

**To: City Executive Board and Council**

**Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January and 16 February 2009**

**Item No:**

**Report of: Head of City Development**

**Title of Report: Oxford City Council Cultural Strategy (2008-2011)**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To obtain approval of the revised Oxford City Council's Cultural Strategy and Delivery Plan for 2008-2011

**Key decision? No**

**Executive lead member: Cllr Mary Clarkson**

**Report Approved by:**

**Executive Director of City Regeneration: Mel Barrett**

**Finance: Sarah Fogden**

**Legal: Jeremy Thomas**

**Environmental Health: John Copley**

**Policy Framework: Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011**

**Recommendation(s):**

To recommend to Council that the revised Cultural Strategy be adopted.

1. This report sets out the need to adopt a Cultural Strategy, how the original Draft Cultural Strategy was developed, the process of consultation that has taken place upon it and how it has since been modified. A copy of the revised Draft Cultural Strategy is in Annex 1. A copy of the Delivery Plan is in Annex 2. Comments and recommendations made by Full Council at its meeting in March are set out under Alterations to Cultural Strategy in point 8.
2. Culture for Oxford City Council encompasses:
  - The performing and visual arts
  - Landscape, architecture & buildings

- Museums, archives and local identity
  - Fashion, media, design, film, writing & publishing
  - Parks, open spaces and playgrounds
  - Tourism & heritage
3. Culture has a major role in Oxford's future transformation with particular reference to the following Corporate Priorities:
- Physical regeneration
  - Community cohesion and diversity
  - Creative skills and employment
  - Tackling social deprivation and reducing crime

<p><b>The Audit Commission Inspection</b></p>
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4. In November 2006 Officers started preparation for an Audit Commission Inspection on the delivery of cultural services in the City, due to take place in April 2007. As a part of this preparation a number of workshops were held with officers, councillors and stakeholders. A desk top review of all the relevant policies, procedures and financial information was also carried out.
5. In November 2007 the Audit Inspection took place. The Report is largely positive and whilst it set out some weaknesses it also identified good prospects for the future, given the Council's awareness of these weaknesses and vision for improvement. The Audit Commission found that 'Oxford City Council provides fair cultural services which have promising prospects for improvement'. The report identified areas where the service was good. It states:
- a) Cultural services make a major contribution to improving social inclusion in the city. The Council is committed to the services, which it appreciates clearly support local and national priorities for social inclusion and quality of life.
  - b) Many services are delivered in partnership, delivering effective outcomes in community cohesion, particularly through the art, grants and activities provided through the community centres. The range of cultural activity available is often centred in deprived areas, and the service works hard to reach marginalised groups.
  - c) The services have made progress to achieve many of their objectives, and have made a significant contribution to meeting council priorities, particularly towards quality of life and economic vitality.
  - d) The outdoor environment is well maintained, as is the built heritage of the area.
6. The Report also found areas where cultural services were below standard. As a result the decision was taken to review Leisure Services and the new Cultural Strategy will not therefore include Sport & Leisure facilities.

7. Key recommendations from the Audit Commission were:
  - a) Improve value for money of the leisure centres
  - b) Progress the cultural vision for the city as a whole
  - c) Ensure the right building blocks are in place to improve cultural services, including increasing value for money and delivering the West End vision.
  
8. In terms of prospects for improvement the Commission report states:
  - a) on balance the council has good prospects of improvement overall. It has a greater sense of clarity and ambition, improved focus on better value for money, improving performance management systems and providing good leadership. The Council is progressing with its review of strategies, however service planning for cultural services is still in progress.
  
9. The process involved wide consultation with: staff, councillors and stakeholders, including cultural providers, the County Council, the Universities, Primary Care Trust, the Police and the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership and the public via the website and through the Talkback Citizens Panel.

### **Alterations to the original Cultural Strategy.**

10. The Cultural Strategy is an important response to the Audit Committee recommendations. It will form the framework for ensuring that the vision and service delivery plans are implemented and delivered.
  
