

Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Culture Plan Update

Executive Summary

Cultural activity is abundant across the city and remains a key component in driving the city destination agenda as a desirable place to live, work, visit and study.

- There are 380 creative and cultural enterprises in Plymouth, which has remained relatively stable despite the impact of the pandemic.
- The sector employs 3,064 FTE who have an output of £44,050 GVA per FTE, which is above the city average, and contributes £130m GVA to the economy.
- Despite curriculum cuts to the arts the city has maintained student numbers with 7,715 students studying arts & humanities within the city.
- Against a backdrop of funding cuts the city has retained its annual Arts Council investment in the recent National Portfolio Organisation round, with 8 organisations offered a share of £4.11 million (£12.34 million over three years).
- A cultural mapping tool has been developed to enable us to better understand the growth and development of the sector, including geographical reach. This will be further enhanced by the development of the audience data capture system Tap-In, showing audience numbers and flows across the city.
- Despite the challenges presented by Covid and changing post-Covid audience behaviours, the sector has delivered more than 50 cultural events and audiences for culture are in excess of 850,000.
- British Art Show 9 is now open and has already attracted over 47,000 visitors.

The priority moving forward will be the development of an investment strategy to drive new and increased funding into the sector, and to broaden and deepen our engagement with local residents and communities. In order to do these two key actions we need to continue to build a robust data collection and analysis system so that we understand current engagement levels and can explore the barriers to engagement for others, putting appropriate strategies in place.

Background

The Culture Plan (https://plymouthculture.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Plymouth-Culture-Strategy_REV_P08_fulldraft.pdf) was adopted by PCC in March 2021 and published in May 2021. The Plan is the culmination of extensive consultation with stakeholders and part of a robust process to co-design the ten-year strategy for Culture. The Culture Plan has at its core a focus on people, place and planet and is a direct response to the Arts Council Let's Create Strategy (<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create/strategy-2020-2030>) and is aligned with the Plymouth Plan.

In order to support the implementation of the Culture Plan and ensure alignment across the city, Plymouth Culture established the Cultural Partnership in October 2021. This partnership includes cross-city, cross-sector representation and meets on a quarterly basis. The partnership has initially focused on mapping cultural activity and identifying the real issues and priorities, which is reflected in the report below.

The Creative Industries

The Creative Industries are a high value, high growth sector. Prior to the Pandemic the Creative Industries contributed £11.6bn in GVA in 2019, growing twice as fast between 2011 and 2019 than the rate of the UK economy as a whole (DCMS 2021). In the year from October 2019 to September 2020 the Creative Industries accounted for 2.2 million jobs (DCMS 2021) and 3.2 million were employed in the wider creative economy (DCMS 2019).

The sector has been heavily impacted by the pandemic but the report by Creative UK, *The UK Creative Industries: unleashing the power and potential of creativity*, states that “with the right investment, the sector could recover faster than the UK economy as a whole, growing by over 26% by 2025 and contributing £132.1 billion to the economy in GVA – over £28 billion more than in 2020, and more than the financial services, insurance and pension industries combined” (Creative UK, 2021).

The Creative Industries in Plymouth reflects the national picture as a high value sector. The sector employs 3,064 FTE who have an output of £44,050 GVA per FTE and contributes £130m GVA to the economy. It is important to note that we have 7,715 students studying arts & humanities within the city, making it a hive of creativity.

(<https://www.visitplymouth.co.uk/invest/why-plymouth/key-sectors/creative-industries>)

Culture Plan & Cultural Mapping

The Culture Plan sets out a 10-year vision to build and sustain this thriving cultural economy, which enhances the city as a destination and contributes to the social prosperity for residents and visitors alike. The following quantitative objectives are outlined within the Plan, to:

1. Unlock 5 new spaces for culture annually.
2. Increase jobs in the creative and cultural sector by 30% by 2030.
3. Introduce 10 new cultural initiatives in neighbourhoods annually.
4. Increase our core arts audiences by 20% by 2030.
5. Increase our non-arts audiences by 30% by 2030.
6. Reduce environmental impact of our sector helping to reach the city's ambition for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.
7. Secure £0.5m annually in non-arts funding by 2030.
8. Increase out-of-Plymouth visitor numbers to cultural venues and programmes by 40% by 2030.

