

ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
14 JANUARY 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Adrian Chapman, Service Director – Communities and Safety	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr Steve Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, Culture and Recreation	
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DEVELOPING A CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR PETERBOROUGH

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: <i>Adrian Chapman, Service Director – Communities and Safety</i>	Deadline date: <i>N/A</i>
<p>It is recommended that Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Note and scrutinise the direction of travel to develop a Cultural Strategy for Peterborough in partnership with Vivacity, Arts Council England and cultural leaders across the City 2. Comments on key aspects of the proposed strategy with a view to informing the next stage of its development 	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee have recently taken on the portfolio for the culture and leisure activities of the City Council. This report is the first to be brought to the Committee to provide an overview of current and future proposals.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 To brief members of the Committee on current arrangements within the Council and with Vivacity to develop and deliver future cultural and leisure opportunities within the City.

To note the direction of travel to develop a Cultural Strategy for Peterborough.

To seek comments from Members on key aspects of the proposed strategy with a view to informing the next stage of its development.

2.2 This report is for the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. Part 3, Section 4 - Overview and Scrutiny Functions, paragraph No. 2 Functions determined by the Council:

6. Libraries, Arts and Museums

2.3 This report specifically relates to the corporate priority to ‘Support Peterborough's Culture and Leisure Trust’.

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 ***Current arrangements for Cultural activity within Peterborough City Council***

4.1.1 Vivacity was established almost a decade ago, through the transfer of much of the existing City Council functions in relation to culture and leisure into an arms-length trading organisation. Peterborough City Council has a contract with Vivacity to deliver these activities until 2035.

Vivacity is an independent charitable trust and a strategic partner of the Council, responsible for the delivery of a range of arts, culture, sports and leisure services on behalf of the city including statutory services (archives, libraries and KS2 swimming).

4.1.2 The areas of specific cultural development which Vivacity leads on providing for the City include:

Creative People and Places

In 2014 the Peterborough Presents consortium, led by Vivacity, successfully bid to the Arts Council's Creative People and Places fund receiving £725,046 over a three-year period towards a £1,082,008 initiative. Since then Peterborough Presents have delivered a multi strand programme of activity that aims to increase arts attendance and grow the local arts infrastructure. In 2018 the consortium successfully received further funding to continue the programme over the next 3 years.

The Key Theatre is situated in Peterborough's city centre overlooking the river Nene. The Key Theatre works to bring an abundance of entertainment and culture to the heart of the city. The Key is home to many of the amateur and semi-professional theatre groups in Peterborough and presents a high quality programme of drama, dance, music, spoken word, family film and live screenings. It also produces in-house its annual pantomime.

Peterborough Museum & Art Gallery is located in one of the city's most historic buildings. Peterborough Museum has a wealth of stories to fascinate and enthral the whole family. With amazing objects and interactive displays for all ages, the collections comprise over 200,000 items of great national and international importance. It also houses the City's Art Gallery that has recently been upgraded and is now capable of hosting high profile loans.

Flag Fen is a seasonal archaeology park and visitor attraction, home to a unique ancient wooden monument. A kilometre-long wooden causeway and platform are perfectly preserved in the wetland. 3300 years ago, this was built and used by the Prehistoric fen people as a place of worship and ritual. 60,000 upright timbers and 250,000 horizontal planks are buried under the ground along with many swords and personal items given as offerings to the watery fen.

Peterborough's Library Service is delivered by Vivacity from 10 static libraries, a mobile library and a Book Bus for primary age children. The service underwent extensive transformation four years ago with the implementation of self-service access technology that allowed all library branches to remain open and with longer opening hours but with significant reductions in staffing levels. Reading development is a key focus of the service, with investment in activities for primary age children to help deliver the city's 'Vision for Reading'. New opportunities are emerging for the development of the libraries through a new partnership with Civic.

4.1.3 Some key functional areas were retained by the City Council after the establishment of Vivacity which have a direct role in developing and fostering the cultural life of the City. In addition to the responsibility for the management of the relationship with Vivacity, activities delivered by the City Council have included the fostering, funding and development of community and council-led festivals and events. As part of the work we are now progressing with Vivacity, these types of functions are being reviewed to ensure they are being delivered in the most appropriate way by the most appropriate organisation.

4.1.4 As the key provider of Peterborough's culture and leisure services, it has always been our ambition that Vivacity should develop into a self-sustained organisation not reliant on council funding, able to grow and adapt to the changing profile of our city. For various reasons however, this ambition has not been fully realised to date. However, significant work has been undertaken by Vivacity and the City Council in the last two years to recalibrate the relationship, putting it onto a firm footing for the future, and reaffirming the strategic partnership between the two organisations.

