

Growth and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting:	13 September 2023
Title of Report:	Culture Plan Update
Lead Member:	Councillor Jemima Laing (Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture, Events and Communications)
Lead Strategic Director:	Anthony Payne (Strategic Director for Place)
Author:	Hannah Harris, CEO Plymouth Culture
Contact Email:	hannah@plymouthculture.co.uk
Your Reference:	HHI30923
Key Decision:	No
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

The Culture Plan was formally adopted by Plymouth City Council in March 2021. As part of our annual reporting process this report provides a snapshot of cultural activity in the city, how activity aligns with the objectives set out in the Culture Plan and what the priorities are for the coming 12 months.

Recommendations and Reasons

I. To note the report.

Reason - To ensure that the committee is kept up to date with progress on the Culture Plan and contributes to setting annual priorities.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Update report only, no alternatives required.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

This supports the City Vision to be one of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities and the City Council priority of a vibrant cultural offer.

The Plymouth Plan remains the City's overarching strategic plan, looking ahead to 2034. The Plan sets out a shared direction of travel for its long-term future bringing together a number of strategic planning processes into one place. The Plan sets out the aspiration to be a healthy and prosperous city with a rich arts and cultural environment and we see the Culture Plan sitting alongside this as a mechanism for achieving the strategic objectives.

Policy INT4 is of particular relevance as it seeks to delivering a distinctive, dynamic, cultural centre of regional, national and international renown and sets out how the city will support a thriving arts and cultural sector.

The arts and cultural sector have the ability to have a positive impact across a wide range of topic areas ensuring this Culture Plan also contributes to the following policies:

- Policy HEA1 Addressing health inequalities, improving health literacy;
- Policy HEA2 Delivering the best outcomes for children, young people and families;
- Policy HEA4 Playing an active role in the community;
- Policy HEA7 Optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of the natural environment;
- Policy GRO1 Creating the conditions for economic growth;
- Policy GRO2 Delivering skills and talent development;
- Policy INT3 Positioning Plymouth as a major UK destination;
- Policy INT6 Enhancing Plymouth's 'green city' credentials;
- Policy INT8 Celebrating diverse communities.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

None identified directly connected to this report.

Financial Risks

None identified directly connected to this report. NPO funding has been secured to March 26 but a competitive bidding round will reopen in 2025.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

Whilst this report has no identifiable environmental implications, being produced in digital format only, the Culture Plan has the environment as a key driver stating, 'We will be a city of culture with green credentials, using culture and creativity to tackle the climate emergency'. As such this will be a key criteria for decision-making as projects develop, to ensure the sector acts responsibly and facilitates others to do the same.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

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Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Culture Plan Update							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment (if applicable)							

Background papers:

**Add rows as required to box below*

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: David Draffan (Service Director Economic Development)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes Date agreed: 25/08/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Jemima Laing approved by email Date approved: 01/09/2023											

Culture Plan Update

1.0 Executive Summary

- There are 365 creative and cultural enterprises in Plymouth according to the latest data. Whilst a slight decrease on 2019 figures there has been steady growth since the pandemic with signs of bounce back from 2022.
- Estimated Total Employment in Creative Industries in 2022 is approximately 3,350, a growth of around 9.8% on 2019 figures.
- Similarly, Total Real GVA of Creative Industries in 2022 is approximately £150m, growing from £98m in 2020.
- 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).
- Despite the challenges presented by Covid and changing post-Covid audience behaviours, the sector delivered more than 50 cultural events and audiences for culture were in excess of 850,000 in 2021/22.
- The cost of living crisis is the challenge now for cultural organisations, with many audiences saying that this is now the key factor in preventing participation. This is particularly acute for those already less engaged with culture, meaning we risk widening inequality in cultural participation.

2.0 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.

The Culture Plan provides a framework for decision-making and helps to direct resources to identified priorities. The Plan outlines how we grow and sustain a thriving cultural sector in order to positively impact the lives of individuals and the economic and social prosperity of the city. It has been compiled by the sector and key stakeholders to ensure that it is collectively owned and that individuals and organisations understand the contribution they can make towards achieving our long-term ambitions. Ultimately this ensures that we have a strong, collective sector voice within the city and that culture in Plymouth remains an investable proposition to partners external to the city. Our job now is to create the conditions for culture to thrive.

