

Peterborough: our city, our culture

2014 – 2019

Draft Culture Strategy

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Foreword

Councillor Graham Casey

‘Peterborough: a great place to go, with great things to do’.

Peterborough has been my home for over 25 years.

The City has a diverse cultural offer, one of which it should be proud. Indeed, Peterborough's culture is unique both with a rich heritage and an ambitious forward looking vision. Peterborough is a growing city and I am proud to serve as a Councillor for a City that continues to offer a warm welcome to new residents of all nationalities.

Culture is vital to a confident City; I know the importance and value of culture. As an enthusiastic supporter and even, at times, performer, I understand the benefits that culture can bring, whether it's the simple pleasure of being entertained, being inspired and even challenged.

I want to make it even easier for as many people as possible to see, hear and participate in high-quality cultural experiences in Peterborough.

This strategy is not about spending more money. It is both about making the very best use of the wealth of existing resources and about ensuring there is a long-term return on all of the existing investments in culture.

The Cultural Strategy recognises the significance of the cultural and creative sectors in making Peterborough a cultural City, and advocates continued support and investment. It also addresses concerns facing the sector and considers how to maximise opportunities for the cultural life of Peterborough to flourish.

The cultural strategy builds on this and goes on to outline strengths, challenges, actions and aspirations.

The strategy identifies priorities for the City Council and our cultural partners that will help provide the leadership and coordination required.

I believe that the cultural offer, the activities, the organisations and individuals, the buildings and the inspirational work that goes on must be recognised and supported for the good of the future of the City.

The culture strategy encompasses **Arts, Heritage, Libraries** and **public space**. The strategy team has undertaken a wide range of research and consultation activities to develop a close understanding of Peterborough's cultural sector and potential actions for the cultural steering group and partners to implement. A separate strategy is being developed for our sporting activities.

Finally I would like to commend all our cultural partners that strive to make a real difference in the City. I am proud of the work that we lead as a Council and the work produced through our strategic partner Vivacity.

I hope this strategy will help galvanise the City's cultural organisations and individuals to work together to help deliver our shared vision for culture in Peterborough.

Peterborough: our city, our culture

Our Vision

- To bring local, regional, national and international interest in, and acclaim for the City based on the variety and quality of our cultural offer.

Our Priorities

- To further increase participation in and enjoyment of cultural activities and celebrate our diversity – culture, connecting and reflecting our communities
- To attract, develop, promote, retain and attract talent, including developing the local creative economy, complementing the city's growth
- To create places and spaces for culture – using the public realm and our green open spaces to ensure there are *'places to go and things to do'*

Our Legacy

- To raise the profile of culture and participation within the City
- To raise the profile of the City through culture and increase visitor numbers

Culture in our city today

While Peterborough's history may stretch back to the Bronze Age and earlier, in demographic terms, Peterborough is a **youthful** city, which makes the City distinct to many other cities and areas in the UK. It is also very multicultural, much more so than many other cities and areas in the UK. The Strategy aims to reflect this dynamism in cultural activities and audiences, and sees this mix as an opportunity.

These characteristics make Peterborough an exciting place to live and work.

- Peterborough is the fastest growing City in the UK, the population has increased by 17% over the last decade to 183,000 (from 157,000)¹
- The combination of a baby boom and inward migration from many countries including many in Eastern Europe has driven growth requiring 6,000 more primary school places.
- Peterborough's overall population is young – more than a third of the City population is under 25.
- The City is diverse, with 20% of the population born outside of the UK and the City has the only primary school in the country where all of the pupils have English as a second language.

Peterborough has a thriving – but disparate – cultural offer already. To understand Peterborough's starting point the strategy takes into account the significant amount of work undertaken in this area over the last two years.

- The City Council Commercial operations team provides a wide range of cultural activities from facilitating local groups to produce their own activities in the City centre, such as the **Italian festival** the **Portuguese festival**, the **Polish festival**, **African Splash**, **Diwali festival** and a new introduction for 2014, a **Latvian festival**, enabling them to bring cultural activities to the widest audience as possible. The Council's operations team also producing high calibre activities for the City from managing the city's tourism centre
- The City benefits from set calendar events from the **Christmas lights** switch on, **Music on the square** and the **Great Eastern Run**. The team also support a wide range of commercial events such as the **Willow festival**, **concerts** and the **Beer festival**. During 2013 the team delivered and supported over 34 distinct cultural events for the City
- The **Arts** have seen tremendous growth in the last two years, with the development and expansion of a new programme at the **Key Theatre** and its development into a cultural 'hub', to the reopening of the **Broadway** for a winter session, both have shown a real appetite for a rich and diverse programme, including comedy, drama, dance, spoken word, music, film and community projects and activities.

