



# SOUTHAMPTON TOGETHER

## SOUTHAMPTON'S CULTURAL STRATEGY 2021-2031

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL





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## Foreword

[To be added following Cabinet Approval]

## Executive Summary

**This 10-year Cultural Strategy is about our communities, our city, our past, our future and how we sustainably navigate our place in the world together. It aims to embrace our history, our multiple identities, our differences and common ground whilst also striving for high quality work and national and international cultural collaborations.**

Southampton is culturally diverse with a long history of welcoming people to the city and linking the south of England to the world. It is geographically defined by its position at the head of the Solent's tidal waters, which created its role as a seaport now hosting the second largest port in the UK, further enhanced by its Freeport status.

Southampton has a distinctive story to share. From its unique natural environment, physical and human heritage, powerful migration experiences, contributions to two world wars and post-war reconstruction, to the many historic and contemporary innovations that started here and impacted on the world.

With decades of sustained cross-party political support for culture, this strategy seeks to build on the role of culture in the city, place partnerships and the regional, national and international ambitions of our UK City of Culture 2025 bid.

Public access to the waterfront (the ocean and two rivers) is currently limited, whilst the impact of climate change on the city and its communities, compounding the deep social and economic inequalities that exist across the generations is recognised. It is a city where air quality, health, wellbeing, educational attainment, skills and low-quality jobs lead to reduced life expectancy and geographical and social divides. This in turn has affected Southampton's identity, confidence and pride; its ability to recognise its own strengths, imagine a different future, and support each other in getting there.

Our vision is that by 2031:

***Through culture, Southampton is an inclusive city that collaborates and connects at home and on the national and international stage to ignite imaginations, innovation, pride and a sense of belonging across the whole city***

Southampton's definition of culture is broad and values 'everyday creativity' as a vital part of shaping a dynamic and inclusive city. It supports the idea that we can all be creative in our lives whilst enabling those seeking to pursue professional cultural and creative careers. Happening in our cultural and creative industries, places of worship, estates, communities, green and outside spaces; in our sports arenas, clubs, societies, homes and around food; in the virtual and digital world, it enables us all to be artists, creators, historians and sports people wherever, and whoever we are.

Our vision is based on four principles that guide how we intend to deliver our Cultural Strategy – these are described more fully in section 5.0 (pp.17-18):

1. Reflect and Embolden
2. Resonate and Inspire

3. Regenerate and Embed
4. Resilient and Co-creative

And five step changes this Cultural Strategy seeks to deliver – these are described more fully in section 5.0 (pp.18-19):

1. A Culture of going *to* not *through*
2. A Culture of Creativity and Innovation
3. A Culture of Opportunity and Inclusivity
4. A Culture of Health and Wellbeing
5. A Culture of Environmental Sustainability

We have also identified initial investment opportunities that align to Southampton's strategic ambitions to contribute locally, regionally, nationally and internationally – these are summarised in section 6.0 (pp.20-21).

This Cultural Strategy is closely aligned with Southampton's bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025. It draws upon the extensive consultation and the collaborative work that the city and partners have been undertaking to build a cohesive bid and this strategy.

It is a living document that will be reviewed annually to monitor progress and alignment with wider strategies whilst also giving space to the process of testing, learning and growing together as a city. The next steps are to develop an annual action plan that delivers benefits for our communities, partners and stakeholders.

## 1.0 About our Cultural Strategy

### 1.1 Introduction

This 10-year strategy is about our communities, our city, our past, our future and how we sustainably navigate our place in the world together. It aims to embrace our history, our multiple identities, our differences and common ground whilst also striving for high quality work and national and international cultural collaborations.

Southampton is culturally diverse with a long history of welcoming people to the city and linking the south of England to the world. It is geographically defined by its position at the head of the Solent's tidal waters, which created its role as a seaport now hosting one of the UK's largest export ports with over £40bn trade passing through it, further enhanced by its Freeport status.

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With decades of sustained cross-party political support for culture, this strategy seeks to build on the role of culture in the city, place partnerships and the regional, national and international ambitions of our UK City of Culture 2025 bid.