4.1.5 It is recognised that the development of an ambitious agenda for the cultural future of the City comes at a time when the public sector and many involved in creative industries are experiencing significant financial challenges. However, there are also many opportunities which can be maximised through harnessing existing resources, and making the most of funding available through national funding streams, placing culture at the heart of regeneration and growth of the City. Developing a compelling vision for the future across a broad coalition of partners is the touchstone for this ambition.

4.2 ***Future vision for Culture in Peterborough***

4.2.1 A number of thriving cities have used culture (in its widest sense) as one of the tools and levers that are at the heart of successful and sustainable regeneration, bringing vibrancy, creating a sense of place, a destination, supporting community cohesion, and enhancing the visitor and night time economy to become a genuine economic driver. Cities such as Brighton, Hull, Liverpool, Luton, and Newcastle & Gateshead amongst numerous others have taken the long view of sustainable cultural investment to achieve these outcomes.

4.2.2 The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) is responsible for delivering the government's policy covering arts and culture, communications and media, sport, tourism, building a shared society and digital connectivity. This is a broad view that there can often be strong connections between culture and economic development.

4.2.3 Peterborough is currently recognised as a 'cultural cold spot' with lower levels of participation in the arts and cultural activities per capita than cities of broadly comparable scale. It is currently ranked 34 out of 355 local authorities measured in the 2017 active lives survey with just 39% of the population engaging or participating in cultural activity. This position's the city in the bottom 20% of places of least cultural engagement in the UK.

The approach and success of other cities such as those mentioned above clearly illustrate that where there is ambition, vision, collaboration, leadership and investment, culture can be a powerful force for change.

4.2.4 The long-term strategic vision for culture and leisure in Peterborough should be to develop a city with a sustainable cultural offer built upon strong city wide partnerships and collaboration with outwardly facing developmental roles. These partnerships need to support organisations of scale and encourage and create the space for smaller organisations and independents to grow. The City Council established Vivacity as an independent charitable organisation in 2010 to deliver its public cultural and leisure offer in the midst of public sector austerity. The decision to establish Vivacity has worked; participation has increased, quality improved and costs reduced. However, without opportunities to develop commercially, the cultural offer that is currently cross-subsidised from revenue generating activities may be at risk.

4.2.5 It is essential that Peterborough has a broad cultural and leisure offer that supports growth of the city, with high quality state of the art facilities that keep pace with the growth agenda and city ambition. Significant investment is required in the sector and the public 'cultural' estate. The city currently lacks conferencing facilities. In addition, the creative industry sector is not obvious with limited gallery space and public art provision which is not routinely enhanced. The Heritage Festival led by Vivacity remains the largest in the city attracting some 30,000 people but has yet to break-even. The last large scale Arts Festival being one that supported the 2012 Olympic Torch Relay nearly 8 years ago. The future should aim to reverse these deficiencies.

4.2.6 The City currently has three National Portfolio Organisations (NPO's) supported by Arts Council England (ACE):

Metal Culture who curate an exciting programme of international and UK artists in residence, host week-long, residential talent development LABs for artists from mixed disciplines and run a wide range of events, exhibitions and participatory projects that connect artists to audiences and audiences to artists;

Eastern Angles who provide professional rural touring and site-specific theatre with a focus on new writing, new audiences and the development of new talent. Their stories and themes are derived from our sense of place, specifically East Anglia and the East of England;

Pop Up Productions facilitate access to rich and meaningful literary experiences for children and young people, schools (primary, secondary, SEN) and families – especially in diverse, deprived, isolated and otherwise challenged communities. They achieve this principally through an innovative service model – currently being transformed into a national schools Pop Up Festival of children's literature – which works with whole schools and key stages to place authors and their contemporary books at the heart of literacy/English learning and teaching.

The vision is to grow the number of NPO's and public art and secure an investment in the 'cultural offer' having a place and being firmly rooted in Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy agreements; organic growth of cultural independents; a city centre that is vibrant with a coherent and choreographed programme of animation that is bold, accessible and of scale to deliver that 'wow' moment.

4.2.7 For the future, culture may be supported by the proposed Business Improvement District and other larger business outside of the city centre; events, animation licenced buskers and replication at an appropriate scale in communities and townships could be the norm. Physical cultural assets will be valued, have the capability and conditions that are supportive of creative collaborations. The city will have invested in a bold lighting strategy that supports the night-time and visitor economy. We will have a diverse and sustainable theatre offer that is complementary to each other strengthening our city offer as opposed internal competition. The city must have confidence and belief in its cultural and leisure offer, public and private investment in 'culture' will be evidence of it.

4.2.8 The cultural offer should be at the core of encouraging and breeding city confidence, where Peterborough has the self-belief, a clear collective vision that is continually pushing the boundaries of ambition, a genuine strength and depth in multiple partnerships, capacity and capability to bid to host cultural activity at a national level.

