

# BRIEFING PAPER

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**SUBJECT:** SOUTHAMPTON CULTURAL STRATEGY 2021-2031  
**DATE:** 13 JANUARY 2022  
**RECIPIENT:** OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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## **THIS IS NOT A DECISION PAPER**

### **SUMMARY:**

1. Southampton has developed a 10-year Cultural Strategy (Annex 1). This builds on work undertaken in the city over a number of years, the extensive consultation undertaken as part of Southampton's UK City of Culture bid in 2020/21 and the public consultation on this document which ran from 13 September to 31 October 2021.
2. This Cultural Strategy is about our city, our place, our future and how we navigate our place in the world together. It describes the strategic context for this document, where we are now in terms of the cultural infrastructure and baseline, where we want to be in terms of the vision, principles and priorities and highlights future investment opportunities.
3. It builds on the city's cultural infrastructure, resources, capabilities, as well as the needs and opportunities that exist in the city and wider region. It centres on culture as the glue that connects people and place, and recognises the important role it plays in our economic recovery, regeneration and destination creation. It supports our UK City of Culture 2025 bid in which Southampton has been longlisted from 20 to 8 competing cities.

### **BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:**

4. Adopting a 10-year Cultural Strategy is recommended as it:
  - Demonstrates a strategic commitment to culture and is a local authority requirement
  - Provides the framework within which to attract more internal and external investment
  - Sets out the stall and direction for a place
  - Seeks to address issues of sustainability, access, diversity and inclusion
  - Helps to focus on local distinctiveness and attractiveness
  - Culture is embedded in contributing to social, economic and environmental outcomes.
5. Southampton has a small but well-established sector that means it has a strong base from which to re-build following the pandemic. It is not an ephemeral investment opportunity for internal and external funders and the city and cultural organisations and individuals have been successful in attracting funding from a range of sources including

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Arts Council England which saw a 13% uplift in the last National Portfolio Organisation round in 2018 and significant investment in the Studio 144 complex in previous years.

6. Pre-pandemic Southampton generated £27m GVA (excluding publishing) representing 0.4% of total economic output (compared to Bradford (1.4%), Coventry (0.4%), South East (1.6%), South West (1.2%)). This means there is room for growth, particularly when aligned to Southampton's Economic Growth Strategy and Destination Management Plan 2021-2031 which focus on growing our cultural and creative industries and developing a high-quality cultural destination for residents and visitors. It also reflects the LEP's strategic plans.
7. Meanwhile, for 'Libraries, Archives, Museums and Other Cultural Activities' in Southampton on a per capita basis (£19 GVA), it is behind England (£59), the South East (£47), South West (£43) and comparator cities of Medway (£67) and Hull (£23). Similarly, heritage is comparatively underfunded and utilised compared to other cities.
8. An adopted Cultural Strategy is a vital part of the UK City of Culture 2025 bidding process, particularly pertinent now that Southampton has been longlisted from 20 to 8 competing cities. It supports the step changes that Southampton is seeking to deliver as result of UK City of Culture, particularly around national and international ambitions and alignment to other strategies.

## **RESOURCE/POLICY/FINANCIAL/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

9. Aligned to our UK City of Culture ambitions, the draft Cultural Strategy and the adopted Destination Management Plan identified a number of capital and revenue projects that will require investment in Southampton's development as a cultural destination. It is also anticipated a scaling up of the resources within a range of Council departments, including Cultural Services will be required to address a number of these areas, particularly around collections, heritage, public art, public access and engagement. These are not yet fully developed and costed and will be the part of the action plan to take this forward.
10. There are property implications for the development of some of the schemes outlined, including the National Spitfire Monument. There are additional implications with regard to the impact of climate change and the need to integrate adaptability, sustainability and resilience into future schemes.
11. Section 1, Localism Act 2011 provides a 'general power of competence', giving local authorities the legal capacity to do anything that an individual can do that is not specifically prohibited.

## **OPTIONS and TIMESCALES:**

12. Not adopting the Cultural Strategy – this option is not recommended given the strategic importance it provides to growing the sector and the economic, social and environmental benefits it will bring for our residents and communities. It will also

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compromise the credibility of our UK City of Culture ambitions as well as our commitment to continue to invest in Culture as part of the city's recovery plans including around the skills, educational and employment agendas.

## RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

13. The risk of not adopting the Cultural Strategy impacts on the UK City of Culture bid, identifying priorities and attracting future investment, raising the ambitions, profile and perceptions for Southampton and its economic and social recovery. Adopting the strategy provides a focus and direction of travel around which the whole city can galvanise and focus on growing the cultural and creative sector and its contribution to economic, social and environmental outcomes.
14. The risk of limited stakeholder support and engagement with the Cultural Strategy is reduced by the scale of prior and subsequent consultation to shape the strategy. Whilst the strategy is 'owned' by the Council, it is a living document steered through city-wide partnerships and will be reviewed annually to monitor progress and align to wider strategies. Areas for improvement include the voices of young people, people from a range of backgrounds including ethnicity, disability, socio-economic background and geographical areas.
15. The risk of insufficient resource and capability impacts on the city's ability on deliver on this Cultural Strategy, UK City of Culture preparedness as well as other city-wide strategies. These need to be mitigated through the process of business planning, prioritisation, skills and talent development and exploring internal and external funding opportunities.

## Appendices/Supporting Information:

Annex 1 – Draft Southampton Cultural Strategy 2021-2031

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