Public access to the waterfront (the ocean and two rivers) is currently limited, whilst the impact of climate change on the city and its communities, compounding the deep social and economic inequalities that exist across the generations is recognised. It is a city where air quality, health, wellbeing, educational attainment, skills and low-quality jobs lead to reduced life expectancy and geographical and social divides. This in turn has affected Southampton's identity, confidence and pride; its ability to recognise its own strengths, imagine a different future, and support each other in getting there.

Yet the evidence indicates that culture can provide the glue that connects individuals, communities and business to build a strong sense of belonging, pride and togetherness. Culture can also play a role in Southampton's wider economic recovery, environmental action and place-shaping agendas that draws on artists, creatives, heritage, events, sport and communities to create a thriving cultural city. Culture is aligned and embedded in our local, regional, national and international strategies and aspirations.

### 1.2 Methodology

Against the COVID-19 backdrop, an astonishing series of city-wide conversations have taken place about the importance and value of culture to people's lives, and what winning UK City of Culture could mean for Southampton.

A Joint Cultural Needs Assessment, led by the University of Southampton in partnership with Solent University, has provided the evidence base for the Cultural Strategy. It has drawn on the Council's extensive social and economic data; information collected for other

strategies; collation of data on the cultural sector including children and young people, and further research by both Universities.

This has been added to by extensive consultation across the city, including seldom-heard voices, working with the city's key community, voluntary, cultural and statutory organisations. This work has comprised:

- 149 hours of consultation with over 1000 people in virtual workshops
- 16 cross-sector working groups
- Residents and councillors in each of 16 electoral wards
- Organisations representing young people and minority communities
- 3053 responses to city-wide surveys and 640 to the draft strategy

It has generated a baseline upon which to shape our theory of change approach. The experience of consultation has in and of itself gone a long way to building new relationships and collaborations with communities whose voices are vital to our shared mission to create stronger communities.

Together, Southampton is harnessing the regenerative role of culture in addressing our city's needs and challenges, enabling us to reach our collective potential as a flourishing and sustainable city for current and future generations.



## 2.0 Strategic Context

### 2.1 Background

Southampton is geographically dispersed and culturally diverse – a city of many villages, that make up the sum of its parts.

Significantly, Southampton's anchor institutions have played a critical role in recognising, and responding to, the value and impact of culture in our city. So too have our communities, creatives, businesses and volunteers – taking the lead where they have seen gaps and opportunities.

Southampton has attracted and invested resources in its cultural infrastructure as part of the regeneration of the city. This includes the Cultural Quarter with a revitalised public realm and arts centre hosting an internationally recognised contemporary art gallery, theatre, film and studio complex. This sits alongside investment in SeaCity Museum, Tudor House and Gardens, God's House Tower, the Mayflower Theatre and sustained support for cultural provision across the city.

The underpinning commitment to culture has survived despite economic recessions, austerity measures, administration changes and a global pandemic, though resources may have been constrained and depleted. Collaborating through the Southampton2025 Trust, Southampton continues to reshape and reimagine a future with culture at its heart.

The deepening collaboration between artists, communities, cultural organisations, business, education, public and third sector is part of Southampton's enduring strength. This is backed by growing community support, willing investment from big and small businesses, both universities and the local authority to become UK City of Culture in 2025.

During the pandemic the cultural and creative sector alongside associated businesses in the visitor economy, events industry and night-time economy have dealt with closure, income depletion, furloughed staff and loss of talent from the sector. However, the sector pivoted with ingenuity to respond to the health and wellbeing needs of Southampton's communities and collaborated with partners to deliver new activities that will support adaptation to future changes and needs.

However, a constant refrain and frustration is that Southampton lacks confidence, profile and pride. Furthermore, understanding of its complex social and economic needs is widely misunderstood and Southampton is often lumped together with leafy Hampshire and overshadowed by Britain's second largest port.

Like Coventry and Rotterdam, Southampton was devastated by Second World War bombings as a city of strategic significance, originator of the Spitfire and embarkation point for soldiers and D-Day initiatives. In response, the city took a pragmatic approach to rebuilding meaning that it is architecturally eclectic, and its nationally important heritage is largely hidden and underappreciated.

