

Overview and Scrutiny

Meeting date: Monday 2nd September

Member question

Question from Harry Booty (Independent co-optee) to Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnership

What is the core value proposition of the Board? How does it add more than the sum of its constituent parts?

Cheltenham Culture Board was set up to connect the cultural sectors together and to take on the role of producing a cultural strategy for Cheltenham. The terms of reference for the Board highlight the importance of building a strong and supportive alliance across Cheltenham's cultural and creative communities to aid communication, collaboration and capacity-building.

The terms also set out the values by which the board will operate including being supportive and collaborative in its work in order to drive forward the vision.

The board has worked hard to create a representative membership structure ensuring that a diverse range of cultural and community voices are heard and to advocate for the central role of the creative and cultural sector in the town's economic and social future.

Question from Harry Booty (Independent co-optee) to Richard Gibson, Head of Communities, Wellbeing and Partnership

What is the evaluation framework for the six objectives? For example, Cheltenham becoming known as the "festival town" — how is that measured?

As noted in the report, following the recent review of the structure of the board, and the establishment of the new culture network, there is a piece of work to be done to review the strategy, its six objectives and the evaluation framework to ensure continuing relevance.

In response to the question about measurement of the visitor economy objective, this is carried out in a number of ways, coordinated by the Marketing Cheltenham team at the council. Metrics include:

1. **Visitor volume and value.** Visitor numbers and spend are measured independently by an external research agency utilising the Cambridge model. The latest figures are for 2024 and show that Cheltenham welcomed just over 2 million visitors to the town who spent an estimated total of £191,873,000. Tourism accounts for around 5% of all local employment.

2. **Website statistics for Visit Cheltenham, the official tourism site for the town.** In 2025, the website had 2.1 million page views and 758,000 website visitors.
3. **Social media statistics for Visit Cheltenham social media.** There are 87,000 followers on social media channels and in 2025 there were 12.75 million views of social media content.

The above are some of the measures used to track the performance of visitor economy marketing initiatives that have been put in place to support visitor economy businesses across Cheltenham. The Festival Town campaign is used during festival season to drive awareness of the excellent cultural offer across the town.