running as a thread throughout all we do. This is because our consultation, back in 2015, identified that young people had not always been well-served by the city's cultural offer. To tackle this, we aim to enable young people to take part in cultural activities (such as dance, poetry, drama, and music), develop their creative talents to a high standard, enjoy the growing offer as audiences and become our future creative leaders. We now look to the next five years, to build on this hard-won progress.

To refresh the Strategy, we have spoken to over a hundred people from a range of backgrounds. They told us that while the Strategy is on the right track, more needs to be done to diversify representation amongst cultural leaders, artists and participants; that Gloucester's growing cultural offer needs better promotion; and that the offer for young people needs more investment.

Respondents strongly supported the new Objective 1 and wished for the Cultural Strategy to inform other key plans, such as the city's Heritage, Environmental and Regeneration Strategies.

This process happened during the COVID pandemic, which has presented huge challenges for the city's arts and heritage organisations, artists and audiences – but which has also connected people with one another and with creativity in new ways. It has therefore been an opportunity to pause, reflect and come up with new ideas, focusing on what we as a city can achieve in the future, working collaboratively and inclusively.



Gloucester has so many interesting, fun and unique qualities that everyone should be able to enjoy, participate in and be proud of. This Cultural Strategy aims to enrich the lives of as many people as possible, especially young people, by expanding Gloucester's cultural life and making it as accessible and inclusive as possible.

There is significant strategic advantage in continuing to devolve delivery of the actions and outcomes set out in the strategy to a broad coalition of engaged partners. This arrangement helps to pool resource, energy, expertise and experience and, whilst possibly not unique, is noticeably rare and is being watched, commended and supported by key funders and potential partners. But however good a strategy is, it is only words on a page; successful delivery of this strategy will depend on the commitment of a broad coalition of engaged partners and individuals led and co-ordinated by Gloucester Culture Trust.

Gloucester Culture Trust acts as the city's cultural lodestar helping to pool resource, energy, expertise and experience. Whilst this devolved model is not unique, it is noticeably rare and is being watched, commended and supported by key funders and potential partners.

The City Council has a critical role to play in supporting this strategic devolvement; providing or enabling much of the cultural infrastructure; ensuring the right level of support is provided and the conditions are created in order for culture to thrive.

A joint working group consisting of members of the council and Gloucester Culture Trust will develop an action plan and track progress against this strategy.

We look forward to working with you all to make the next five years the second successful part of this journey.

Councillor Steve Morgan

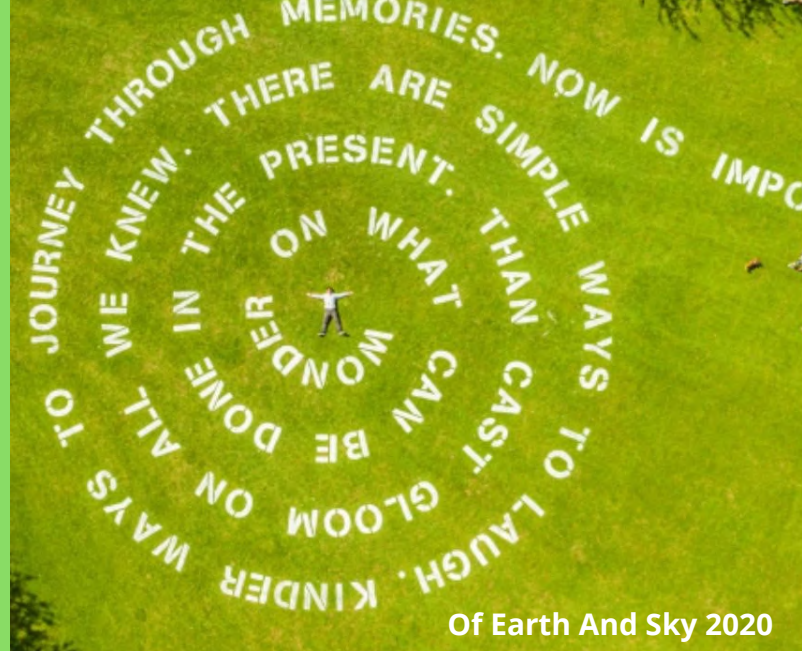
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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CULTURE?