2.1 Objectives

The following quantitative objectives are outlined within the Culture 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.

3.0 Recap of 21/22 Highlights

We encourage you to view the short film produced by Plymouth Culture as a result of mapping work undertaken by the Cultural Partnership. This summarises the cultural activity and audience engagement in 2021/22 - <https://vimeo.com/770690103/75004ed775>.

With reference to this mapping work, 132 venues were identified as hosting cultural activity across the city. There were over 50 cultural events in 21/22, more than half were free to attend attracting audiences of over 220,000. Collectively the events, free and ticketed, over this period attracted audiences of over 350,000. When you take account of venues, projects and events audiences exceeded 850,000.

During this period the cultural activity across the organisations and events secured external funding in excess of £1.5m, working with 28 different funding bodies and sponsors. The projects and events provided over 2,000 job opportunities for creatives which helps to sustain the creative economy within the city. In addition, the events programme offered over 675 volunteer opportunities.

4.0 2022/23 Highlights

Since the last scrutiny report in December 2022 cultural activity has continued to flourish in the city, as we collectively work towards the objectives set within the Culture Plan.

Partners are responding to the Culture Plan Place priority - *Making use of alternative and outdoor spaces for culture so that we celebrate our blue grey-green landscapes, bring culture to the doorstep and connect culture to the climate emergency agenda* – by placing work in the public realm. Art and culture are popping up in unusual places, giving residents and visitors daily opportunities to see and experience high quality culture.

Projects such as the light installation in the Civic Centre, funded through Historic England High Street Heritage Action Zone, and Plymouth Artists Together murals are good examples of accessible art in the public realm which are stimulating positive conversations.

The recently installed Art Vending machine is a brilliant example of artists (led by Alex Robins) working alongside corporate partners (British Land/Drake Circus) to pilot a quirky project that makes art part of the everyday.

The cultural education offer remains an important priority within the city. The With Flying Colours project (<https://withflyingcoloursplymouth.co.uk/#/>) has been working with 11 schools across Plymouth for the last four years. The young people have been co-creating performances with artists and cultural organisations resulting in individual and collective impact. The final year of the programme alone has employed 47 creative practitioners, hosted 21 trips to 10 different cultural venues, taken 347 young people to the theatre and 290 pupils recently participated in a festival to celebrate the project. The learning from the project is nationally significant and will inform the development of the cultural education offer in the future.

Within higher education our city universities are working hard to retain creative graduates. Arts University Plymouth have established a partnership with Eat, Work, Art to provide creative workspace within the newly opened Light Studios in Millbay. This building has recently been brought back into use as a creative hub offering affordable workspace.

New venues have also opened including Manor Street Galleries in Stonehouse, located in Plymouth's Old Morgue, and Salt Studio in Peverell. Both spaces showcase local artists and are a much needed addition to the city landscape for creatives.

4.1 National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs)

For the last 10 years the city has developed a strategic partnership with the Arts Council, made possible by the joint investment principles agreed with PCC. Retaining the National Portfolio

Organisation (NPO) investment is essential for the overall health of the cultural ecosystem and was a priority clearly identified within the Culture Plan.

Despite Plymouth not being a priority place the city retained its overall NPO funding, with 8 organisations sharing £12m over the next three years. Whilst the amount of funding remains, the composition of the NPOs has changed with two organisations leaving the portfolio, Take a Part and Plymouth Music Zone, and one organisation joining the portfolio, Beyond Face. Arts Council have continued to invest in Take a Part and Plymouth Music Zone through other project grant funding which has now been secured and will mean the important provision they offer to Plymouth communities can continue.

This core funding provides some stability for the organisations, but long standing NPO's are undergoing change in response to internal and external factors. For example, Plymouth's largest NPO, Theatre Royal Plymouth (TRP), is in a period of transition. James Mackenzie-Blackman joined the organisation in January 2022 after Adrian Vinken's retirement after 32 years in post. Simon Stokes, TRP's Artistic Director, left in 2019. The pandemic had significant impact on TRP with over a third of the workforce made redundant. TRP is now approaching pre-pandemic staffing levels with over 320 employees, annual audiences of over 300,000 and a circa £16m turnover.