In order for us to fully understand our progress with these objectives we felt it was important to know our current position. As a result, the Cultural Partnership, supported by Plymouth Culture, has undertaken a mapping exercise. This seeks to identify the cultural activity on offer, where it is located and who is engaging. We appreciate this work is a snapshot and in no way exhaustive but it is extensive and provides a baseline from which to work from.

The maps plot the location of venues that host cultural activity, cultural organisations, events and projects between March 2021 – August 2022. They indicate a good spread of activity across all wards in Plymouth but, importantly, provide a visual aid to understanding where there are gaps in activity and engagement. This will be a tool to support decision-making across the sector and city, using the data to better understand the real barriers to engagement.

It is our intention to convert the goggle maps into a public facing map hosted on the Plymouth Culture website. We will create a function where people can add or suggest other venues, events and projects which need to be included so that the map becomes a living record of cultural activity across the city. On an annual basis we can take a snapshot to illustrate changes as part of our reporting process. Information will be added to each 'pin' as case studies.

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=IaKwAU0XJElfrgQiEhH6CdSD4CShfOIM&ll=50.38664475616322%2C-4.136463450000014&z=13>

21/22 Highlights/overview

(Please note the video link to a short film summarising the cultural activity and engagement in the last year - <https://vimeo.com/770690103/75004ed775>)

With reference to the maps, 132 venues have been identified as hosting cultural activity. This ranges from purpose built cultural centres like The Box, to community hubs in pubs and village halls. In spite of

the challenges presented by Covid seven of these venues opened in the last year – Market Hall, The Depo, Grow Plymouth, Stock Village Hub, Borrowed Parts Brewery, Snap Dragons and Block. Importantly cultural activity has also been possible in outdoor and alternative locations including – Community Climate Centre (and the wider meanwhile use programme), Tinside Lido, Royal Corinthian, Central Park Events Space and Millbay Boulevard. This corresponds to objective one in the Culture Plan (to Unlock 5 new spaces for culture annually) and these alternative spaces are essential for making our cultural offer more visible and accessible to new audiences.

There have been over 50 cultural events in the last year that have taken place across the city, more than half have been free to attend attracting audiences of over 220,000. Some of these are large scale such as SailGP attracting audiences of over 30,000 but others are more pop-up in nature such as Above Bounds Silly Squirrel family show, Petrol Headz on the Piazza and Back Alley Giant Puppets. Collectively the events over this period attract audiences of over 350,000 but we know that across the venues, projects and events there have been audiences of over 850,000. Whilst this is lower than the approx. 1 million audience figure for previous years this is exceptional given that Covid restrictions were still in place for a significant period of the time frame we are considering.

The organisations involved in making these works are working hard to reach new audiences so that we have a growing, diverse and sustainable audience for Culture. Barbican Theatre, Theatre Royal Plymouth, The Box and Real Ideas are just a small sample of the organisations working beyond the confines of their venues to reach into communities and build new audiences. The data shows us that audiences to The Box, Illuminate and Theatre Royal Plymouth alone include residents from every ward in Plymouth (contributing to objectives 3, 4 & 5 of the Culture Plan).

The cultural activity across the organisations and events has secured external funding in excess of £1.5m, working with 28 different funding bodies and sponsors. These funders are within and beyond the cultural sector achieving objective seven within the culture plan (Secure £0.5m annually in non-arts funding by 2030). The projects and events have provided over 2,000 job opportunities for creatives which helps to sustain the creative economy within the city and work towards objective two within the plan (Increase jobs in the creative and cultural sector by 30% by 2030). The events programme has offered over 675 volunteer opportunities.