More recently, Southampton's Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2030 embeds the cultural and creative industries and the associated visitor economy within the strategic aspirations for the city. These centre on four interrelated interventions including:

- People, Employment and Skills
- Supporting and Growing Local Businesses
- Growth through Sustainable Place-shaping
- Growing an International City

In this respect, the sector is recognised for the value and potential it brings in creating growth and jobs and the catalytic impact it can have on the city. It is important in helping to raise the profile of the city on the international stage, particularly through the UK City of Culture 2025 bid, and the reach it can have through the visitor economy and other businesses in the city.

A detailed action plan is being developed as part of the Economic Growth Strategy, with many of the interventions likely to benefit the cultural and creative sector as well as the wider economy. Examples include: evaluating the business support environment; considerations around creative zones; developing skills and development opportunities for people working within or aspiring to work in the cultural and creative sector; providing a quality urban environment and transport infrastructure for residents and visitors. This sits alongside responses to the deep social inequalities that impact on people's prosperity, opportunities and wellbeing that cannot be addressed by these actions in isolation.

## **2.2 Policy Framework**

It is within this context that this Cultural Strategy dovetails with and draws upon the wider policy framework which includes:

- Arts Council England's Let's Create Strategy and investment principles
- National Lottery Heritage Fund's Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024
- Cultural Cities Enquiry 2019 and Cultural Cities Recovery Report 2020
- Government's Environment Bill 2021
- Solent Local Enterprise Partnership 2050 Vision and Recovery Plan
- Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2025
- Council's Economic Growth Strategy 2020-2030
- Council's Destination Management Plan 2021-2031
- Strategic plans of the University of Southampton and Solent University
- Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Southampton Health and Care Strategy

And emerging strategies, plans and policies including:

- Council's Vision and Local Plan
- Council's Children and Young People's Strategy
- Council's Adults and Wellbeing Strategy
- Council's Global Partnerships Strategy

- Council's Leisure Strategy and Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- Safer City Strategy
- UNICEF Child Friendly City status plans
- Southampton Cultural Education Partnership Vision
- Royal Society of Arts' Learning City and strategies around the Future of Work
- A city-wide Heritage Strategy and the Council's Heritage Asset Management Plan
- Monuments and Memorial Policy and Public Arts Strategy
- Festivals and Events Strategy and Creative Industries Strategy

### 3.0 Climate Change

Southampton must face up to the urgency, impact and acceleration of the global climate challenges on the human and natural world. The scientific and human evidence is that climate change and the loss of biodiversity are already having a profound effect on society, with disproportionate effects on parts of the world. Increasingly, urban areas such as Southampton will be at the sharp end of these impacts including for example, poor air quality, temperature and sea level rises, flooding, and significant seasonal weather changes.

Following the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, the UK government set a legal target to be carbon zero by 2050 and to cut emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. The Climate Commission Committee reported in their Sixth Carbon Budget that this can only be achieved if Government, regional agencies and local authorities work together seamlessly.

The 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) agreed to the Glasgow Climate Pact to limit temperature rises to 1.5C. However, it is reliant on every country delivering on their pledges and committing to the four goals to drive action which include:

- Mitigation – reducing emissions with new 2030 net zero emission targets
- Adaptation – helping those already impacted by climate change including doubling 2019 levels of adaptation finance by 2025
- Finance – enabling countries to deliver on their climate goals including realigning finance to global net zero, and away from fossil fuel
- Collaboration – working together to deliver even greater action including the ‘Paris Rulebook’ (common reporting of emissions and support)

Prior to this, in 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency with a commitment that its assets and operations would be carbon next zero by 2030. Major city partners have also pledged to address environmental sustainability, cognisant of Southampton’s important natural and maritime heritage, located between two national parks and the Solent’s Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Southampton is home to the National Oceanography Centre (NOC), which has bases in Southampton and Liverpool. Its multi-disciplinary team leads pioneering global research into ocean health and economy. Given the ocean absorbs 93% of excess heat and 25% of human produced carbon dioxide “...it is our biggest hero in tackling climate change”<sup>1</sup> and presents a unique opportunity for Southampton to play a vital global and local role.