Dame Darcey Bussell DBE succeeded Nick Buckland OBE as Chair of the TRP board in March 2023 and together with the Executive team the leadership team and the board have been collaborating on a new business model for the charity. The evolution of this model is required due to a lack of high-quality product for the Lyric Theatre after the pandemic. TRP also needs to better benefit from HMRC's Theatre Tax Relief and so will be doing more large-scale co-producing in future years. TRP will publish a new strategic framework by the end of September and the board will approve a new business to commence in April 2024.

In June 2023 John Haider, Tom Jackson-Greaves, Sara Rhodes and Malaika Kedoge were appointed Associate Directors at TRP in a new creative leadership model that was widely praised by the sector.

Darren Henley, Chief Executive Arts Council England, and Phil Gibby, SW Area Director Arts Council England, have already visited Plymouth on several occasions this year and continue to be supportive of our future ambitions. Similarly, with the support of Cllr Jemima Laing we hosted the LGA visit in July as another means of strategically positioning Plymouth as a leader in this sector.

4.2 Audiences and Data

The city and cultural sector do not have a centralised data collection system. This means that collection of audience data varies in scale and type from organisation to organisation. Plymouth Culture is currently developing a significant data focused programme of work with a city partnership to address this with the aim of creating a means of collecting and analysing data in a way that we can better understand impact and use this knowledge to make informed decisions for audience development strategies. Early conversations with Arts Council to support this work through Place Partnership funding have been positive.

This work will connect with the Data Hub initiative led by Destination Plymouth which will provide live data as well as perception studies for the cultural sector to inform those operating within the cultural visitor sector. Similarly, the city brand development work that Destination Plymouth has been leading will ensure that we can better communicate to audiences, residents and visitors, and support collaborative marketing efforts.

Post-pandemic audience figures have been a real challenge for venues, with some age groups and artforms particularly slow to return and recover to pre-pandemic levels. Last summer the DCMS Participation Survey showed a continued increase in audiences for cinema, festivals, live music and street art but a slowdown in audiences for exhibitions and theatre.¹

¹ <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/news/increase-post-pandemic-arts-attendance-slows-down> full report
<https://www.campaignforthearts.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Arts-attendance-in-England-Oct-2020-to-Sep-2022.pdf>

Nationally the Audience Agency has been tracking audience behaviors since the pandemic through the Cultural Participation Monitoring project. Not surprisingly the cost of living concerns are now having a greater effect on people's ability and intention to attend arts and culture than Covid fears, with 59% of people saying they are actively put off attending arts and culture by cost-of-living concerns.

Whilst this trend is seen across all audience segments, it is more acute in certain segments and communities. For example, the **numbers of people already attending less arts and culture** than they were a year ago has **gone up significantly**, from 31% in February 2023, to 42% in July, though the change is slower in younger groups. This means that the already least culturally engaged audiences continue to be the most affected, compounding the existing inequality gap in culture consumption. The same report shows that groups with children at home or other dependents are most put off attending arts and culture by the demands of rising energy bills.²

That said, there is a clear shift to people preferring to, once again, consume live culture at a venue rather than online or digitally. This does vary by age group, with age being the dominant factor in post Covid attitudes to culture, and younger groups wanting the live experience again.

Given our city demographics and audience segmentation the current cost of living crisis is a concern. Whilst free cultural venues like the Box continue to grow their audiences, having now welcomed over 500,000 visitors, other organisations like Theatre Royal Plymouth reflect the national picture. Planning and programming remain incredibly difficult from the perspective of rising venue costs but also changing audiences behaviors as the cost of living crisis hits.

However, there is an opportunity, using the data available, we can better target audiences and potential audiences, honing the communications from the sector. As a city we have a higher proportion of 20-24 year olds compared to national figures and this age range has been quicker to return to pre-Covid activities and are looking for live experiences. Music in particular has seen audience growth which is an artform specifically identified within the Culture Plan as a priority, having growth potential for the city with proper investment.

4.3 Artists and the Cultural ecology

In the Inclusive Economy priority within the Culture Plan, it sets out the importance of growing and maintaining a healthy, diverse cultural sector for the benefit of creatives and the wider city. The Plan sets out the ambition to - *position culture as an economic driver, growing and sustaining a diverse ecology of creative individuals and organisations.*

It goes on to say, we need to create the conditions for artists and creatives to start and grow their careers in the city, and to ensure they have the necessary infrastructure to thrive. It needs to be evident internally and externally to the city that Plymouth is the cultural destination of choice for creatives.

