

# Southampton City Council Arts & Heritage strategic vision

Information from Southampton City Council about plans for arts and heritage in the city

## Towards an international city of culture



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## Introduction

Southampton is coming of age as a cultural city. It has a thriving arts and heritage community that is driving forward a renaissance programme of change. By 2026 we will have revealed the true potential of the city's history and modern day creative talent.

Culture is of central importance to the city's wider ambitions for economic and social development. Transforming Southampton into an international city of culture for everyone can help raise the educational aspirations and wellbeing of local people, create a safer city for us all to live in, stimulate jobs and growth, and inspire greater civic pride.

There is already significant investment underway which will fundamentally improve the cultural offer by 2012. The Heritage Lottery Fund and Southampton

City Council are planning to invest over £6 million in the re-development of Tudor House in Old Town. The 'PUSH4Culture Find Your Talent' pathfinder pilot will bring significant investment into the city. This will develop opportunities for young people to engage in cultural activity.

Southampton City Council is championing partnership working with the Arts Council and SEEDA, amongst others, to deliver a Cultural Quarter in the Northern Above Bar area. This strategic vision celebrates this commitment and for the first time brings together existing plans, projects and early ideas into one place. It provides an essential strategic opportunity for the council and other key strategic partners to confirm Southampton's cultural vision. It also identifies a clear route map describing how, by working together, we intend to get there.





## 1. Executive summary

Southampton is a thriving and growing city with a diverse and dynamic population. However, these developments are in pockets and other parts of the city (economically, physically, socially) remain significantly deprived. We want to provide cultural opportunities for all and transform Southampton from being a gateway to a place of destination where people want to visit, put down roots and engage in community.



Our vision is for Southampton to become an international city of culture<sup>1</sup> within the Urban South Hampshire region by 2026. Such a transformation would help re-energise the city and the people who live, work and play here.

Culture is critical to Southampton's economic development, and to the health, wellbeing and educational aspirations of its citizens. Without a vibrant cultural soul, Southampton becomes a divided, anonymous, modern and transient settlement with little civic pride or unique sense of place, and without an attractive, sustainable and stimulating environment that people value.

The city has a fantastic opportunity over the next twenty years to transform its cultural offer and create a vibrant sense of identity and uniqueness that connects people to each other and to Southampton as place. Its rich cultural diversity, internationally important heritage story and nationally dynamic arts and creative scene provide an inspirational resource for exploitation. The strategic framework already emphasises the wider importance of culture and the significance of Southampton within the PUSH regional development area will ensure that this potential can be realised.

This exciting vision is achievable in the current regeneration and 2012 context if individuals and organisations across Southampton, and regionally and nationally, work together. Southampton City Council has real appetite to play its part – to provide leadership, strategic facilitation and enabling, co-ordinating the partners and creating the right culture and environment to deliver the bigger picture. We look forward to working with our partners across the city to further shape the ambition and transform it into reality.



<sup>1</sup> A city with a national and international reputation as a dynamic cultural provider, a beacon of best practice and a serious candidate for any European Capital of Culture initiatives post 2020.

## 2. Strategic framework

a) The **City of Southampton Strategy** (Southampton's Community Strategy) launched by Southampton Partnership and Southampton City Council sets out a 20 year (2026) vision for the city that places people and culture at its heart. Specifically, arts and culture are the focus of one of 6 key objectives:

- Imaginative arts and cultural opportunities achieved by being:

A centre of national excellence for the arts and culture, building on the major strengths of existing venues and collections and encouraging new ventures

A place that fosters and celebrates creative and media industries, contemporary, visual and performing arts, arts reflecting the city's communities and arts in education

A place which celebrates and shares its rich maritime heritage with ever increasing numbers of visitors from around the world; a heritage that is carefully preserved and actively brought to life for the benefit of visitors and residents alike

Importantly, arts and heritage activity also has a significant role to play in achieving the other 5 objectives:

- By showcasing and celebrating Southampton's international symbols of achievement and diverse community histories and artistic traditions, we can **inspire people's pride in their city and their desire to make a positive contribution**
- By exploiting the city's arts and heritage as a powerful creative and innovative resource that inspires people to learn knowledge and skills in new and meaningful ways, we can support the advancement of educational attainment and work to place **learning and innovation at the heart of the city**
- By supporting the creation of a proud and vibrant city with a confident, innovative and creatively skilled local population, we can play a key role in delivering a leading creative and cultural industries sector and a **dynamic business environment overall**
- By championing the role of arts and heritage in city regeneration, redevelopment, health and wellbeing initiatives, we can inspire the creation of high quality public realm spaces and urban design and contribute significantly to the development of an **attractive, sustainable and stimulating environment**
- By creating a confident multicultural city that is proud of and showcases its unique arts and heritage as an integral part of its daily presence, we can deliver **Southampton's unique sense of place**





b) The City of Southampton Strategy objectives reflect **Southampton City Council's cabinet priorities:**