Led by the Council, Southampton is home to the UK’s first geothermal power scheme which began pumping in 1986, serving the Civic Centre initially before expanding to include business and residential properties around the city centre. An award-winning enterprise, the Southampton District Energy Scheme is currently operated by EQUANS, and in partnership with the Council is now being used as the basis for exploring further

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<sup>1</sup> COP26 Statement, Professor Hill, CEO [The National Oceanography Centre at COP26 | National Oceanography Centre \(noc.ac.uk\)](https://www.noc.ac.uk)

opportunities to extend its low carbon benefits across more of the city and to incorporate emerging zero emission technologies. Further net zero work includes improving insulation, introducing LED lighting and solar panels and reducing energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Seeking to improve air quality and manage city-wide emissions, Southampton was one of the first local authorities to have a clean air zone compliant bus fleet and over half its licensed taxis are now zero or low emission vehicles. Other emission reduction innovations include an electric scooter trial and an e-cargo loan scheme with 10 bikes available to businesses. An e-cargo trial by the Library Service aims to offer a home service for people confined to their homes and vulnerable individuals. In 2020 Southampton became the first UK commercial port to install shore power facilities, providing visiting cruise ships with the ability to turn off their engines in port to reduce pollution.

Southampton is currently reviewing its green infrastructure which includes Southampton Common, a 90ha SSSI in the heart of the city, and the internationally important wetlands of the Rivers Itchen and Test. This work focuses on creating a healthy environment and reconnecting the city, for people and wildlife, as well as rediscovering Southampton's place in the landscape. As part of the 'green grid' it will identify assets which need protecting and enhancing, making room for nature whilst connecting our green spaces and making them more accessible. Whilst 52% of the city is classified as greenspace, only 5% is designated as natural greenspace. To address nature's imbalance, early initiatives include the establishment of new urban wildflower meadows, and the introduction of boxes for bats, swifts, dormice and peregrine falcons to support the biodiversity of the city. The Council and Balfour Beatty recently won two awards for its Living Wall project on the Millbrook roundabout which incorporates an integrated watering system. Furthermore, driven by community-based, grassroots action Southampton is seeking to consolidate and make our environment greener by achieving National Park City status by 2025.

Through Arts Council England's Accelerator scheme, Julie's Bicycle have been working with a small cohort of cultural organisations. The focus has been to lay the groundwork for measurement of operational emissions within our Cultural Quarter, as well as promoting sustainable culture, influencing behaviour changes, promoting understanding through programming and connecting with city-wide opportunities.

All this, and much more work by partners including public realm and housing developments, are the critical backdrop to the city's resilience and sustainability. For Southampton, the natural world is core to the culture of the city and a critical part of its infrastructure. Integrating this into our approaches will be vital for providing climate change adaptation and resilience, as well as supporting and enabling the health and wellbeing of communities. Southampton's green infrastructure is also part of creating a sense of identity and belonging across generations and communities. Whilst science can provide the evidence, culture has its own role to play (such as through its operations, programming, audiences, messaging and engagement) and it is up to us to act and ensure Southampton and the wider region is liveable and sustainable, for current and future generations.

## 4.0 Where we are now

### 4.1 About Southampton

Southampton is home to just over 260,000 people. It is a diverse city, with over 152 languages spoken in our schools, indicating the breadth and depth of connections across the world and over time. With a young demographic profile, the Office for National Statistics (2020) estimates that 18% of the city's population is between 15 and 24 years old, compared to 11% nationally. This reflects the presence of two Universities with over 33,000 students who make the city home during their studies. However, it is also an aging city with complex health, wellbeing and social needs. Meanwhile, Southampton is a City of Sanctuary that nurtures a growing network of schools, libraries and universities of sanctuary, that welcome and support asylum-seekers and refugees into our communities.

Although our history and heritage is fundamental to who we are, our strengths and the challenges we face, Southampton continues to play a pivotal role in UK trade and industry, as well shaping the future of the country. The port of Southampton is one of the UK's largest export ports, with over £40bn of trade passing through it. This is reflected in the importance of the transportation and storage industries to Southampton (accounting for c.25% of the city's economy). When public sector industries are included, nearly half of Southampton's economic output is accounted for, demonstrating the critical role played by health and social work, education and public administration. Within this there are world leading strengths in marine and maritime research as well as computer and optical sciences.

