

Cheltenham Culture Board: Mandate for producing and delivering a Cultural Strategy.

This paper sets out the case for Cheltenham Borough Council to approve a mandate for the Cheltenham Culture Board to be the group that is accountable for the development of a Cultural Strategy of Cheltenham and the delivery there in.

This paper summarises the purpose of the Cheltenham Culture Board, its current members and its governance and then summarises an examples of key goals a Cultural Strategy would look to achieve.

1. Purpose and Governance of the Culture Board:

Purpose

To collaboratively define and deliver cultural impact; positioning Cheltenham's cultural offer further locally, regionally, nationally and internationally; therefore engaging diverse audiences and developing the cultural offer with ambition and conviction whilst supporting the growth of the economy of Cheltenham and quality of life of residents.

Current Culture Board Members:

1. Cheltenham Borough Council – Member and Officer
2. Cheltenham Festivals – Chair and Executive
3. Everyman Theatre – Chair and CEO
4. The Cheltenham Trust – Chair and CEO

The Cheltenham Culture Board would look to appoint an independent chair to the Culture Board.

It is not the intention that above members are the only members of the Cultural Board. It would for example, moving forward, look to have other cultural sectors represented on the group. However, it should be acknowledged that the group would need to maintain certain leanness in order to be most productive at this stage. As with all boards the members are not there to represent themselves or their employer but to apply their knowledge and experience for the greater purpose of the board and the goals of the Cultural Strategy.

Transparency

The Cheltenham Culture Board would have a 'critical friend' relationship with the Place Governance Group. Consultation with this group will ensure the Cultural Strategy complements the Cheltenham Place Vision and its objectives:

- where all our people and the communities they live in thrive
- where culture and creativity thrives, is celebrated and enjoyed throughout the year
- where businesses and their workforces thrive
- where everyone thrives

The Cheltenham Culture Board will keep cabinet members updated on a regular basis and will be available for Scrutiny via Overview and Scrutiny Committee and will also present updates to all elected members via briefing and/or member seminars.

Wider Sector and Industries:

The Cheltenham Culture Board is committed to engaging with a wide cross-section of stakeholders to inform the production of the cultural strategy. This would likely take the form of a minimum of two community annual stakeholder forums to which cultural sector partners will be involved in forming a cultural strategy.

Through ongoing engagement and representation, the board will seek to persuade key partners (including CBC) to align their cultural investment to support the objectives of the cultural strategy.

Whilst the cultural strategy is being developed there will be a minimum two forums a year to which all stakeholders will be invited.

Values:

1. Open and progressive relationship between partners
2. Results orientated collaborative partnership
3. Focus on ambition and delivery of ambition
4. Collaborative across and with others as appropriate

Scope:

(A) The Cheltenham Culture Board will consider geographic reach as follows:

1. Cheltenham in the context of Gloucestershire and the Cheltenham Place Strategy
2. Gloucestershire – positioning culture in the 2050 landscape

3. Wider regional, national and international opportunities
(B) Level of Ambition and Strategic Approach:

The Board will work in partnership with a wide range of partners that cross boundaries, regions and art forms to shape and develop a vibrant cultural destination. The Board will leverage strategic funding nationally, regionally, locally and internationally in order to deliver the agreed strategy to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

(C) Operations:

The Board will seek efficiencies across organisations where this makes sense and deliver.

The Board will consider audience data; impact; reach; profile; commerciality; quality; supporting development of artistic and cultural talent; fundraising opportunities (and is not limited by this list).

The Board would seek the opportunity to work with Cheltenham Borough Council to help align its current and future support of Culture to the Cultural Strategy.

A Cultural Strategy

The below goals are examples of what could be included as goals of a Cultural Strategy for Cheltenham. The actual goals would be formed following comprehensive consultation with key stakeholders. The examples given below compliment the Place Strategy objectives.

1. Partnership

Create a new partnership approach to cultural growth, which ensures access and sustainable funding for a wide range of cultural organisations activities and events across the town. This partnership brings together the Council, communities, academic institutions, local businesses and charities, and the professional and amateur cultural sectors to maximise resources, infrastructure, innovation and investment.

2. Education & Skills

All children and young people have an entitlement to the arts and digital creativity in schools and in their community which is not limited by family income, location or age. There are opportunities for all generations to learn from and develop through the arts. Talent is recognised, developed and supported through to early careers in the cultural and creative industries and beyond.

3. Inequality and diversity

Communities and individuals are empowered to celebrate and share their heritages, cultures, abilities and identity and participate in the cultural life of the city. Use culture to tackle inequality particularly for those who are cultural isolated.

4. Wellness

Arts and culture are core to the health and wellbeing of the town. Participation in and enjoyment of town-wide professional and community arts programming responds to the needs of all generations and combats isolation and mental health in our most vulnerable communities. Culture makes a major contribution to encouraging healthy lifestyles and physical activity.

5. Economic Growth

Cheltenham is a culturally vibrant, attractive and prosperous town that enriches the lives and environment for all residents. The town is a major tourist destination and successfully attracts new businesses and investment, particularly in high-tech creative industries such as the Cyber Park, talent development and cultural production. Culture is recognised as a major economic opportunity to increase the education, employment, reputation, training and investor opportunities within the town, county and beyond.

Risk

It is suggested by the Cheltenham Culture Board that if we don't move forward with a Cultural Strategy, strategic investment decisions won't be aligned and the Council would be unable or unlikely to deliver elements of the Place Strategy, possibly resulting in Cheltenham falling further behind on the Arts Council's priorities of towns and cities in the region.

Recommendation

The Cheltenham Culture Board seek a mandate from the Council to develop a Culture Strategy to support the implementation of the Cheltenham Place Vision.

List of cultural partners, business groups, community organisations as well as key statutory partners

Cultural

Cheltenham Festivals
Everyman Theatre
The Cheltenham Trust
Playhouse
Create Gloucestershire
Cheltenham Arts Council
Holst Birthplace Museum
Festival of Performing Arts
Wilson Arts Collective
Marketing Cheltenham
Creative England
Create on the Square
Civic Society
Cheltenham Paint Festival
Cheltenham Film Festival
Cheltenham LGBT partnership
African Community Foundation
Cheltenham Together
Cheltenham Open Studios
Cheltenham Christian Arts Festival
Gardens Gallery
The Guild of Craftspeople

And any other organisation that seeks to be involved, who fall under the 'definition of culture' by The Arts Council:

"Culture means different things to different people, and creativity can be expressed in many different ways. ... through painting or papercraft, hip hop or coding, joining a book club or their local choir... we think we need to widen our focus ... to support new forms of culture, including those developed using new technologies." (Arts Council, 2030 strategy draft).

Business

Cheltenham BID
Chamber of Commerce
Glos LEP

Community

Via Cheltenham VCS Forum
Via Gloucestershire Rural Community Council

Statutory

Cheltenham Borough Council
Cheltenham Borough Homes
Gloucestershire Constabulary
Prospects – Youth Service
Gloucestershire County Council – Public Health / Childrens Services
Clinical Commissioning Group
Regional and national collaborations will be sought as part of the Cultural Strategy.