- Delivering value for money and efficient services, avoiding excessive taxation, ensuring good City governance, and working with neighbouring authorities, partner agencies and with appropriate strategic partnerships such as the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire
- Promoting economic prosperity in the City by improving the City's infrastructure, facilitating business growth and enabling more residents to enjoy rewarding employment
- Raising educational standards and attainment in the City, and promoting greater choice and diversity
- Reducing crime and anti social behaviour and improving the protection of residents from crime
- Minimising and recycling waste, promoting energy initiatives and improving the City's environment
- Improving the wellbeing of all residents and supporting older people especially those with medical, care, social or financial needs

Through engendering greater community and civic pride, raising the educational attainment of local people, and creating attractive, sustainable and stimulating environments, arts and heritage activity has an important role to play in helping the council meet these six priorities.

c) The **Southampton Local Area Agreement** focuses on four main areas of activity:

- Children and young people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Healthier communities and older people
- Economic development and enterprise

It has already been demonstrated that culture has a strong potential role to play in each of these areas of social and economic impact. Partnership projects will continue to be developed with wider organisations and providers to ensure arts and heritage activity enhances Southampton's ability to deliver on current targets and primary performance indicators in these areas.

d) The Cultural Consortium has been re-formed as the **Southampton Heritage and Arts People (SHAPe)** and is taking a lead role in taking forward arts and heritage within the context of the City of Southampton Strategy. It will build upon the Cultural Strategy produced by the Consortium in 2002, and in particular will focus on integrated policy and delivery in four cross-disciplinary areas: Communicating and Showcasing; Raising Educational Attainment; Nurturing Creative Industries; Cultural Olympiad.





e) The **Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)** provides the vital regional economic regeneration context for delivery of the arts and heritage aspects of the City of Southampton Strategy. PUSH is one of the New Growth Points that the Government has entered into long-term partnership with to improve South Hampshire's quality of life in the broadest sense, including economic, social and environmental wellbeing. It has been created as a city region with the objective to stimulate growth and economic development in recognition of the under-performance over the last two decades compared to south east average growth rates, and the resulting significant pockets of deprivation located in this area. Its vision is for South Hampshire to be a better place for everyone who lives, works and spends their leisure time here. Culture is regarded as a key regeneration and wellbeing strand and is one of the nine PUSH strategic objectives. A Quality Places group has been established to drive forward the cultural agenda for change across the region, and to support and advise elected members and colleagues planning the sub-region's growth by ensuring

that cultural and creative activities, services and facilities contribute to the economic, social and environmental well-being of South Hampshire. Achieving these ambitions will depend on a range of public and private funding programmes, including developer contributions, and the Government is committed to working with local partners to achieve strategic and sustainable growth to get the best outcomes from future investment.

f) The **Living Places Partnership** is a joint initiative between Communities and Local Government and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, along with five key cultural agencies, including the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, the Arts Council and English Heritage. This joint work aims to ensure that all communities, in particular those experiencing economic growth, benefit from cultural facilities such as museums, libraries, art and sport, as well as making better use of cultural heritage. PUSH has been identified as one of the five priority places in England to work with the Government and cultural agencies under this initiative.

g) The **South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)** has unveiled the Implementation Plan for the Regional Economic Strategy for the South East, 2006-2016. The role of culture is pivotal to delivery of each of the three RES objectives: Global Competitiveness, Smart Growth and Sustainable Prosperity.

h) The Find Your Talent pathfinder programme, **PUSH4Culture**, will provide important strategic opportunity to further develop and demonstrate the value of cultural activity in raising the aspirations and educational attainment of young people in Southampton.

i) The **Cultural Olympiad** will be a key driver in terms of shaping UK cultural activity and opportunity towards and beyond 2012. The DCMS 2012 co-ordinator for the South East Region will work closely with cultural organisations and agencies, including MLA and Arts Council South East to facilitate the development of joined up programming. SEEDA has launched the 'Compete, Create and Collaborate' offer

for the 2012 Games. Opportunities for Southampton to engage actively in this major initiative will continue to emerge.

j) Several wider **Southampton city policy** initiatives are of direct relevance to the Arts and Heritage Strategic Vision. These include:

- Old Town Development Strategy
- Public Art Strategy
- North-South Spine Development Strategy
- Legible Cities
- City Centre Action Plan
- Children and Young People Strategy
- Green Space Strategy





### 3. Southampton's rich arts and heritage resource

Southampton has an internationally unique arts and heritage resource that can strengthen the city's identity and has the potential to draw in visitors from across the world. Local people, through history into the present, have shaped this resource – their stories, identity and creativity underpin this rich cultural heritage.

Our connection with the sea over 2000 years is at the core of Southampton's local, national and international story, and has huge potential to captivate and inspire.

Yet this diverse and powerful arts and heritage resource is under-exploited. Local people and those passing through for whatever reason have limited knowledge of the wonderful treasures of arts, history and creativity that Southampton has to offer. For example, current visitors come partly to explore the city's maritime heritage. Presently, they are disappointed with what they find <sup>2</sup>.