### 4.2 Cultural Infrastructure

Southampton's cultural and creative ecology is supported by large, small, formal and informal cultural and community organisations, freelancers and volunteers. They deliver and support theatres, museums, galleries, libraries, archives, literature, dance, film, music, creative curriculums, events and festivals, religious centres, community organisations, societies and friends of groups, and the city's important tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Much good work is also undertaken by cultural partners with the police, crime and violence units, youth services, adult care and community provision across the city.

It builds on the impressive archaeological foundations of the city, and a civic leadership, entrepreneurs and communities that have sought to champion the value of culture in generating pride, identity and economic and social regeneration.

This mix is critical to shaping and reflecting the vibrancy, energy, innovation and creativity of the city to deliver lasting economic and social value. By way of example, the city is host to:

- Six regularly funded ACE National Portfolio Organisations (a space arts, ArtAsia, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton City Council, Turner Sims, Zoie Logic Dance Theatre), working alongside Artful Scribe, City Eye, Opera Up Close, Solent Showcase Gallery, SoCo Music Project, The Art House and many more

- The Mayflower Theatre as the third most successful commercial theatre in the UK, complemented by the newly established Mayflower Studios (MAST) providing collaborative and umbrella support for other cultural and community organisations
- Two nationally important museum collections (Archaeology, Fine Art) and important national and regional aviation, maritime, industrial, local history, oral history and archival collections dating from 1199, supported by the Chipperfield Advisory Committee and Friends of Southampton's Museums, Archives and Galleries
- Over 165 Scheduled Monuments, listed and buildings of special architectural or historical interest, including medieval vaults and town walls to rival other cities, supported by the Council's Archaeology Unit, and complemented by the Maritime Archaeology Trust
- Organisations and activities focused on young people including schools and colleges pursuing Artsmark awards, Artswork, Southampton Music Service and Music Hub, City of Southampton Orchestra, Southampton Cultural Education Partnership (SCEP), University of Southampton hosted Connecting Cultures consortium project, Southampton Education Forum
- 11 libraries across the city run by the Council and community partners such as the YMCA, Christchurch Southampton and dedicated volunteers in Thornhill. They deliver services around literacy, employability and digital skills, children, families and vulnerable communities with Citizens Advice, Department for Work and Pensions Young Adults Employment Hub and a British Library pilot Business and IP Centre in Central Library
- Grassroots and mid-scale music venues such as The Joiners, The Stage Door, The Brook, The 1865, The Engine Room and O2 Guildhall
- Organisations drawing on the city's rich and diverse heritage including, for example, Black History Month South, Southampton Heritage Federation, Parkes Institute for the study of Jewish and non-Jewish relations, The United Voices of Africa Association, Southampton Hip Hop Heritage
- An annual calendar of over 150 community, civic, sports and commercial events and festivals including for example, Chinese New Year, Pride, Southampton International Boat Show, Black History Month, Vaisakhi, Music in the City, ABP Marathon, Mela, Jerk Jam, Heritage Open Days, supported by a network of historically important and culturally valued parks and open spaces across the city
- The National Oceanography Centre undertaking pioneering global ocean research and home to unique archives and special collections, including those dating back to 1925 when the RRS Discovery collected the first samples in the Southern Ocean
- Two universities delivering cultural agendas through academic teaching and research including around metrics for 'public good', fashion, art, design, music, literature and archaeology; special collections, programming and public realm programmes, student volunteering and community engagement, the new Southampton Institute of Art and Humanities

- Visitor attractions including Southampton City Art Gallery, God’s House Tower, the Merchants House, SeaCity Museum, SS Shieldhall, Solent Sky Museum, Tudor House Museum and Gardens, many of which need further investment
- Extensive public art and public realm interventions across the city and in our estates, including organisations celebrating the city and its special places such as the City of Southampton Society, Friends of groups supporting our parks, cemeteries and local history
- Organisations delivering sports and leisure activities including Southampton City FC, Rees Leisure, Live Nation supported by a network of facilities across the city including Ageas Bowl (Eastleigh)
- A range of networks such as CHAOS, Southampton Heritage Federation, Creative Network South, Creative Growth South, SCEP, Southampton Voluntary Services, Southampton Connect, PUSH Partnership, Chamber of Commerce
- A supportive media also creating cultural content that includes the BBC, Southern Daily Echo, Wave 105, Unity 101, Awaaz FM, Fiesta 95 FM, Our Version Media CIC, Voice FM

### **4.3 Baseline**

This document draws upon a baseline assessment of the sector from data available prior to the pandemic. A richer data bank is being commissioned to understand the impact and ramifications for Southampton’s cultural and creative sector resulting from COVID-19.