4.3 ***The Development of a Cultural Strategy for Peterborough***

4.3.1 The development of a new Cultural Strategy is supported by Arts Council England (ACE), Peterborough City Council and Vivacity alongside local cultural organisations who are key partners in shaping and delivering the cultural life of the city. The strategy is the vehicle by which the vision and ambition set out above can be carried. It has a core focus on the arts, cultural product, heritage and tourism.

A strategy should be ambitious; however it only has validity if it helps shape the future, fits with the wider strategic objectives of the city and is implementable.

4.3.2 To support the development of the strategic partnership work and delivery of a cultural strategy which captures all the opportunities outlined above, an external consultancy (D-P-Q) has been commissioned jointly by Peterborough City Council and Vivacity. The brief is to develop an Arts & Cultural strategy covering the next 5 years and accompanying action plan backed up by a fundraising and resource plan to support it. The work on the strategy will research and consider the following themes:

1. Inclusive - Culture has the potential to play a pivotal role in strategies to Integrate communities. Putting people, residents and visitors at the heart of Integrated strategies

that sit across the places core aims, creating a collective narrative and raising aspirations through cultural engagement & activities.

2. Fit for Future - Peterborough has the potential to be a truly sustainable city. A city which has a thriving local economy, first rate futures for our children and Pride in our communities and environment. A city where our residents are healthy, happy and prosperous. Culture has the potential to play a leading role in this and to also consider what new ways arts and culture can inspire and facilitate a transition to increased levels of sustainability.

4.3.3 The work is being overseen by a small group of key partners in the city which includes Vivacity, Peterborough City Council, the Arts Council and key local partners (the Strategic Partnership Group). This group will refer back to a wider reference group or forum (Cultural Leaders Group) which brings together the broader city wide coalition of partners and stakeholders in the life of the City. Securing engagement, support and a collective ambition of the partners will be critical to the success of the strategy.

4.3.4 Work started on the strategy in summer 2019, with the first phase of their work focussing heavily on consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. This has included:

- 1 online stakeholder survey, over 50 responses
- 1 public consultation day, city centre, 37 responses
- Over 30 stakeholder meetings and conversations
- 2 Cultural Leaders Group & 2 Strategic Partnership Group meetings
- 1 City Leadership Forum & workshop

4.4 ***Emerging Themes***

4.4.1 The development of ideas and themes is at an early stage with the focus to date being on gathering views and information from across the partnership. As the work on the vision for the City develops, building on some of the themes expanded on in this paper, this will form the bedrock for the themes which will drive the action plan, and be brought back to Committee for consideration in a future report.

4.4.2 However, potential areas of focus that are emerging include:

- supporting creative and cultural industries
- supporting young people to access creative opportunities and experiences
- exploring ways to increase community participation
- building a sense of Peterborough's culture and heritage
- the role culture can play in environmental challenge.

4.4.3 Members are invited to comment on these themes and other aspects of the future vision set out in this paper.

4.5 ***Next Steps***

4.5.1 Peterborough is welcoming the Chief Executive of the Arts Council, Darren Henley, to the City on the 11th February 2020. This is a great opportunity to showcase the ambition the City has for the future development of its arts and cultural life, at a time when the strategy is at a key point in its development. Members are invited to participate in his visit with more details to be provided as the arrangements are clarified.

4.5.2 The Strategy is due to be completed by September 2020 with the following key milestones over the next few months:

Jan – Apr	Ongoing stakeholder engagement
May - June	Final draft strategy circulated for comment
Jul	Writing funding and resource plan
Aug	Devising action plan, finalising strategy
Sept	Launch strategy

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 The consultation which has been undertaken so far is outlined in section 4 above. The ongoing engagement with community stakeholders and Members will continue to be a crucial part of the strategy development.

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

6.1 The development of the Cultural strategy provides a vehicle for harnessing the considerable resources within the City which will place culture at the heart of the growth and economic development of Peterborough.

7. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

7.1 The reasons for the recommendations is to support the delivery of Peterborough City Council's corporate priorities in relation to culture and leisure.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 Not applicable

9. IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

9.1 The development of the strategy takes place at a time when the City Council's resources are reducing, and a new business model for Vivacity is being developed. The work on the strategy will identify and make links with other opportunities for funding where culture should be playing a key part. For example potentially through the Stronger Town funding, and extending the reach and impact of the Integrated Communities Strategy which has already brought an additional £1.6m into the City to support our work to foster and develop integration.

Legal Implications

9.2 Not applicable

Equalities Implications

9.3 Developing a strong cultural offer, which strengthens the strategic cultural partnership in the City, rooted in a connection with local communities will support the ambitions to continue to develop integration and inclusion across the City. Cultural activity is fundamental to celebrating diversity, and bringing communities together.

Rural Implications

9.4 The reach of the strategy is for the whole of the City, including rural as well as urban areas.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 None

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None