11. In March 2007, Executive Board received the Culture Strategy for approval and recommended it for adoption by Full Council at the meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2008.
  
12. Council resolved NOT to adopt the Strategy. Issues to be addressed were raised surrounding the Delivery Plan including the need for :
  - Clear SMART objectives
  - Evidence and impact monitoring systems
  - Review of deadlines and time frames for delivery
  
13. In May 2008 the Arts Office and Oxford Inspires were asked to re-draft the Cultural Strategy with the following priorities:
  - a) Emphasis on community development, social inclusion and participation
  - b) Delivery
  - c) Clear strategic and measurable outcomes
  - d) Focus on regeneration
  - e) Working to the Council's new Corporate Plan and objectives

14. The new Strategy, an appendix to this report, sets out a vision for culture based around people and participation and the Action Plan, also appended, identifies measurable actions and objectives.

15. In line with our corporate aspiration to become a world-class city for everyone, the cultural vision set out in the Corporate Strategy is:

**“To be recognised internationally as a world class city for culture; a city that others look to for ideas and models of best practice; a city that integrates and encourages creativity and innovation, bringing the unexpected into everyday living and inspiring others by example.”**

16. The Strategy focuses on delivering culture in Oxford and proposes that the City Council’s Cultural Priorities should be:

- **Profile** – increasing our regional, national & international standing
- **People and Participation** - strengthening local engagement
- **Places and Productivity** - supporting local talent and creative industries
- **Partnership** – increasing investment, working collaboratively

## **Conclusion**

17. Officers, members and stakeholders have put a considerable amount of time and effort on the development of the Cultural Strategy. There has also been extensive consultation on the original Culture Strategy and this new version has been modified as a result of the comments received and in response to the new re-structure and Administration within the City Council.

18. The process of developing the revised Strategy has resulted in continued recognition of the value that all sectors and partners play in the delivery of cultural services and strong support for its adoption.

19. Culture has a core role in delivering a range of other strategic priorities for the council, including social inclusion, improving the local environment, economy and quality of life. This was recognised by the Audit Commission Inspectors in the feedback received in the draft Inspection Report and is identified within the new Cultural Strategy.

20. Officers believe that the vision and strategic priorities contained within the document still has the support of all partners and stakeholders.

## Financial Implications

21. The Delivery Plan demonstrates the need for the Council to have an effective leadership role for culture stakeholders and providers to deliver the vision and priorities. The majority of actions are to be implemented through existing resources. However, there are some resource implications for managing the delivery of culture.
- A Lead Officer post (Cultural Development Manager) to implement key elements of the Action Plan has been included within the City Development Service restructure.
  - Council-led strategic direction to enable partners to deliver culture on our behalf.

## Legal Implications

18. There are relatively few legal considerations although some may arise when exploring the role of the cultural partners in delivery (contractual agreements.)

## Risk Management

19. The Cultural Strategy presents low risk, although its non-adoption will result in the likelihood that some external funding body income to arts partners and the city's providers may be reduced.

## Equalities Implications

20. None

## Climate Change Implications

21. None

## Recommendations

22. To recommend to Council that the Cultural Strategy be adopted

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### Background papers:

Cultural Inspection Audit Commission Report



# **Oxford – A World Class City for Everyone**

## **A Vision for Culture - 2008-2011**

*Oxford City Council*

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## 1. Foreword

*Supporting statement to be inserted by Chief Executive/Leader of the Council/Portfolio Holder*

*Cultural activity across the board from heritage & art to theatre & music is key to:*

- *Improving our city – pride of place, regeneration, creating a “joined-up” Oxford; building on heritage; cutting edge facilities;*
- *Improving People’s Lives – transformation in the widest sense, community cohesion, celebrating diversity; encouraging creativity & skills; power to change lives regardless of class, education or ethnicity; what people turn to in times of stress; the very best art and culture is for everyone.*
- *Improving our Economy – increased employment, investment in the city; creative industries, value for money.*



*Lighting Up Rose Hill, Modern Art Oxford, Dec 2007*

*Oxford City Council is transforming; culture has a proven and significant role in helping us do that.*