¹ Cities outlook 2014

- The **City Gallery**'s introduction of support programmes, such as Saturday art schools and life drawing and the success of the **Open Exhibition**, giving artists living in the Peterborough area, offering showcase opportunities; alongside the national and international exhibition programme,
- The **Arts Festival** has developed into a true international festival in every sense, welcoming acts and performers from across to world to developing arts activities with local communities, eliminating barriers of language and background.

The City hosts a range of National Portfolio organisations and established arts organisations:

- **Eastern Angles, Britten Sinfonia, Metal, NNF (Bridge Organisation), Metal and SeaChange Arts** all have growing relationships that are embedded in the city. These groups have made significant inroads in developing local groups and audiences and producing insightful and quality experiences for the people of Peterborough.

The City has an emerging musical offer:

- The City's **Music Hub** is delivering a three year programme of music, funded through national government, which is due to be extended through another funding cycle and will develop a singing strategy, school CPD, access to musical instruments to all children in Peterborough schools and school engagement;
- The growth and development of music has been extended through the development of the City's choirs, **Peterborough Singers** and other choirs in the city has seen an active up take of singing activities, with the Male Voice choir achieving national awards and success and **Sing Peterborough** leading on the development of a new **singing strategy**, making use of assets such as the **Cathedral** and **Broadway theatre**.
- Independent groups are growing in the City from **Blok Collective, Peterborough Music Makers, Creative Peterborough** to **Beat This** who are now winning commissions and developing their practices, more groups are being enabled to be independent and sustainable for the further.
- Peterborough hosts independent organisations offering lessons and sessions in dance of all varieties, music, singing, drama and art, both our libraries and our children's centre offer 'culture' for the very young from **Wildcats and Fit to dance**.

The City has a strong Literature offer:

- The City's **Literature** scene has growth from strength to strength through the tradition of the City's annual **poet laureate** competition to the developments at **John Clare Cottage** and the introduction of the **We Love Words festival**, bringing international authors and writers to Peterborough.

The City's **heritage** attractions have not just a rich past but also an exciting future:

- **Peterborough Museum** is working in partnership with the Natural History Museum to bring Real World Science to Peterborough schools by providing free, stimulating, hands on workshops. Vivacity heritage attractions are not only providing access to historic venues and the rich stories of Peterborough but are also providing a real and engaging context for the City.
- The **Cathedral**, has received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for £2.4 million to enable the Cathedral to offer visitors a richer appreciation of life of the buildings past and present. The development will include a new heritage centre, which will not only benefit the Cathedral but all heritage attractions in the City, through joint programmes and activity. The Cathedral is gearing up to celebrate its 900th anniversary.
- **Flag Fen** now hosts eight prehistoric Bronze Age log boats, found near the site at **Must Farm**. Most of the boats are in an incredible state of preservation due to the wetland nature of the area. Many were virtually intact and some have elaborate features including lifting handles, grooves for transom boards, sterns and evidence of decoration and are now being conserved for future generations at Flag Fen and are open to the public to view. This find has international significance and is a great opportunity to raise the profile of heritage in the City and country.

There are opportunities for school children to experience and enjoy culture:

- The Schools offer has grown through partnerships with many cultural organisations offering both on site and classroom experiences where pupils can develop new skills and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Pupils' cultural contributions are celebrated through the **Music awards** and the **young people film awards**, held every year in the City with growing attendance.