For the purpose of this strategy the term Culture focuses on arts and heritage.



Of Earth And Sky 2020



It is used to describe **activities** such as the visual arts, music, performing arts, crafts, creative writing, literature and poetry, the wider creative industries and the arts–science interface.

Also the provision of **facilities and services** such as theatres, museums and galleries, cinemas, community halls and archives.

As well as exploring and animating the city's heritage and historic environment, public art and telling Gloucester's collective story.

Sports and leisure are not included in this current strategy.

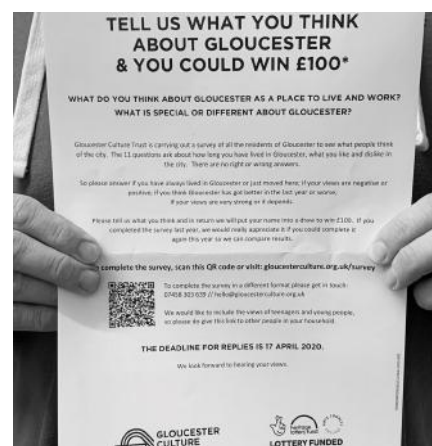
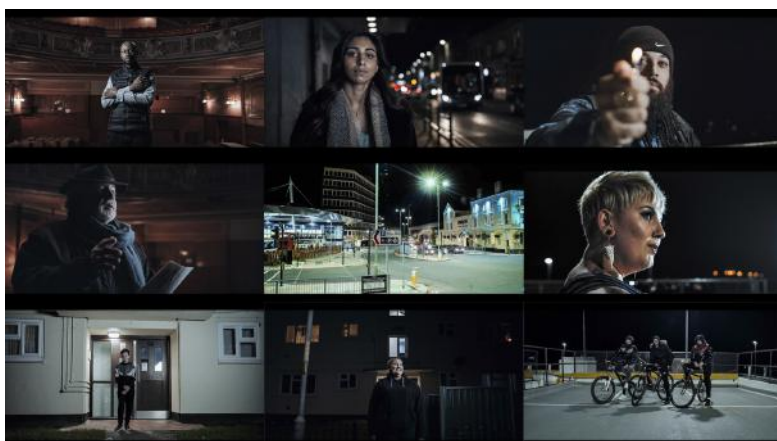
For specific and detailed plans around Heritage, see Gloucester's Heritage Strategy 2019-2029:
<https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/conservation-regeneration/gloucester-heritage-strategy-2019-2029/>

OUR VISION:

Rooftop Festival 2019

PUTTING CULTURE AT THE HEART OF GLOUCESTER FOR THE GOOD OF ALL

- We are committed to making Gloucester a better place to live, work and play by engaging and empowering local communities and leaders to transform the city.
- Gloucester is known for its distinctive heritage. Our aims are to build on that reputation and to provide conditions that will allow innovation and excellence to flourish and Gloucester's quirky and edgy nature to shine across the many communities in the city. There will be a particular focus on providing creative opportunities for young people.



OBJECTIVES, AIMS & ACTIONS FOR 2021-2026

OBJECTIVE 1

EMBED CULTURE IN THE CITY'S FUTURE PLANS

Ensure cultural policy runs through the heart of the city's wider strategies, recognising the role of arts, heritage and creativity as fundamental drivers of Gloucester's economic, social and community development, as well as health and wellbeing – especially in post-COVID recovery plans.



Proposed Actions

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

OBJECTIVE 2

BUILD THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES BY DEVELOPING ARTISTS AND ARTS ORGANISATIONS

Attract creative people to the city, and nurture those creatives who already work here, by developing a creative talent pipeline that increases artistic opportunity at all levels, catalysing growth in the creative industries locally.

Create affordable workplaces for artists and micro-arts organisations to develop new work in the City as equally important to big bricks and mortar projects.

Support young people to develop their musical talent and participation by investing in a place for them to develop, rehearse and record new work and learn new skills.

Develop the Guildhall and Museum's programmes to attract a broader audience and realise the potential of Gloucester City Council-run cultural venues.

Invest in and champion those Gloucester artists and independent cultural organisations who produce high quality work and the leaders who can deliver.