The headlines are that:

- Southampton has a well-established but modest cultural and creative sector which means that investment is not ephemeral and can be grown, particularly given the lower economic output compared to other places regionally and nationally
- Cultural assets are concentrated within the city centre demonstrating gaps in provision for our most deprived and communities outside the city centre, compounded by transport connectivity and affordability
- Two thirds of audiences to some cultural organisations come from outside the unitary authority area, whilst 73,000 people belong to the least engaged groups
- Freelancers support the sector, and their vulnerable employment status has been brought to the fore during the pandemic, with ramifications for the diversity of the sector (disability, socio-economic, ethnicity, gender, age)
- There are a number of networks in the city which indicates opportunities for developing greater synergy and collaboration across the city, and supporting resource, capacity and experience gaps
- Southampton’s physical heritage has been comparatively underfunded and utilised, and its complex human and global stories underappreciated impacting on our understanding of the city as residents, workers and visitors
- There is good grassroots and mid-scale music provision including an established music service and hub but there are issues around venues, licensing, promotion, talent development and artist progression within the city



- There are challenges around attracting and retaining talent (of all ages) in the cultural and creative industries due to the availability of affordable (wet and dry) workspaces for (all) creatives, access to advice and costs of living which impact on sustainable careers
- There is strong support for cultural education provision spanning the educational and cultural sector but the social and economic challenges facing children and young people are significantly higher than South East averages
- The lack of diversity in the leadership and governance of the sector impacts on different ways of thinking, community engagement, programming, inequality in provision and access
- Whilst there are year-round festivals and events there are opportunities to improve this around curation, programming, diversity, profile, attracting new events and environmental impact
- The economic and social relationship between the cultural and creative sector, night-time and visitor economies, as well as skills development and quality jobs, are undervalued

In economic terms, pre-pandemic:

- Southampton generated £27m GVA<sup>2</sup> (excluding publishing) through the cultural and creative sector prior to the pandemic. This equates to 0.4% of total economic output and puts Southampton below the comparator city of Bradford (1.4%) and on par with Coventry (0.4%) and less than both the south east (1.6%) and south west (1.2%) regions.
- Whilst strong in the 'Creative Arts and Entertainment', it appears to perform less well in 'Film, TV and Broadcasting' where the level of activity is significantly below national and regional levels, and behind comparator cities such as Plymouth, Bradford and Hull. However, there are opportunities through City Eye and its relationship with the British Film Institute (BFI) and the BBC regional headquarters located close to the Cultural Quarter.
- For 'Libraries, Archives, Museums and Other Cultural Activities', on a per capita basis (£19 GVA), the city is behind national and regional figures - England (£59), south east (£47), south west (£43) and comparator cities of Medway (£67) and Hull (£23).
- In terms of jobs, focusing just on 'Creative Arts, Entertainment and Cultural Activities', there were 525 jobs which is less than most comparator cities in absolute terms, and in the middle as a percentage of all employment (0.5%). This is slightly less than the regional and England averages (0.6% and 0.7% respectively).
- Associated employment in Sport and Tourism shows employment to be at the lower end of comparable cities in absolute terms. Access to affordable, playable and competitive space for sport is also a challenge for some communities within the city.

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<sup>2</sup> ONS data

## 5.0 Where we want to be

### 5.1 Vision

Our vision is that by 2031:

***Through culture, Southampton is an ambitious and inclusive city that collaborates and connects at home and on the national and international stage to ignite imaginations, innovation, pride and a sense of belonging across the whole city***

The strategy aims to embrace our history, our multiple identities, our differences and common ground whilst also striving for high quality work and national and international cultural collaborations.