There is a collective priority to continue to provide paid opportunities for artists and creatives in Plymouth. In some instances, this is direct through cultural organisations like the Box commissions, Barbican Theatre practitioner roles or Literature Works Laureate of Words programme, for example. We also work hard to collaborate with partners outside of the cultural sector to develop paid opportunities such as Plymouth City Centre Company's West End Carnival, PCC North Cross Subway mural commission and local musicians on the main stage during fireworks night.

Partners also collaborate to secure larger funding pots for the city. For example, the British Art Show partners secured in the region of £100,000 which was invested into designers, marketers, artists, facilitators and ambassadors through paid work. The With Flying Colours programme already mentioned, has provided work for 47 creative practitioners in its final year of delivery. The Cultural Investment Fund set up by Plymouth Culture, pools funding from across the NPO's to invest in the

² <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/evidence/cultural-participation-monitor/key-insights>

sector and funded three projects, 10 creative practitioner in the most recent round. These are just some of the examples of external funding secured by partners and benefiting artists and creatives.

It isn't always about funding though. Artists also need opportunities to test, experiment and exhibition as a means of progressing their careers/practice, and this can be just as valuable. The meanwhile use programme piloted by Plymouth Culture, supported by city partners, gave 17 creative projects an opportunity to pop-up on the high street and attracted audiences of nearly 7,000. Grow Plymouth offers a residency programme as a test space for creatives and Exim is once again offering a Space Scheme, making studio space available free of charge for one year. Plymouth Art Weekender is perhaps the largest example of providing a platform for artists to exhibit and engage with the public. We would wish to see this return to the city and are engaged in early conversations about the mechanism for this to happen and scale up.

Plymouth Culture also plays a role in communicating and connecting opportunities, which is an important function. We have over 800 creatives that subscribe to our newsletter and since January alone we have shared 57 opportunities and 37 funding announcements. In some instances, we convene specific network meetings, such as the music forum, which leads to further partnerships and funding. In this case the music forum has helped to support Marjon Arts Centre to partner with a promoter, evolving their programme with great success and assisted Nudge Community Buildings to secure funding and partners for the Millennium Awakening programme.

5.0 Challenges

Whilst the arts and culture sector in Plymouth continues to develop and grow, it is facing considerable challenges:

- Audiences – the cost of living crisis is already impacting arts attendance and participation and so work to understand audiences, tailor the offer and improve access will be increasingly important.
- Funding – a stand still position on funding, such as Arts Council NPO, is a cut in real terms. Growing pressure on venues around utility costs and inflation compound the issue and mean that more funding from alternative sources will be required to maintain the level of provision in the city.
- Creative space – affordable studio space for creatives is in demand and new provision will be needed over the coming years in order to retain and grow the sector. Unlocking spaces around the city will be critical to this work.
- Politics – changing and unstable politics at a National level make it difficult to achieve growth or even stability. Advocacy for the city and the sector at a National level will be increasingly important to position us for future opportunities.

6.0 Priorities for 2023/24

As is widely understood within the city, 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. In order to sustain and grow the cultural offer, Plymouth Culture will continue to work with partners to prioritise 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. 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 have robust baseline data and truly understand the impact of culture on aspects such as health, wellbeing and education, it is essential that we continue to work on our data collection and analysis systems. A consistent system will enable us to better understand engagement levels and barriers to engagement so that robust audience development strategies can be developed.
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. We will continue 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.

Creative Industries Value

365

Creative and cultural enterprises in Plymouth

3,350

Estimated Total Employment in Creative Industries in 2022

a growth of around 9.8% on 2019 figures

£150m

Approximate total Real GVA of Creative Industries in 2022

growing from £98m in 2020

2021/22

Cultural Highlights in Plymouth

132



Venues offering
cultural activity

50

Cultural events
attracting audiences
of over 350k

50

% of events offered free
of charge, attracting
audiences of over 220k

850k



Total audience of
events and cultural
venues

2,000

Job opportunities
created

675

Volunteer
opportunities created

£1.5m

External funding
from 28 funders