## 2. Introduction & Background

### **This is Oxford – A World Class City for everyone**

Oxford is a world-class city – a place that people are attracted to live in, to visit and where they choose to study or work. And Oxford welcomes the world – it is one of the UK’s most cosmopolitan cities with people from all around the world living here. We are a city of global cultural interest; home to the world’s first public museum and concert hall, stunning architecture, and an international centre for books and publishing. Culture is our key asset. Our commitment to ensuring that Oxford is a world class city for everyone means that participation in world class cultural events and experiences for all of Oxford’s communities, and for visitors, is central to Oxford’s future.

Our cultural asset base, combined with the presence of two thriving Universities and the diverse, cosmopolitan nature of Oxford’s resident and visiting community give the city an inherent vibrancy and an ever-increasing potential for excellence.



Visiting, living or working in Oxford offers:

- A world-renowned academic heritage
- A city rooted in industry and production
- Beautiful, inspirational, art and architecture
- Contemporary, internationally-renowned and much-loved cultural institutions
- Breathtaking parks, open green spaces and waterways, integral to the city
- Strong, established, diverse communities representing cultures from across the globe.

Oxford's selection as a "European Centre of Culture" in bidding for the European Capital of Culture 2008 confirmed the quality of Oxford's cultural offer. The enduring influence of the artists, writers, performers and thinkers who are associated with the city in the world's imagination, make it one of the world's best known, and most imagined, cities. Oxford is also a significant centre in the cultural economy of South East England, especially for creative industries and artist's higher education and training and was recognised as one of three centres of cultural leadership in the South East.

This cultural strategy highlights the opportunity to build on the successful Oxford brand and the momentum of programmes delivered by cultural development agency, Oxford Inspires, such as Evolving City, Arts on Estates and Oxfordshire 2007, to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century Oxford that balances its heritage with an international programme of vibrant, contemporary cultural activity.

We know that Oxford has outstanding cultural strengths, and we are not complacent about our future as a cultural centre of international standing. We recognise that we need to be proactive in identifying programmes and opportunities that serve all our communities' needs; in developing contemporary cultural events and festivals that match Oxford's heritage culture for quality and national recognition; in supporting the artists that train here to continue to live here and to develop their career. Culture holds our communities together and plays a critical role in shaping our city. It represents how people who live here feel about their place and how it is seen by the wider world.

Culture is not just about great icons or famous names, or just "a nice thing to have". It has the power to change our way of life, to shape what we pass on to future generations about our city, to contribute substantially to the economy, improve health & well being and enable people to feel better about themselves and where they live.

The recent LGA improvement strategy for culture & sport "A Passion for Excellence"<sup>1</sup> highlights local government as "leaders of place" working with local partners to deliver better outcomes, improving the quality of life for local people and providing them with the services they want and need. This strategy will guide Oxford City Council's work in cultural development, but will be delivered in partnership: culture in Oxford is shaped by the involvement of our two Universities, by county and regional government, by local business, by cultural organisations and by individuals. Partnership and collaboration is essential if Oxford's communities are to reap the full benefit from cultural opportunities across the city and is a central tenet of this strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> A Passion for Excellence – An improvement strategy for culture & sport DCMS/LGA, March 2008  
*A World Class City for Everyone – A Cultural Strategy for Oxford September 2008*

Culture for Oxford City Council encompasses:

- The performing and visual arts
- Landscape, architecture & buildings
- Museums, archives and local identity
- Fashion, media, design, film, writing & publishing
- Parks, open spaces and playgrounds
- Tourism & heritage

## **2.1 Strategic context**

### **2.1.1 International**

Tourism is vital to Oxford's economy and the city is in a highly competitive environment as the choice of cultural destinations increases. Oxford already has cultural assets and architecture that rank the city amongst the best in the world.

World Tourism Organisation figures on cultural tourism indicate a growth of 15% per annum, 45% of European holiday destinations are chosen because of their heritage sites, cultural events and attractions.