Proposed Actions

3.
Continue developing Kings House into an exemplar arts, and creative industries' hub and incubator to build and support a thriving, diverse creative community at the heart of Gloucester.

4.
Develop and implement a business transformation and creative development plan for Gloucester City Council-owned cultural venues, to realise their potential.

(This action links with the goals of the City's [Heritage Strategy 2019-2029](#))

5.
Invest in talent development programmes and networks across Gloucester to develop cultural leaders, existing and emerging, and nurture future generations of artists and creatives.

6.
Invest in and champion the city's independent cultural sector, to boost the professional skills, qualifications and employability of people who lead, manage, work in or aspire to work in, the creative and cultural sector.



OBJECTIVE 3

BROADEN THE CULTURAL OFFER TO SUPPORT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Improve Gloucester residents' quality of life through increased cultural provision and participation, leading to better social cohesion, civic pride, confidence and ambition, as well as improved health and wellbeing.

Ensure that the City's cultural plans match the ambition of its bricks and mortar regeneration and are embedded at the heart of the Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy and the G-First Local Enterprise Partnership.

Think long-term cultural infrastructure to enable the City to enjoy the full economic and social benefits that cultural regeneration can achieve, for decades to come.

Build partnerships with national cultural organisations, artists and producers to bring large-scale projects to the city whilst home-grown infrastructure matures and to complement the home-grown cultural programme.

Proposed Actions

7.
Ensure a unified approach to cultural planning by aligning Gloucester Culture Trust and independent cultural organisations with the local authorities, Covid-19 recovery groups and other economic and social policy-makers.
8.
Develop a cultural and creative industries infrastructure masterplan and investment plan for the city, to ensure the city's built infrastructure becomes industry-leading, supports this Cultural Vision & Strategy and is as ambitious as the rest of the city's bricks and mortar regeneration.

(This builds upon the recommendations of the independent [2019 Report into the feasibility of a major new venue for Gloucester.](#)) [To read the report click here](#)
9.
Continue to build partnerships with national cultural organisations, artists and producers to inspire the sector's ambitions and drive up audience demand for cultural experiences.
10.
Empower local people through investment in grassroots arts activity. Deliver against mutually agreed health and wellbeing outcomes for residents, especially those who are particularly culturally disengaged, by working closely with them, as well as the NHS, Active Gloucestershire, Community Builders and others.
11.
Invest in Gloucester-based arts and heritage organisations to diversify and develop their participation and talent development programmes.

OBJECTIVE 4

DEVELOP A VIBRANT CITY CENTRE FULL OF CULTURAL ACTIVITY AND THINGS TO DO

Help all communities, and particularly young people and families, feel that the city centre is theirs - a safe and enjoyable focal point in their lives, somewhere to find belonging, community, and place.

Find a better way of telling Gloucester's collective story involving the city's Heritage Strategy, the museums, tourist information centre and other attractions, including the Cathedral's Project Pilgrim.

Proposed Actions

12.
Work with local businesses, economic development bodies, arts and heritage organisations to commission and effectively promote a regular and diverse programme of high quality outdoor arts events, including street arts and parades, using the city centre's fantastic array of outdoor spaces.

13.
Work with the city's many heritage destinations and historic 'spaces' to develop a high profile, contemporary creative programme unique to Gloucester, regularly bringing together arts, heritage and local communities.

14.
Animate Kings Square as a revamped, lively, year-round cultural and public space, integrated into and a proud exhibitor of the cultural life of the city.

OBJECTIVE 5

DEVELOP AUDIENCES FOR ALL THE CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES BEING CREATED

Build audiences for new cultural developments by listening to and understanding the audiences on our doorstep.

Stimulate local demand for diverse cultural experiences through a long-term audience development strategy.

Attract visitors to Gloucester's new high quality cultural activity.

Proposed Actions

15.
Promote Gloucester's cultural offer more effectively: First, by researching, listening to and understanding current audiences to map demand, opportunities and gaps, and second, by raising investment for a long-term audience development action plan that addresses these findings.

16.
Work with the city's and county's destination marketing organisations to develop a cultural tourism marketing strategy and campaign, collaborating with neighbouring towns and regions as appropriate, to attract visitors nationally and internationally.

