PETERBOROUGH CULTURE STRATEGY
2015 - 2020
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Images sourced from Peterborough City Council, Vivacity & Metal Culture
FOREWORD
Councillor Graham Casey

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

Peterborough has been my home for over 25 years.

I am grateful for the warmth of the city’s welcome and proud to serve as a Councillor for a city that continues to offer a warm welcome to new residents of all nationalities.

I know the importance and value of culture. I’m fortunate to be an enthusiastic consumer and even, at times, producer of culture. I understand the benefits culture can bring, whether it’s the simple pleasure of being entertained, but also to be inspired and 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 partly about ensuring there is a long-term return on all 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 our strategy requires.

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 city.

The culture strategy encompasses arts, heritage, libraries and public space for cultural activity. 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.

Finally I would like to commend all our cultural partners who 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 partners.

I hope this strategy will help galvanise the city’s fantastic cultural organisations and individuals to work together to help delivery our shared vision for culture in Peterborough.
Our Vision
To bring local, regional, national and international interest in, and acclaim for, the city’s cultural offer based on the variety and quality of the inspiring experiences it offers.

One city – many communities.

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 talent, including developing the local creative economy, complementing the city’s growth.

- To create places and spaces for culture – using the public spaces 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 increase participation in cultural activity within the city

- To raise the profile of the city through culture and increase visitor numbers.
Peterborough’s history stretches back beyond the Bronze Age, yet in demographic terms, Peterborough is a youthful city. This makes Peterborough distinct from many other cities and areas in the UK. It is also a highly multicultural city, with people of different cultural backgrounds and heritage integrating and complementing one another to create a rich and dynamic cultural landscape. This strategy aims to reflect this dynamism and create opportunities which will enhance the city’s heritage, arts, libraries and public spaces for local people and visitors alike.

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

- Peterborough is one of 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 several countries including many from 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’s 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 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

¹ Cities outlook 2014
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 possible audience.

- The city benefits from set calendar events, ranging from the Christmas lights switch on, music on the square to the Great Eastern Run. The council also support a wide range of commercial events such as the Willow Festival, concerts and the Beer Festival. During 2013 the council 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. The aim is to develop this venue into a cultural ‘hub’. In addition, the reopening of the Broadway for the 2013 winter season was a success. Both initiatives have demonstrated a real appetite for rich and diverse programmes, including comedy, drama, dance, spoken word, music, and film and community projects.

- The City Gallery has introduced new programmes, such as Saturday art schools and life drawing. Moreover, the success of the Open Exhibition has given artists living in the Peterborough area showcase opportunities to display their work alongside national and international exhibition programmes.

- The Arts Festival has developed into a true international festival in every sense, welcoming acts and performers from across to world to develop arts activities with local communities, heedless of barriers of language or background, and has attracted over 30,000 visitors each year.

- In 2012 the city produced a Heritage Ambition, which set the foundation for the long term strategy for Peterborough’s Heritage. The contributions of the four Action Working Groups can be found at www.peterboroughheritage.org.uk

- Peterborough Heritage builds partnerships, ignites new celebrations of heritage, enables and supports new activity, and strives to tell the story of the city in a captivating, enjoyable and accessible way.

- Peterborough’s annual Heritage Festival has also attracted over 30,000 visitors, and incorporates stalls, historical re-enactors, activities and historic materials. It is the UK’s only city-centre-based multi-period living history festival and explores and celebrates over 3,500 years of cultural activity in and around the city.

Peterborough hosts and works with, a range of National Portfolio organisations and established arts organisations:

- Eastern Angles, Britten Sinfonia, Metal, NNF (Bridge Organisation), 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 **Natural History Museum** has an established and growing partnership with Peterborough Museum and support from the **British Museum** has started in relation to other elements of the museum’s wide ranging collections.

The city has an emerging musical offer:

• The city’s **Music Hub** is delivering a three year programme of music for schools, 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 of music has been extended through the development of the City’s choirs. **Peterborough Young Singers** and other choirs in the city have seen an active up take of singing activities, with the **Male Voice Choir** achieving national awards and success and **Peterborough Sings** leading on the development of a new **singing strategy**, making use of assets such as the **Cathedral, St John’s Church** and the **Broadway Theatre**.

• Independent groups are growing in the city from **Blok Collective** and **Peterborough Music Makers**, to **Creative Peterborough** and **Beat This** who are now winning commissions and extending their activities, meaning more groups are being enabled to be independent and sustainable into the future.

• Peterborough hosts independent organisations offering dance of all varieties, music, singing, drama and art. Libraries and our community centres also offer venues for cultural activities for the very young from **Wildcats** and **Fit to Dance**.

The city has a strong literature offer:

• The city’s **literature** scene has gone from strength to strength, from through the creation of the city’s annual **poet laureate** competition through the developments at **John Clare Cottage** and the bringing of international authors to Peterborough’s libraries.