### **2.1.2 National**

The DCMS' aim is: "to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries."

Their priorities for the delivery of culture are:

- Opportunity; encouraging widespread enjoyment of culture, media and sport
- Excellence: supporting talent
- Economic impact
- Olympics

### **2.1.3 Regional**

In Oxford, we aim to work in partnership with Arts Council South East by:

- Supporting the engagement of the Universities with culture in terms of training, internationalism, supporting creative industries and programming large-scale initiatives e.g. arts/science collaborations.
- Developing new financial models and business models for the support of the arts through the public and private sector.
- Using the arts as a transformational experience for individuals and communities through high quality participation and community arts projects as well as large-scale events/programmes.

Tourism South East's regional strategy<sup>2</sup> highlights the importance of building real partnerships and the achievement of sustainable growth. The focus is on the visitor experience and aims to help deliver SEEDA's five key objectives:

- Competitive businesses
- Successful people
- Vibrant Communities
- Effective Infrastructure

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<sup>2</sup> Tourism ExSEllence 2008-212

- Sustainable use of resources

SEEDA are promoting the South East as a region of festivals and place particular emphasis on supporting the creative industries through the regional Diamonds for Growth initiative.

#### **2.1.4 Local**

Culture in Oxford needs to be intrinsic to our partnership plans and priorities, notably the Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership and the Oxfordshire Partnership, which bring together key organisations from the public, business, community and voluntary sectors to develop and implement our long term collective vision. Culture supports the delivery of the following core priorities locally:

Oxon Sustainable Communities Strategy:

- World class economy
- Environment & Climate Change
- Healthy & Thriving Communities
- Reducing inequalities & Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation

Oxford City Council Corporate Plan priorities:

- Stronger & more inclusive communities
- More housing, better housing for all
- Improve the environment, economy & quality of life
- Tackle climate change
- Reduce crime
- Improving Value for Money

A vibrant, ambitious and successful creative and cultural community is an essential transformational tool in regenerating a city. A vital part of the Council's role is to build the capacity of partner organisations to deliver cultural activities within the context of our corporate and Local Strategic Partnership priorities.

### **3. Purpose of the Strategy**

This Cultural Strategy for Oxford City Council provides a framework for shaping the future role of culture in our city. Collectively, Oxford City Council and our partners are working towards making Oxford a world-class city for everyone. Building on and recognising the strengths of the city's cultural sector is key to delivering that corporate vision. We aim to nurture, encourage and broker long-term practical partnerships to improve and make a difference to our cultural infrastructure.

We aspire to;

- create a shared vision for culture across the city, exploring what kind of cultural life we aspire to and the benefits that can be realised, providing a rationale for further investment in the cultural sector
- identify ways in which cultural provision, support to the culture sector and access to cultural opportunities can be improved in Oxford
- demonstrate commitment to a genuinely partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the city, locally and within the wider international, national and regional arena.

## 4. The Cultural Vision for Oxford

This strategy outlines our vision for bringing world-class culture into everyone's everyday lives.

### 4.1 Our vision

In line with our corporate aspiration to become a world-class city for everyone, our cultural vision is:

**“To be recognised internationally as a world class city for culture; a city that others look to for ideas and models of best practice; a city that integrates and encourages creativity and innovation, bringing the unexpected into everyday living and inspiring others by example.”**

### 4.2 Oxford's Profile

Oxford has a total population of around 135,000 and is a relatively young city, with over half the population aged under 35. It is an urban city within the most rural county in South East England. It is the seventh most visited destination in the UK by international visitors, attracting approximately 7.8 million visitors a year. It has a long history of cultural innovation including the country's first Botanic Garden, the world's first public museum (the Ashmolean in 1682) and the world's first music room (Holywell). It continues to be at the forefront of trends and ideas, with the first open studios programme in England 1987 and with the unique collaboration of Oxford Inspires, a cultural partnership born out of the European Capital for Culture bid in 2000. Oxford is also home to many inspirational, dynamic community arts facilities including Pegasus Theatre, Fusion and ITHACA, all of whom have direct relationships with minority and excluded communities.