OBJECTIVE 6

PUT GLOUCESTER ON THE CULTURAL MAP BY DEVELOPING HIGH PROFILE EVENTS

Develop distinctive Signature Events that raise the image and profile of the city to attract visitors, building on our strengths in heritage and music.

Consider bidding for major national and international events, programmes and opportunities to inspire the sector and the City, acting as beacons to signal the cultural regeneration of Gloucester.

Proposed Actions

17. Building on existing local strengths, invest in and develop a portfolio and regular programme of regionally or nationally significant Signature Events, including Three Choirs Festival, Tall Ships, Gloucester History Festival, Kings Jam, Carnival and working with other programming partners such as Strike A Light.

(This builds upon the recommendations of the 2017 review of Gloucester's Festivals & Events)

18. Coordinate the city's calendar of festivals and events to facilitate better city-wide and long-term planning, as well as coordinated promotion of ambitious, high quality cultural festivals and events.

19. Monitor the funding model for festivals and events supported by the Council, to ensure it meets the needs of this Strategy, supports the growth of the local independent cultural sector and maximises the artistic, social and economic impact of those events.

20. Building on the successes of the first five years of the Cultural Strategy, evaluate the potential impact and return on investment of a bid for UK City of Culture, if and when the conditions are right for the city, and the structure for delivering this goal.



OBJECTIVE 7

MAKE THINGS HAPPEN TO CONTINUE THE MOMENTUM FOR CHANGE

Develop and champion inclusive, collaborative cultural delivery models, investing in a new generation of cultural leaders who can harness Gloucester's vast untapped creative potential.

Empower Gloucester's creative community, giving them the tools to collaborate effectively and take charge of their own cultural future.

Create a fundraising plan to support the initiatives in this strategy, to fund the commissioning of local arts organisations to deliver.

Proposed Actions

21. Strengthen the innovative Cultural Partnership that has been set up between Gloucester City Council and Gloucester Culture Trust to ensure this strategy is delivered, building on the achievements of the first five years. To do this, support the further strategic devolvement of culture to Gloucester Culture Trust, allowing the City Council to focus on its vital role in creating the conditions for culture to thrive.
22. Connect this Cultural Partnership to networks and organisations across the city and beyond, to ensure a broad range of residents, artists and organisations can shape the city's cultural future. This will include developing the range of Cultural Forums and co-creation networks.
23. Work with a wide range of strategic and funding partners who share our Vision (such as Arts Council England, University of Gloucestershire, NHS, GFirst LEP and major local businesses), to pool resources, generate greater investment in culture and ensure this strategy is resilient.



OBJECTIVE 8

EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO CREATE, EXPERIENCE AND PARTICIPATE IN CULTURE

Young people are critical to the cultural vitality of Gloucester today and as the creators of the cultural forms of the future.

In order for the cultural scene in Gloucester to continue to thrive investment needs to be made into training, apprenticeships, placements and mentoring opportunities to develop young people's skills. Young people should be supported and invested in for them to become the city's future cultural leaders.

Building on the legacies of the Gloucester Roundhouse Exchange and Great Place programmes, youth-led programming across cultural venues, such as First Fridays should be encouraged and supported, providing opportunities for new activity to emerge.

Young People need to know what cultural offer is available to them and know what's going on in the city. This will be done through targeted marketing and encouraging young-people-led publications/channels/networks, supporting and encouraging youth networks.



Proposed Actions

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

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

In order to judge whether the Strategy is a success, we will check it against the following:

- Gloucester residents know about and participate in a range of cultural activities
- Gloucester's cultural organisations, artists and creative businesses are confident, diverse, resilient and creatively ambitious
- More investment is coming into the city for culture
- Gloucester is viewed as a culturally exciting city
- Culture is valued in Gloucester for its regeneration, place-making, health and wellbeing benefits

We will measure this via continual audience research, including ticket sales, an annual residents' survey, annual sector survey, feedback from attendees at festivals & events, economic impact assessment, collecting data about who takes part in workshops, activities etc.

There will be a delivery plan that tracks the progress of these actions and Key Performance Indicators, overseen by a cross-organisational steering group. Each action will have a clearly identified owner or lead partner. The progress will be regularly presented to and monitored by both Gloucester Culture Trust and Gloucester City Council.



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