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

• Vivacity’s heritage attractions not only provide access to historic venues and the rich stories of Peterborough but are also offer an authentic—and engaging context for the city. **Peterborough Museum** has recently been refurbished, and further improvements to gallery spaces and the visitor offer are ongoing, providing the city with a flagship attraction. The Museum’s education service is working in partnership with the Natural History Museum to bring **Real World Science** to Peterborough’s schools providing free, stimulating, hands on workshops.

• **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. The boats are now being conserved for future generations and are open to the public to view at Flag Fen. This find has international significance and is a great opportunity to raise the profile of heritage in the city and country. One of the boats is already a resource for the National Curriculum, featuring in the British Museum-led 'Teaching History with 100 objects'.

- **Longthorpe Tower** is another Vivacity-managed attraction, housing the finest medieval wall paintings in Western Europe. Starting in 2015, a project will be launched to highlight the wealth of medieval art contained in the Tower, local churches and other venues in the area.

- The **Cathedral** has received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for £2.4 million to enable the Cathedral to offer visitors a richer understanding of the life of the buildings, both past and present, which have stood on the site. Exciting developments as part of the Cathedral’s forthcoming 900th anniversary celebrations will include a new heritage centre, which will not only benefit the cathedral itself, but all heritage attractions in the City, through joint programmes and activity.

- **Sacrewell Farm** has recently been successful in gaining Heritage Lottery Funding to renovate its 18th century watermill, restoring this important historic building and providing a venue and opportunity for Heritage Skills learning.

- **Burghley House** has upgraded its visitor facilities recently, to present an exciting new interpretation of the finest Elizabethan mansion in the country. It has also launched an exciting programme of cross-disciplinary events to broaden its audience, including a highly popular season of outdoor cinema and a range of outdoor concerts.

- The city also has a rich **historic environment**, with spaces, buildings, countryside and villages reflecting over 3,500 years of continuous human occupation. We wish to raise the profile and usage of these rich and irreplaceable resources for a wide variety of cultural uses.
There are also other 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 skills that can support a career in culture:

- Degree courses are available at University Centre Peterborough ranging from performing arts, archaeology, community arts and theatre practice, English literature to media studies. These courses give students 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 Norfolk & Norwich Festival Bridge (NNF), 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 culturally focused professional development; and developing better brokerage between the arts and cultural offer with schools.

- ‘Vivacity for Schools’ has now been launched, providing a new one-stop dedicated resource for teaching staff. The website already has a live Vivacity for Schools portal, which will be developed further in partnership with teaching staff. New strands of the Vivacity for Schools offer will support the Peterborough Heritage, Arts, Culture Enterprise, (PHACE) such as a developing Continued Professional Development menu for local schools.

- Learning sits at the core of this Strategy - the growth of heritage education in the city has an ambition of its own. Peterborough itself is an awe-inspiring learning resource, steeped in rich and diverse history, heritage and culture. In the future, our desire is for Peterborough to be recognised as a centre of excellence for heritage learning. From early years to higher education, from traditional to experimental; our partnerships and initiatives will support, grow, and foster understanding and pride in the city by those who live here and those who visit.

Peterborough has made some significant progress in raising its profile already:

- The city has achieved for the first time European funding for culture, becoming part of the ZEPA2 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 been successful in attracting funding for a national project, Creative People and places. This has now been re-named Peterborough Presents. The project will see local groups organising themselves to champion culture, and will set up networks with micro-funding opportunities. The aim is to generate 35,000 active users (organisations and individual), including Step Up Community Association.
A significant amount of funding has been invested in Peterborough's culture over the past 20 years, with £13.5 million from Heritage Lottery Fund alone (in excess of £3.75 per head per year) for heritage projects including Vivacity's museum redevelopment. The Arts Council and also the Cabinet Office have funded new library initiatives, essential in terms of improving literacy levels across Peterborough.

The city’s Archive service has been recognised nationally by receiving the Pacesetter award for its innovative work using volunteers to catalogue and make significant archive documents more accessible for people.

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 common priorities and outcomes.

There will be a key role to be played 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** is now established in the city and is leading work 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](http://www.idea1.org.uk). The website is open to anyone who wants to promote or list events in the city, making it a one stop shop for finding out what's happening today, tomorrow or this month in Peterborough.
This strategy is intended to secure two, mutually reinforcing benefits over the next five years:

- **To raise the profile of culture and participation in cultural activity within the city**
- **To raise the profile of the city through culture and to 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, www.idea1.org.uk and Visit Britain
- More facilities being used to provide cultural activities – tracked through bookings and the cultural strategy steering group.

The people of Peterborough, individuals, 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 and work together to:

- Grow participation and develop audiences;
- Provide programmes that are relevant to and supportive of Peterborough’s ambitions;
- Promote 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

Cultural activities can enrich people’s quality of life, offering enjoyment and self-fulfillment, and 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. It 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. The city’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 there is now an opportunity to make a real difference and effect positive change through culture, through diverse 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.

The Peterborough Presents programme aims to increase participation in cultural activity by providing locally relevant activities and programmes in a range of both traditional and non-traditional locations, as well as developing the capacity of the city’s participatory culture and voluntary sectors.

Peterborough needs to attract audiences that actively engage with, create and shape events. This will be delivered through a combination of better programming, home-grown productions and using national tours to bring nationally 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.
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.