Southampton's definition of culture is broad and values 'everyday creativity' as a vital part of shaping a dynamic and inclusive city. It supports the idea that we can all be creative in our lives whilst enabling those seeking to pursue professional cultural and creative careers. Happening in our cultural and creative industries, places of worship, estates, communities, green and outside spaces; in our sports arenas, clubs, societies, homes and around food; in the virtual and digital world, it enables us all to be artists, creators, historians and sports people wherever, and whoever we are.

### 5.2 Principles

High levels of collaboration already exist in Southampton and are being catalysed further by our UK City of Culture journey. Drawing on the Joint Cultural Needs Assessment we have outlined four principles to underpin our approach to delivering the strategy.

- **Reflect and Embolden**

Building upon the creative talent and cultural experience that exists in the city, our governance, workforce, programmes and narratives must reflect our communities and embolden people so that they feel they belong, are valued and are able to shape this city.

- **Resonate and Inspire**

Whilst an exciting array of existing opportunities for people to engage in the cultural life of the city, it is vital that the changing needs of audiences and challenges to participation are reduced, and new opportunities are developed which resonate and inspire audiences and creators.

- **Regenerate and Embed**

Culture has role to play in supporting the economic recovery of the city, alongside health, wellbeing, education and skills opportunities, by being embedded in the vision and regeneration of the city, where the lens of artists can bring new perspectives to the city.

- **Resilient and Co-creative**

Resilient and co-creative leadership at all levels will be required to deliver sustainable outcomes for and on behalf of the city. This requires egoless and distributed leadership, focused on transformation of the city for the long term – this is fundamental to Southampton’s story of change.

### **5.3 Step changes**

Five step changes will be delivered as result of this Cultural Strategy, building upon existing good work and the significant and exciting opportunities for growth in the city. These are summarised as follows and the action plan, with measurable outcomes, will be developed:

- **A Culture of going to not *through***

This focuses on developing the visitor economy, the public realm and making Southampton a more attractive place to live, work, play and visit. Despite being the busiest cruise terminal in Europe, many visitors pass through Southampton to other places and many local audiences don’t have access to or engage with the range of current cultural offers.

Southampton will become an internationally-recognised cultural destination with a vibrant and safe daytime and night-time economy where our communities and visitors can access stimulating and joyful experiences across the city.

We will be a good partner in national moments and significant projects to raise the profile and ambition of the city to put Southampton on the map and be part of the national and international story.

- **A Culture of Creativity and Innovation**

Creativity and innovation lie at the heart of life and commerce within Southampton. The links between the cultural and creative industries and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) are an important area for stimulation.

Embedding creativity in the curriculum will prepare young people and adults to be resilient and flexible, analytical and innovative thinkers, tackling complex problems with ideation, creativity and originality. It will open doors to careers in the cultural and creative sector through progression routes or career changes. Meeting the needs of cultural and creative businesses will also be key to ensuring sustainable growth.

- **Culture of Opportunity and Inclusivity**

Work on diversity and inclusion in the leadership and governance of the city’s cultural and partner organisations will expand. This will embolden people from all backgrounds and ages to get involved and shape our trajectory whilst fulfilling our ambition to become a UNICEF Child Friendly city.

We will also address the skills and opportunity gaps and Southampton’s productivity potential, supported by our Royal Society of Arts Future of Work programme and the

incorporation of cultural production hubs in facilities across the city – places in which people can convene, make, create and be inspired by cultural and creative programmes.

- **A Culture of Health and Wellbeing**

Recognising the documented positive benefits of experiencing and participating in cultural activities, this focuses on partnering with healthcare professionals and the universities to advance health and wellbeing in the city where there are significant challenges.

Drawing on the five steps to wellbeing (Connect, Be Active, Take Notice, Keep Learning and Give) we will focus on addressing issues around depression, loneliness, healthy lifestyles, life expectancy through physical activity, social prescribing (non-medical interventions), volunteering, participation and creativity to bring happiness and joy to people's lives.

- **A Culture of Environmental Sustainability**

Southampton's blue and green infrastructure is core to the culture of the city and the acceleration of the climate change crisis cannot be ignored. Building on existing work, adaptation and resilience will involve small and large changes by individuals, public, community, cultural and commercial organisations.