Diversity is at the core of our ambition to become a world-class city for everyone. Our city has a higher than average representation across all ethnic minority groups when compared to the regional and national data. This is identified in the wealth of multi-cultural activity present in the city including Cowley Road Carnival, the Oxford Mela and other festivals and cultural events put on by diverse community groups. Through our many partners, we strive to present and promote such work, to enable cultural understanding and break down barriers in an accessible and thought-provoking manner.

### 4.3 Our ambition

Oxford is already recognised as a world leader in support for human ideas and imagination in science, medicine, engineering and education. We are an established cultural centre and our ambition is to become equally recognised as a proactive creative city, by supporting creative individuals participating in the arts and culture, encouraging our own young creative people to stay and build careers. We are committed to innovation, individual development, internationalism and interculturalism and to the potential offered by combining arts, science and the environment.

There is more to Oxford than the traditionally painted image of dreaming spires and academic heritage. We are building on the Oxford brand as a distinctive heritage centre, by offering contemporary cultural activity that compliments and enhances the city's historical background through a commitment to establishing;

- unique international “world-class” events and festivals that bring in visitors and promote local talent and creativity;
- the establishment of centres of cultural excellence for young and old alike;
- interactive museums and galleries with contemporary look and feel;
- a buzzing creative industries sector where young people are encouraged to live and work in affordable locations;
- Oxford as a city that melds the past with the present in order to be continually renewing and refreshing its image and reputation.

#### **4.4 Why does Culture Matter to us as a City Council?**

In the past three years, with the huge growth of the creative industries<sup>3</sup> (now accounting for over 7% of GDP), there has been an explosion in interest in culture’s value to society and the economy. The ability of the arts and culture to deliver economic and social benefits and the ability of artists to transfer creative thinking skills is generating a much wider acceptance of the value of the arts. Culture is part of the solution to a range of issues from social inclusion, to skills development, to creating strong communities and increasing prosperity. Education demonstrates that creative learning is effective learning, which motivates children and teachers. The exercise of personal creativity is recognised as beneficial in promoting mental wellbeing by the health sector. Each of these potentially opens up new opportunities and potential for the cultural sector. Culture can and does contribute in our city to address and deliver our corporate priorities:

##### **4.4.1. “A World Class City for Everyone”**

Creative industries, tourism, heritage all attract people and businesses to an area, supporting the visitor economy and creating thriving communities, establishing world-class cities. Culture is also a determinant of the quality of life available in an area and as such, influences inward investment decisions of companies and public sector organisations, which can further contribute to the economic vitality of a city - region

“Now is the time to recognise the growing success story that is Britain’s creative economy and build on it. The creative industries must move from the margins to the mainstream of economic and policy thinking, as we look to create the jobs of the future”<sup>4</sup>

*How do we do this in Oxford:*

##### ***Oxfordshire 2007 – Celebrating 1000 years of Oxfordshire***

*Oxford City Council is one of the four partner stakeholders in Oxford Inspires, the Cultural Development Agency for the County. The agency’s role for Oxford City Council is in:*

- *Coordinating and building consensus: helping cultural organisations and individuals to work together.*
- *Generating new opportunities and new collaborations*
- *Providing specialist support and services, including marketing, fundraising and training*
- *Evidencing the value of the arts and culture*
- *Developing new models or new activity with partners, which position Oxford as a leading city in culture*

<sup>3</sup> Defined as advertising, architecture, art & antiques, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software & computer services, TV & radio.