The city needs to transform the cultural product and enhance the quality and visibility of its many cultural assets:

- **A dynamic and creative professional and voluntary arts and heritage community**

- **The Maritime, Aviation and Southampton Heritage Story**

- Southampton Water – a unique, natural harbour
- A global Roman and Saxon port
- The Mayflower – and the departure of the Pilgrim Fathers
- The RMS Titanic – and the stories of its courageous crew
- The Transatlantic liners
- Travel and transport
- Immigration and emigration

World port and gateway

People working in the docks and on the water, whatever the conditions

A port of war – D-Day; Dunkirk; Falklands

The invention of powerboats – Scott Paine and T.E. Lawrence

Ocean yacht racing

The Southampton Boat Show

Major liner naming events

The Schneider Trophy

Mitchell, Lady Houston and Supermarine

The Spitfire

Flying boats and the invention of passenger air travel

King Canute and Saxon Hamwic

Henry V, Agincourt and the Medieval City

Jane Austen and the Georgian Spa Town

Southampton and the Blitz

Peopling Southampton

Living in Southampton – personal stories

Inventors and Innovators – the gas cooker; the CD Rom

Getting around – trams, trains and buses

Local geographical and community heritage –

Bitterne, Woolston etc.



<sup>2</sup> Southampton visitor destination survey undertaken by Locum Consultants 2007



• **The surviving artefacts that testify to the global impact of Southampton:**

The historic docks and old town waterfront  
3rd most complete town walls in UK (after York and Chester)  
Medieval underground vaults  
Tudor House – rare complete medieval and Tudor survival  
Bargate, Wool House, Medieval Merchants House, God’s House Tower, Tudor Merchants House  
Medieval documents and archives dating back to the C12th  
The Mayflower Memorial  
Nationally designated archaeology museum collections  
Museum collections, archives and oral histories reflecting people living, working in and connected with Southampton and its global history (Solent Sky and Southampton City Council)  
Floating vessels – Calshot tug tender; SS Shieldhall  
Southampton Old Cemetery

• **A dynamic visual arts cluster with a growing national reputation, including:**

Southampton City Art Gallery and nationally designated collections (developed with the support of Tate)  
John Hansard contemporary art gallery at University of Southampton  
Millais contemporary art gallery at Solent University  
Touring and temporary exhibition programmes  
Aspace Bargate Gallery and Art Vaults  
Southampton City Public Arts programme  
Art in the Arches studio spaces  
Red Hot Press  
Individual artists and practitioners based in and around the city  
University and college visual arts courses and student activities  
Creative Partnerships





• **A regionally significant performing arts, music and dance provision including:**

- Art Asia
- Guildhall
- Mayflower Theatre
- Nuffield Theatre
- The Point at Eastleigh
- Turner Sims Concert Hall
- Vibrant pub and venue music scene catering for different age groups and musical tastes (including for example The Joiners, The Brook, Talking Heads, Soul Cellar, The Platform)
- Thriving community of performing artists, music makers and dance practitioners
- University and college performing arts courses and student activities
- Creative Partnerships
- Touring organisations visiting the city

• **A major regional cultural and creative industries sector (arts and heritage) including:**

- Diverse events programme – Mela Festival; Chinese New Year; Black History Month
- SS Shieldhall and Southampton Heritage Federation projects
- University of Southampton and Southampton Solent University courses and student population
- Southampton Schools Music Service
- Specialist Arts Schools
- City College
- Art in the Arches studio spaces
- Individual creative industry practitioners
- PUSH4Culture Find Your Talent pathfinder programme



- **Developing profile as a centre for screen-based arts, underpinned by a number of established resources**

- City Eye
- Harbour Lights Picture House
- Mount Pleasant Media Workshop
- University of Southampton
- Southampton Solent University

- **Long heritage of green open spaces that breath life and tranquillity into the city, including:**

- Central Parks (Grade II Listed)
- Southampton Common (SSSI) and Old Cemetery
- Weston Shore (SSSI)
- Shirley Warren community garden

- **Interwoven and diverse community histories that create a unique sense of local place and identity**

Key milestones on the way to 2026 include <sup>3</sup>:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 2009 | 200 year anniversary of Jane Austen living in Southampton                                |
| 2010 | 100 year anniversary of Southampton airport  |
| 2011 | 75 year anniversary of the Spitfire maiden flight  |
| 2012 | 100 year anniversary of the Titanic disaster   |
| 2014 | 50 years of the City   |
| 2015 | 600 years since the Battle of Agincourt  |
| 2016 | 1000 year anniversary of King Canute being crowned                                       |
| 2017 | 600 years since God's House Tower built; 100 years since Mitchell arrived in Southampton |
| 2020 | 400 years since Mayflower set sail   |
| 2022 | 800th mayor  |



<sup>3</sup> By this date, the European Union might well be calling for new UK candidates for Capital of Culture