Following COP26, targets will be reviewed, and ambitions tested including becoming a potential National Park City where people, wildlife and culture can flourish together. The cultural and creative sector will weave environmental sustainability into organisational adaptation, programming, audience engagement and behaviour change to contribute to generating green capital and value for the city and the region.

## 6.0 Future investment

Whilst there has been considerable cultural and wider public realm investment across the city to date, over the next 10 years there is further work to be done. This will draw upon known and emerging areas of opportunity including for example, the Council's Vision and Local Plan, representation in our city's history and heritage, the music industry, festival and events, leisure and sport.

Financing will be undertaken as a partnership approach and lever opportunities that may be available through Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, government initiatives, anchor institutions and business, as well targeted fundraising campaigns.

For the purposes of this strategy, a summary of early investment opportunities are outlined:

- *Heritage Asset Strategy and Plan.* Following a detailed condition assessment of the Council-owned heritage assets, significant investment is being made to improve the condition of these important assets and support the development of the destination over the next five years.
- *Completing the Cultural Quarter.* This brings together the visions for reimagining the Art Gallery, Central Library, The Guildhall, Solent University's School of Fashion, Art and Design alongside creative zones and the wider public realm to join up with the masterplans associated with The Saints Mile, Mayflower Quarter, the Civic Centre and work of the John Hansard Gallery (University of Southampton), Mayflower Studios (MAST) and other cultural partners.
- *Cultural Education Partnership.* This builds on the financial and strategic investment by Artsworld and other consortium partners to embed cultural and creative education in the curriculum, and to equip young people with the skills and knowledge to build resilient and productive futures for themselves and their communities.
- *Cultural production hubs and creative zones.* This focuses on extending the cultural infrastructure beyond the city centre utilising and enhancing existing community facilities across our districts; and creating mechanisms that allow artists to flourish, potentially adapting the Greater London Authority's Creative Enterprise Zone model.
- *National Spitfire Monument.* An independent trust has bold plans to create a new Monument in Southampton, building on the technological innovation that created this iconic plane, as well as the communities that were instrumental in making and sustaining it during the Second World War. A site has been identified and planning permission secured, with feasibility and fundraising strategies being developed.
- *Solent Sky Museum.* With its important aviation and industrial collections, trustees are developing plans to extend the offer in the current location. This is likely to be the subject of a bid to the NLHF and builds on smaller grants secured for delivering exhibitions and activity to its audiences.
- *College Street Container Park.* With planning permission approved in 2020, this independent consortium is seeking to provide improved offerings for start-ups and creative industries, adding to the vitality of the city centre, close to the emerging Oxford Street destination, and Artists' Studios run by 'a space arts'.

- *Creative Campus*. The University of Southampton's investment in developing a creative campus centred on the campus theatre and Turner Sims, to enhance student experience, increase public engagement with its teaching and research, linking with cultural partnership provision in the city to become a Civic University.
- *Cultural Access*. Investment in our libraries, museums, galleries and archives and other visitor attractions; the development of digital opportunities including community proposals for a virtual museum of migration, Southampton Black Archives and other interventions.
- *ACE NPO funding*. With a 13% uplift in Arts Council England investment in the city in 2018, opportunities will be explored to build capacity as well as the representation of additional cultural disciplines and gaps in provision.

There are also wider developments that will be interdependent and connected with the Cultural Strategy. These include for example: Mayflower Quarter masterplan, Outdoor Sports Centre, parks, highways infrastructure, public realm, way finding, wayfaring and greener city initiatives.

## 7.0 Review and monitoring

This Cultural Strategy is closely aligned with Southampton's bid to become UK City of Culture in 2025 and draws upon the work that the city and partners have been undertaking to build a cohesive bid.

Whilst this document is 'owned' by the Council, it is a living document steered through city-wide partnerships and will be reviewed annually to monitor progress and alignment with wider strategies.

We will also explore how we bring the city together to contribute to the ongoing shaping of this strategy, building on the positive work undertaken to date and give space to the process of testing, learning and growing together as a city. The next steps are to develop an annual action plan to drive forward the step changes Southampton is seeking to deliver through culture to benefit our communities and the city as a whole.