There are opportunities for young people to acquire (some of) the skills that can support a career in culture:

- Degree courses are available at university centre Peterborough from, Performing arts, archaeology, community arts and theatre practice, English literature to media studies. Giving pupils the opportunity to develop and learn within their own city, retaining and using the city's talent
- Peterborough's young people are benefitting from a new three year programme **Peterborough Cultural Partnership**, supported through the **NNF (Bridge Organisation)**, that has identified four strands: encouraging young cultural leadership activity; developing and commissioning events and activities which are young people led and focused; creating opportunities for arts and cultural focused professional development; and to develop brokerage between the arts and cultural offer with schools

The City has made progress in raising its profile:

- The City has achieved for the first time European funding for culture, becoming part of the **ZEPAA2** consortium, which aims to develop the sustainability of the arts festival, making links with Europe and producing a high-quality format, which will attract further investment.
- Peterborough has also been successful in attracting funding for a national project, Creative People and places, which will see local groups organising themselves to champion culture. Creative People and Places, a nationally funded project, will set up networks and micro-funding opportunities for projects and will generate, within two years, a following of over 1000 members (organisations and individual); the group already has at least 250 active members, including Step Up Community Association.

There is a real appetite and need for ensuring a rich, diverse and relevant programme across the disciplines: comedy, drama, dance, spoken word, music, film and community projects and activities.

There will be a key role to be played by both Vivacity and its partner organisation Metal:

- Vivacity is the Council's strategic partner for culture and leisure; an independent charitable trust responsible for the city's Arts, Heritage, Library and Sports services. Vivacity has expert knowledge and plays the lead role in the city for artist and audience development. It will build on the national recognition secured for the three year Forty Years On project – an ambitious and exciting programme of theatre, oral history and archive work, delivered in partnership with Eastern Angles.
- **Metal**, has been established in the City and is producing a programme to develop artists that live locally and to map the current cultural activity in the City. Metal has also produced, with City Council funding, a new website for networking culture and events across Peterborough, **www.idea1.org.uk**. The website is open to anyone who wants to promote or list events in the city, making it a new one stop shop for finding out what's happening today, tomorrow or this month in Peterborough.

To build on – and bring coherence to – all of this activity, this strategy suggests three interlinked priorities to be taken forward by all the cultural organisations active in the city, working towards a common priorities and outcomes. These are

- To further increase participation in and enjoyment of cultural activities and celebrate our diversity – culture, connecting and reflecting our communities
- To attract, develop, promote, retain and attract talent, including developing the local creative economy, complementing the City's growth
- To create places and spaces for culture – using the public realm and our green open spaces to ensure there are '*places to go and things to do*'

Our legacy

This strategy is intended to secure two, mutually reinforcing benefits over the next five years:

- **To raise the profile of culture and increase participation in cultural activities within the City**
- **To raise the profile of the City through culture and increase visitor numbers**

As a result of the actions identified in this strategy, we expect:

- More people to take part in cultural activities more often – tracked through the ‘citizen panel’ survey
- More events to be taking place – tracked through online event guides, idea 1 and Visit Britain
- More facilities being used to provide cultural activities – track through bookings and the cultural strategy steering group.

The people of Peterborough – individuals and community groups – and potential visitors will know:

- What’s on where and when;
- Who to ask for advice, guidance and support if they want to take part in, support or host a cultural event.

Cultural organisations, and their leaders, will develop:

- The Know How to grow participation and develop audiences;
- The programmes of work that are relevant to and supportive of Peterborough’s ambitions;
- A compelling range of marketing materials and activities, promoting cultural activities.

Peterborough’s cultural community will be:

- **Resilient** – there will be a determined effort to grow memberships and audiences and to speak to visitors from outside the City,
- **Strategic** – engaged in the long-term planning within the city to secure benefits for and from our residents, our visitors, our businesses and investors,
- **Collaborative** – operating productive and mutually beneficial partnerships with other organisations, individuals, community groups and businesses,

- **Ambitious** – focussed relentlessly on the quality of the offer, with the skills, knowledge and confidence to recognise, promote and support local performers, and
- **Confident** – enthusiastically promoting Peterborough.

Our priorities

Priority 1: More people, more often – increasing participation in and enjoyment of cultural activities

Why this matters

Cultural activities enrich many people's quality of life, offering enjoyment and self-fulfilment, and offers opportunities to share experiences with others, helping to build and maintain a strong and cohesive society.

Participation in culture plays an important part in providing people with positive activities and transferable skills. Participation in culture is also vital in ensuring the health and wellbeing of our citizens.

Peterborough is a vibrant, diverse, fast-growing and youthful city, which makes it an exciting place to live. Peterborough's diversity is vitally important to the people who live and work here.