We are acutely aware that visitor numbers and audience behaviours will continue to be impacted by Covid and the cost of living crisis. Therefore, we anticipate that objectives 4, 5 & 8, which refer to audience and visitor growth, will need to be reviewed and potentially revised. This will be done in partnership with Destination Plymouth in relation to the Visitor Plan following careful consideration of the research available and future trend predictions.

Impact

It is important to note that the numbers show only half of the picture, it is the impact of this activity that is the critical point. The Culture Plan states that we want the collective impact of the plan to result in:

- Plymouth building a reputation as a fun, playful city.
- Residents feeling a sense of pride in Plymouth borne out of a strong cultural identity.
- The cultural offer reaching across the city to every visitor, resident, neighbourhood and community.
- The cultural sector attracting and retaining a diverse audience who are actively involved in making culture.
- People talking about culture and engaging in conversation because it is fun, challenging and visible.

The amount and variety of cultural activity across the city is not only impressive but impactful. It is improving the lives of residents; whether it is through the Barbican Theatre Rebels Music Programme giving a stage to young performers at the Tinside Lido to start their career, or The Box schools programme inspiring the 5,600 young people it has reached or the Coxsides Echoes newspaper led by Take A Part empowering the community through creative inputs, this work is creating opportunities with positive economic and social value.

Priorities

As we move into the second year of the Culture Plan implementation we feel it is essential that we continue to focus on impact, making the case for culture in both economic and social terms. For this we take inspiration from the research of the Cultural Learning Alliance and the ten key findings:

1. Participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%
2. Learning through arts and culture can improve attainment in Maths & English
3. Learning through arts and culture develops skills and behaviour that lead children to do better in school.
4. Students from low-income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree
5. Employability of students who study arts subjects is higher and they are more likely to stay in employment
6. Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are twice as likely to volunteer
7. Students from low-income families who engage in the arts at school are 20% more likely to vote as young adults
8. Young offenders who take part in arts activities are 18% less likely to re-offend
9. Children who take part in arts activities in the home during their early years are ahead in reading and Maths at age nine
10. People who take part in the arts are 38% more likely to report good health

<https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/evidence/key-research-findings-the-case-for-cultural-learning/>

As evidenced above, the role of culture goes far beyond events and entertainment, it is fundamental to the way we live and has a critical role to play in supporting a resilient, healthy, happy, prosperous and just society. Therefore, the Cultural Partnership are prioritising three programmes of work over the coming year:

1. **Investment strategy** – The Culture Plan sets out the need to develop an investment strategy for culture and this is needed now more than ever. Whilst we have achieved the objective set out in the Culture Plan to retain our overall level of Arts Council investment through the National Portfolio round not all organisations have been offered renewed funding and a standstill funding offer means a cut in real terms. With venue based organisations experiencing exponential increases in utility costs and ticket sales or visitor numbers not yet back to pre-Covid levels in some cases, it is essential that more funding for culture is secured. This must come from funders and sponsors beyond the cultural sector and needs a collaborative, city wide approach to identify and secure alternative funding options.
2. **Data collation and analysis** – In order for us to build a robust case for investment it is essential that we continue to work on our data collection and analysis systems. We have recently launched a pilot initiative, Tap-In, which seeks to capture simple but standardised audience data across the sector. By making this system available to formal and informal, large and small cultural organisations we can better understand engagement levels and barriers to engagement so that robust audience development strategies can be developed. (www.tapinplymouth.co.uk)
3. **Alignment and Integration** – A core thread running through the Culture Plan is the ambition to embed culture and for us to harness its potential as a mechanism for achieving positive outcomes for people and planet. Much like with the Cultural Learning Alliance research, we want to be able to articulate the role and impact of culture in other sectors to support outcomes such as better educational attainment, reduced crime and improved health and wellbeing. This is about place-shaping in collaboration with other sectors.

All three programmes of work are clearly connected and we will take a holistic approach to developing and implementing this activity through a diverse cross-sector, cross-city partnership.