<sup>4</sup> Creative Britain: New Talents for the New Economy, DCMS/DIUS, 2008

*Outcomes from Oxfordshire 2007 included:*

- *More than 350 events county-wide (45% taking place in the city)*
- *160 + cultural organisations featured*
- *£770,327 raised from public and private sources (52% from the corporate sector)*
- *60+ business supporters*
- *2 million website hits*
- *100,000 people taking part*

*Luminox transformed historic Broad St, presenting familiar surroundings in a new light, and attracted more than 20,000 visitors over three nights.*

*“2007 did seem to switch people on to culture. The brochures were excellent and for me, just an ordinary person living in Oxford, it has been such a useful resource in terms of finding things to do with my family” Member of public (Luminox)*



#### **4.4.2 Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour**

Participation in cultural activity can lead to improved confidence, skills development and employability and creative learning has proven benefits in children’s attainment as well as in their enthusiasm for learning. Oxford Brookes University is a UK leader in creative education. There are clearly many links between the arts, adult learning and the government’s skills agenda. The Creative Partnerships initiative working with schools has been rolled out, leading to even more active participation in arts and cultural activity by children and young people. Formally organised voluntary and amateur arts groups account for almost one fifth of all arts participation in England.<sup>5</sup> Participation in creative activities leads to enormous benefits for our society, engages “hard-to-reach” excluded groups and promotes community cohesion.

*How we do this in Oxford:*

#### ***Pegasus Theatre “Journeys to Freedom”***

*Oxford City Council is proud to support Pegasus theatre, which is both a youth arts organisation and a professional venue, programming local, national and international*

<sup>5</sup> Our Creative Talent: the voluntary and amateur arts in England, DCMS/ACE June 2008  
*A World Class City for Everyone – A Cultural Strategy for Oxford September 2008*



*professional performances alongside work by young people and the community. For over 45 years, ongoing opportunities for young people to participate in creative arts activities have been happening in the culturally diverse area of East Oxford where Pegasus is situated. A varied programme of work is delivered both at the venue and through various outreach projects in schools and the community. Journeys to Freedom was an epic nine-part black history cycle performed at Pegasus Theatre in March 2008. The project that took place weekly with 9 different groups of young people and adults coming together to devise and rehearse. Also, one weekend a month from September 2007 to the end of March 2008 the participants, split into two groups, came together to work on a finale piece and linking the different episodes.*

*Outcomes from Journeys to Freedom included:*

- *23 artists employed (15 of whom were African or Black British artists)*
- *150 local participants from aged 6-65*
- *City-wide celebration and promotion of the bi-centenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade*
- *Older people and younger people working effectively together*
- *A epic finale performance attracting new audiences from diverse backgrounds*

*“Journeys to Freedom is a shining example of how enlightened theatre and arts education can provide a stepping stone towards a better future. A future of more racial equality. A future of less racial discrimination. A future of real integration of all our diverse people”. Trevor Philips, OBE Chair , Equality & Human Rights Commission*



#### **4.4.3 Stronger and more inclusive communities**

Cultural activity supports physical and mental health, building strong, active communities. Evidence that the arts supports rehabilitation, increases emotional and mental well-being and aids in promoting the benefits of healthy lifestyles is documented in projects such as intergenerational work with older/younger people, in occupational therapy across the county and nationally and is recognised by the NHS.

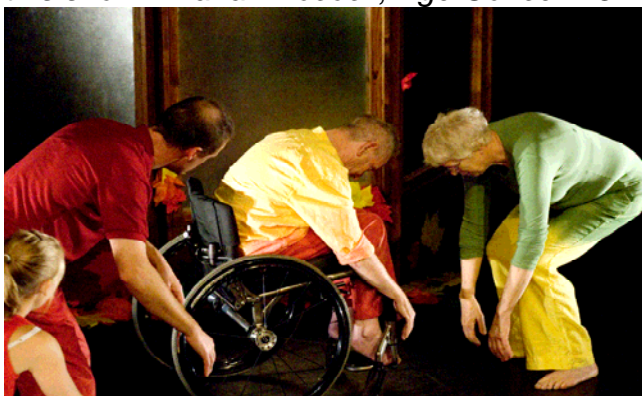
*How we do this in Oxford:*

**ITHACA(Inclusion Training Health Access Creativity Arts)/OTTC (Oxfordshire Touring Theatre Company)/Falls Prevention Team “Head Over Heels” Project**  
Oxford City Council is actively promoting healthy lifestyles in its work with ITHACA, our leading arts and health agency and this particular project was a partnership with another of our arts partners, OTTC and the NHS Trust. Head Over Heels was:

- A participatory research project with older people, on the theme of Falling, led by Crossover Intergenerational Dance Company and a writer (commissioned by OTTC).
- A newly commissioned piece of theatre on the theme of Falling created specifically for older audiences.
- A tour (30 venues) of the above show with accompanying post-show workshops (including creative workshops and health promotion workshops led by NHS Oxfordshire Falls Service).