Participation levels are currently low compared to national benchmarks, reflecting both the socio-economic status of the City population and the lack of cultural infrastructure both inside and outside the City centre.

However, Peterborough's cultural offer has gained considerable momentum in recent years and now has the opportunity to make a real difference and affect positive change through culture, through drivers and dynamic programming from Vivacity to National Portfolio Organisations and local groups, delivering high quality programmes and working with the community and arts practitioners to develop and enhance skills.

Creative People and Places, a nationally funded programme, is aimed at increasing participation by providing relevant and localised activities and programmes in a range of traditional and non-traditional locations, as well as developing the capacity of the City's participatory culture and voluntary sectors.

Peterborough needs to build audiences that actively engage, creating and shaping events. This will be delivered through a combination of programming, producing and utilising national tours to bring national significant work and productions to Peterborough.

Participation is also about communication. It is vital that all partners help communicate the breadth of cultural activities available, not simply their own, so that everyone knows what is on offer.

The youthful and diverse population are enthusiastic users of digital technologies and with the City's investment in high speed fibre infrastructure, new delivery and engagement mechanisms can be exploited for the benefit of culture in the City. In a City such as Peterborough, access to different forms of culture relevant to the local population is important and will help increase the number of people taking part in cultural activities.

What will be done

Peterborough City Council is committed to creative engagement and participation across all areas in Peterborough – involving people to enable them to make their own decisions about what excites them, and to ensure that the cultural offer is relevant to local people.

Peterborough has a range of excellent cultural institutions and programmes which residents can enjoy. However, many residents would like to engage more in cultural activities but encounter a range of barriers including time, transport, price, availability of information and familiarity.

- Work with internal departments, such as City Operations, travel choice and Children's Services to sustain and extend engagement through service and partnerships
- Work with our strategic partner, Vivacity, to sustain and extend engagement
- Support the development of inclusive and inspiring programmes within Peterborough City centre and surrounding Wards.
- Support targeted programmes such as Creative People and Places aimed at priority groups and prioritised engagement.
- Promotion and development of events programmes for the City and development of the night time economy and activity; visibility that Peterborough is a diverse cultural City
- Develop the role of culture as an integral part of wellbeing, especially in combating physical and mental health issues

What will be achieved

- Increased participation with a range of audiences, especially amongst young people the elderly, diverse communities and the voluntary cultural organisations
- Increased use of public spaces for cultural activity
- Visible practice and collaboration within the City which enables groups and organisations to grow
- Cultural leaders across the sector are open to ideas and facilitate others through creative networks
- A greater understanding and confidence of Peterborough's potential as a creative city recognised as active and vibrant
- Increased membership of cultural and voluntary organisations

Priority 2: Developing, retaining and attracting people with talent

Why this matters

Local people value the opportunity to make a contribution through engaging in cultural opportunities, these are beneficial in developing individuals' confidence and transferable skills as well as creating strong communities. People who actively participate in cultural activity are more likely to take a role in shaping their communities in other areas too. More people could benefit from volunteering opportunity within the culture sector².

More opportunities for young people to develop as cultural leaders are needed, from the continued support and promotion of the arts award as a way of recognising their achievements, to increasing opportunities to lead, manage and curate cultural activity through the Young Producers networks. This will be provided through the Creative people and places programme and the Peterborough cultural partnership. The basic entitlement will be through schools and colleges, with additional programmes for those who do not or cannot access culture in these settings, and further support for children and young people with identified talent.

Young people will be entitled to quality cultural activities within and beyond the school curriculum, utilising opportunities such as the Peterborough Learning Partnership, Children's University, where children receive a stamp for each hour of activity in order to work towards the national certificates, accessing a wider range of cultural activities and venues across the city. To provide this entitlement, a wide-ranging partnership between the relevant parts of the public, private, voluntary, faith and third sectors, as well as residents is required.

Peterborough has benefited from of number national portfolio organisations working and delivering quality programmes in Peterborough. The City is now at the starting point with one of the organisations, Metal, taking up permanent residence in Peterborough and integrating with other city providers. This new development, in partnership working, underpins the need to maximise local resources and build capacity in the cultural sector. Both Vivacity and Metal are key in attracting, developing and retaining cultural producers and programmers in the City. Programmes such as Community Bridge Builders, Connection–Culture and Chamber of Culture are underway through the Creative People and Places programme to deliver this priority. All areas of work intend to develop skills and confidence, producing sustainable models of delivery and cultural programmes.