What will be done

- 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 partners, Vivacity and Metal, to sustain and extend engagement.
- Support the development of inclusive and inspiring programmes within Peterborough city centre and the surrounding wards and villages.
- Support targeted programmes such as Peterborough Presents, 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; celebrating and making visible that Peterborough is a diverse and culturally rich city.
- Develop the role that culture plays as integral part of wellbeing, especially in combatting physical and mental health issues.

What will be achieved

- Increased participation with a range of audiences, especially among young people, the elderly, diverse communities and voluntary-sector cultural organisations.
- Increased use of public spaces for cultural activity.
- Collaboration within and across 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 of and confidence in Peterborough’s potential to be a creative city recognised as both active and vibrant
- Increased membership of cultural and voluntary organisations.
Priority 2: Developing, retaining and attracting people with talent

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 sector.

The Young Producers networks will create opportunities for young people to develop as cultural leaders. Across the city, organisations will continue to support and promote the Arts Award as a way of recognising achievements and to increase opportunities to lead, manage and curate cultural activity.

Opportunities will be provided through the Peterborough Presents and PHACE programmes as well as 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 access 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.

In the past Peterborough has benefited from of number visiting national portfolio organisations working and delivering quality programmes in the city. After seven years Peterborough now has its own national portfolio organisation, Metal Culture. Metal is in permanent residence in Peterborough and is integrating its offer with other city-based providers. This initiative seeks 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 Peterborough Presents programme to deliver this priority. All areas of work intend to develop skills and confidence, producing sustainable models of delivery and cultural programmes.

National partnerships within the heritage sectors, such as the strong collaborative work between Peterborough Museum and the Natural History Museum to deliver ‘Real World Science, are in place to inspire young people to pursue further education and careers within the sector.

There is a strongly held ambition for city to be regarded as a centre of excellence for heritage learning. The website [www.peterboroughheritage.org](http://www.peterboroughheritage.org) will complement and enhance the existing materials on the Vivacity learning webpages ensuring that this aspect of culture is well-reflected and represented throughout the city and nationally.

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2 The value of arts and culture to people and society, Arts Council England 2014
Peterborough will develop opportunities for the next generation of cultural producers and practitioners. This will include innovative and imaginative programming, brokering and building new relationships between professionals and non-professionals and cultural organisations. This approach will create 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 opportunities to engender excellence, to develop talent and retain it.

**What will be done**

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

**What will be achieved**

- A current and relevant cultural offer to all schools.
- 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.
- Opportunities to develop and enhance skills, an increase in the number of creative courses offered in Peterborough.
- Easily accessed and understood signposts for 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

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 growth remains 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. Public space, infused with cultural resources will become the meeting points, and places to showcase and enjoy great art and cultural activity, drawing 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 public spaces and commercial premises for a wide variety of purposes will become increasingly important and valuable.

Peterborough has a number of venues and facilities focused in the city centre which produce and offer 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 neighborhood level, using facilities in the community and vacant properties.

Key organisations across the city play a valuable role in running and programming cultural venues. Many are supported through volunteers and membership. Opportunities need to be given to enable people, independently, to find and use spaces within the city that are not established venues. The city needs to map current spaces, both commercial and vacant, and produce a plan for the city. This will provide 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 is 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.
Peterborough’s public spaces will benefit from a stronger cultural infrastructure brought about through the development of networks and relationships, across public realm works and open 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.

What will be done

- 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 the communication of initiatives for the city’s cultural calendar (including through the idea 1 website for events promotion) – to residents, businesses, visitors.

- Continue to use current resources effectively to support cultural provision for the city; maintaining and developing the quality, freshness and uniqueness of programmes.

- Highlight and increase usage of the unique and irreplaceable resources that we have in the city, from historic buildings and landscapes, to green spaces and environmental assets.

What will be achieved

- A ‘cultural spaces’ policy for council assets, identifying and seeking to use spaces when they are vacant.

- A space plan of the city, covering all current assets, both publically owned 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 audience to feed demand for activity.
MOVING FORWARD: KEEPING ON TRACK
The cultural strategy recognises the significance of the cultural and creative sectors in making Peterborough a vibrant, culturally and economically healthy 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 this strategy was overseen by the cultural strategy steering group. This successful partnership approach and 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 wider creative forums, such as Peterborough Presents, Creative Peterborough, Peterborough cultural partners, Opportunity Peterborough 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
The culture and the creative sector is not immune from the impact of the unprecedented public spending deficit. Work is already underway between the city council and the sector to identify responses to the challenges ahead.

In summary, the approach will include:

- Encouraging greater collaboration and links between organisations, artists, programmes and projects. Changes in school and NHS structures could provide opportunities for cultural agencies to come together to deliver a single, coordinated package of cultural activity.

- Driving down costs through shared services; smarter procurement, review of delivery structures, and where possible engagement of volunteers.

- Supporting organisations to access funding and to develop the skills required for sustainability. This will aim to ensure that Peterborough gets its fair share of future grant funding.

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 agreed by March of each year. This will set 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.