The project was part of a wider initiative SAGE, an ambitious and far-reaching programme that aimed to create tangible opportunities for older artists by supporting the development of innovative and experimental new work, and also to nurture the development of a more positive culture for the arts and older people by brokering rich partnerships between arts organisations, local authorities, health and social care providers.

*“What a fantastic piece of theatre. I’m sure it would appeal to a wide age range and not just older people. People I spoke to said they had been very moved by the piece. Many people’s weeks would have been a lot less rich without having had the opportunity to see this show.” Marian Pocock, Age Concern Oxford.*



#### **4.4.4 Improving the local environment, economy and quality of life**

Culture done well, has the potential to bring people together from all areas of life and increases our sense of local identity and belonging, breaking down barriers and adding to our overall quality of life. A sense of identity, of home, of distinctiveness is vital to healthy cohesive communities and culture can highlight those things that we care about – through public art for example – as well as provide opportunities for people in communities to come together and form bonds through community events and festivals.

*How we do this in Oxford:*

#### **Dancin’ Oxford**

*Dancin Oxford is our own dance festival, promoted and managed by Oxford City Council and one of its continued strengths is successful partnership working with our cultural organisations and the Arts Council of England. Dancin Oxford’s main aims include:*

- *Increased profile for dance in the city.*



- *Increased representation and celebration of Oxford's cultural diversity through dance.*
- *Increased participation and audience development.*
- *Increased partnership working.*

*Outcomes from 2008:*

- *190 artists taking part*
- *1,450 individuals/participants*
- *10,000 audience attendance*
- *29 performances*
- *17 new commissions*

*Dancin Oxford is only one part of Dance Development that happens in the city. The City Council has its own Dance Officer and Dance Development Plan.*

*"Oxford City Council has demonstrated a visionary approach to dance development, resulting in a vibrant community of dance professionals who are creating high quality work for the benefits of audiences in Oxford and beyond." Jamie Watton, Arts Council, South East.*

Local pride, distinctive neighbourhoods, green spaces and parks all contribute to a better place to live. Good quality, far-reaching facilities are essential to the city's development and future as a cutting-edge, contemporary city. And ownership by local people is paramount to success.

*How we do this in Oxford:*

#### ***The Glow Tree***

***fusion** is Oxford's community arts agency and is based at East Oxford Community Centre. It was one of the first community arts organisations in the UK and its focus has always been community based arts activities. Fusion:*

- *delivers high quality, participatory arts in partnership with the communities we serve*
- *initiates inspiring and innovative arts projects that support social inclusion*
- *provides access to a wide range of expertise, facilities and resources*
- *acts as an advocate for creative excellence*

*The Glow Tree is a 5m high stainless steel sculpture for Blackbird Leys Community Centre inspired by a popular community learning project. This project involved community workshops in which both adult Leys residents and Leys children made their own cast relief sculptures with artist Neil Wood. The Blackbird Leys Arts Group (BLAG) also benefited from a mentoring program, which involved personal sessions as well as 3 members visiting the artist's studio in Stafford to learn welding techniques and work on the sculpture itself. They also visited a foundry in Wales to cast their own bronze leaf designs for the tree sculpture. The sculpture was installed by the community with the artist, Neil Wood.*



## 5. Delivering culture in Oxford; Oxford City Council's Cultural Priorities:

- **Profile – increasing our regional, national & international standing**
- **People and Participation - strengthening local engagement**
- **Places and Productivity - supporting local talent and creative industries**
- **Partnership – increasing investment, working collaboratively**

### 5.1. Profile – increasing our world-class reputation

Culture is changing; our aim is to compete with the rest of Europe and beyond for our place as an international centre of culture, therefore we have to raise the game. This means taking risks with cultural programming to encompass a broader range of creative activity.