² The value of arts and culture to people and society, Arts Council England 2014

What will be done

Peterborough will develop opportunities for the next generation of cultural producers and practitioners, innovative and imaginative programming brokering new relationships between professional and non-professionals and cultural organisations, providing pathways through early years to higher education. These projects will experiment with programmes, locations and forms, and set ambitious targets for increasing levels of participation, both in numbers and levels of activity. There will be new pathways to excellence, developing talent and retention

- Work with learning partners across the city to support and encourage learning at all ages through culture.
- Promote the empowering role of informal learning in underpinning personal and community development, through reading, creative activity and cultural experiences.
- Support continuing professional development activities for cultural producers and programmers, through programmes such as Creative people and places, cultural producers networks and Peterborough cultural partnership
- Continued support and celebrating excellence through the Arts Award and the children's university
- Support the development for phase two of the music hub and music partnership to support young people through music pathways
- Support local and national cultural programmes which inspire cultural development

What will be achieved

- A current and relevant cultural offer to all schools.
- Pathways and opportunities for young people to develop skills and to stay or return to the City.
- Sharing of knowledge and experience, development of skills within the City.
- CPD opportunities to develop and enhance skills, an increase in the number of creative courses offered in Peterborough.
- Developing and signposting to creative practitioners in the City.
- The development of cultural hubs.

- An increase in the numbers of national portfolio organisations working and staying in Peterborough
- A Peterborough based National Portfolio Organisation

Priority 3: Places to go and things to do – making the best use of our city spaces

Why this matters

Peterborough is an historic City ringed by new town development, it is essential that cultural services are developed in order **to maintain and increase the vitality of the City** to ensure that the growth becomes a strength.

One of the ambitions for this strategy is to use culture to **reconnect the satellite settlements to the City**, both physically and emotionally, where public space and cultural resources become the meeting points, and places for great art and cultural activity, that draws from the city's many and diverse communities. Research shows that people are increasingly going to lead more isolated lives, with many working from home and/or living alone. Opportunities to meet in a variety of free public spaces and commercial premises for a wide variety of purposes will therefore become increasingly important and valued.

Peterborough has a number of venues and facilities focused in the City centre which produce excellent work and programmes, however the City does not have the venues or facilities which would be associated with Cities of a similar size. **Peterborough does not have a cultural quarter like many other comparable Cities.** In order to improve access to cultural activities, Peterborough needs to improve or open up access to cultural facilities in the city centre and the surrounding Wards, delivering programmes at the neighbourhood level, using facilities in the community and vacant properties.

Key organisations across the City play a valuable role in running and programming cultural venues, with many supported through volunteers and membership, giving opportunities to local, national and international groups. Opportunities need to be given to enable groups, practitioners and producers to find and use spaces within the City that are not necessary under organisational umbrellas, the City needs to map current venues and spaces, both commercial and vacant and produce a space plan for the City, producing a sign post for City spaces where people can broker activity.

Broadening access to spaces within the City for cultural activities will have a direct impact on the City's economy. The cultural offer within the City is an integral part of the success of Peterborough's tourism; a reason for people to come and to stay. It is also a key contributor to the quality of life that are important both in retaining existing business and attracting new employers and investors.

Commercial events and visible, free, cultural programmes across the City have a key role to play at the best of times. However, in times of recession, this role is arguably even more important.

This will be achieved through raising public confidence and activity in the City, stimulating secondary spend and keeping a sense of year round vibrancy. In order to achieve this the City needs to support space development and access.

What will be done

Peterborough's City Spaces will develop a stronger cultural infrastructure through the development of networks, capacity and relationships, making links with the public realm works and exploiting underutilised spaces within the City. The aim is to support high quality programming and the production of new work through accessing and utilising under used spaces across the city.

- Review all our community assets, including school buildings and libraries to understand how and where cultural activity can be accessed and supported
- Exploring the potential for creating a cultural quarter
- Support creative activities – in the community, in libraries, in the museum, in the cathedral, in our parks and open spaces
- Highlight the role of culture in relevant investment strategies such as the Visitor economy strategy.
- Mapping and utilisation of spaces within the City for cultural activity, exploiting existing assets, creating an online directory of venues and spaces, where people can broker/book activities and space (guidance/signposting)
- Work with partners to develop and strengthen new initiatives for the City's cultural calendar: idea 1 website for Events promotion – to residents, businesses, visitors
- Continue to use current resources effectively to support cultural provision for the City; maintain and developing the quality, freshness and uniqueness of programmes

What will be achieved

- A space policy for council assets
- A space plan of the city, current assets, free and commercial
- Clear guidance and signposting on how to book public space
- Increased use of current city assets, from the public, private and third sector venues
- Development of community assets to increase access to joined up services
- Growth of cultural companies resident in the City
- The development and use of school facilities for community use

- Creating new audiences to feed demand for activity
- Recognition for the creative industries in the City and the value they add to everybody's lives

Moving forward: Keeping on track

The Cultural Strategy recognises the significance of the cultural and creative sectors in making Peterborough a cultural city, and advocates continued support in culture and cultural activities. The strategy also addresses concerns facing the sector and considers how to maximise opportunities for the cultural life of Peterborough to flourish.

Peterborough City Council is well placed to lead the development of the strategy and to oversee its delivery. However, the diverse nature and scope of the cultural sector is such that a range of other organisations will be central to ensuring that there is full engagement in the process. This is particularly the case in Peterborough where the City Council already has predominantly a commissioning role and operates via a network of funded delivery partners.

The development of the strategy was overseen by the Cultural Strategy Steering Group. This successful partnership approach and the subsequent consultation on the strategy suggests the need for a small *executive* group informed by and interconnected with a wider consultative forum. It is therefore proposed to establish a core delivery group – Culture Peterborough – supported and informed by a wider creative forums, such as Creative People and Places, Creative Peterborough, Peterborough Cultural partners and Peterborough learning partners. Together, this creative alliance of organisations, individuals and artists will take ownership of the strategy and oversee its delivery.

The consortium will be built around the major cultural institutions in the City. The group will be an open and relatively free-form group that has seamless links with the wider cultural sector. Specifically, the group will look at ways of involving the commercial and private sector within the consortium.

The proposed functions of Culture Peterborough will include:

- Inform, own and oversee the delivery of this strategy;
- Provide a voice for the sector;
- Networking, lobbying and information-sharing;
- Seek resources to deliver the strategy;
- Make strategic connections with and contribute to the Local Enterprise Partnership
- Advise on selected projects and programmes;
- Encourage collaboration in the sector;
- Monitor progress on the strategy and other key cultural projects.

The City Council will play a central role in the Culture Peterborough group and will support the development of the Forum. The specific priorities for the Council will include:

- Advocating the importance of culture;
- Supporting partnership working;

- Delivering selected events and programmes;
- Commissioning and funding key programmes and events;
- Linking culture to other key city priorities;
- Liaising with national and regional cultural bodies on behalf of the city.

Delivering the strategy

The budget challenge

Culture and the creative sector will not be immune from the unprecedented public spending deficit faced by the UK and the City. Work is already underway between the City Council and the sector to identify responses to the challenges ahead. In summary, the overarching approach will include:

- Greater collaboration and synergy between organisations, artists, programmes and projects;
- Seeking to drive down costs through shared services; smarter procurement, review of delivery structures, and where possible engagement of volunteers;
- New income streams – by differentiated products and pricing, capturing income that is currently benefiting out of city organisations, a City approach to event ticketing, cross-selling, new approaches to sponsorship and naming rights and continuing success in attracting grant income, making sure Peterborough gets its fair share.
- The alignment of culture with the emerging City and national agendas e.g. localism, Big Society, thriving district/local centres, personalisation and the Local Enterprise Partnership. This should include seeking new partnerships with community organisations, corporate bodies, City agencies and the changing regional/national cultural bodies.

Action Planning

Progress on delivering the strategy will be done in three ways:

- Open annual review involving the sector and wider public each year;
- Annual action plan setting out what needs to be done, by whom and by when;
- Agree a set of indicators which measure strategic progress (e.g. participation levels) and also measure progress of key programmes and projects. The indicators will also take account of the objectives and outcomes set by key partners such as Arts Council England. As national performance indicators disappear, a key measure of success will be customer, citizen and tourist satisfaction with the city's cultural programmes.