- We will commit to working with our partners to increase high quality programming in non-traditional spaces.
- We will work on developing and promoting large-scale events that draw on international/national audiences.
- We will improve marketing and communications of cultural events in the city by working closely with tourism and events.

### 5.2. People & Participation – Strengthening local engagement

Oxford has a huge choice of cultural activity on offer from world-class venues showing West End work through to innovative arts spaces for young people, community art projects and a vibrant voluntary arts scene.

- We will support and nurture models of good practice for community organisations to proactively work alongside professional cultural institutions.
- We will improve access to cultural events for local communities particularly amongst people who currently feel excluded.
- We will encourage and support audience development for cultural events in the city.

### 5.3. Places & Productivity – supporting local talent & creative industries

Oxford has strong and inclusive venues to **see** art; where we are lacking is in places for **making/creating**. This means that we lose many talented young artists to other cities and the facilities are not available to bring in more cutting edge and inspirational individuals and companies.

- We will commit to encouraging new creative talent and for more creative industries to take up residence in the city.
- We will assess the physical infrastructure need for creative workspace and work in partnership to address this need.
- We will encourage artists to create site-specific works that explore and draw inspiration from the diversity of the buildings and landscape.

### 5.4. Performance through partnerships – working collaboratively

Oxford City Council is committed to working in partnership across sectors, including private, public and local enterprise. It is vital that Oxford has a global vision for culture

in order to bring the city in line with its competitors and for us to meet the vision of a world-class city for everyone.

- We will research and develop new funding models for arts and culture in association with our core partners.
- We will commit to supporting one overall vision and strategic approach to culture in the city in the future.
- We will explore new avenues to attract partners who offer high profile branding and strong interaction with the local community.

## **6. Moving Forward – Cultural Strategy Action Plan**

Our success lies largely in our actions to address these priorities and the Cultural Strategy Action Plan outlines core objectives, measured against SMART outcomes to enable Oxford City Council's cultural aspirations to become a reality. We have incorporated NI11 as an indicator locally to enable us to properly evaluate the evidence, making the case for culture locally against our corporate plan priorities.

This Cultural Strategy has been written with the following two intrinsic aims:

- **Sustainability:** To build capacity and allow our long-standing, established cultural institutions and organisations to grow significantly and aspirationally.
- **Enhancement:** To encourage and support new talent and creative industry to encourage innovation and the regeneration of Oxford as a contemporary city.

Our core cultural values throughout the strategy are to support and encourage at all levels:

- People
- Participation

The Cultural Strategy Action Plan reflect the City Council's cultural priorities in line with our overall corporate plan and provides an over-arching framework for the delivery of cultural services in Oxford City Council. This framework will be delivered through service strategic plans and Service Level Agreements and will be coordinated by a Lead Officer. A clear monitoring & evaluation structure will be implemented for accurate evidencing of impact.



# **Appendix 1: Draft Cultural Strategy 3-year Action Plan**

Oxford—A World Class City for Everyone

Revised—September 2008

## Oxford City Council—Cultural Strategy 2008–11

### Draft Action Plan

Objectives	Action	Targets/Timescale	Monitoring & Evaluation	Key Partners
<b>1. Profile—increasing our world-class reputation</b>				
To actively promote the cultural offer of the city of Oxford by supporting spectacular activity and events of international standing that engage and impress people.	Develop, support and market an annual programme of events which will improve Oxford's profile as a world-class cultural city.	Audit of activity. Establish gaps and opportunities in festivals and events; identify partners internally and externally.  By March 2009.	Improved provision of high-quality activity.  Improved recognition as a city for culture.	Cultural partners Oxford Inspires Universities Arts Council England
To prioritise support of organisations, events and festivals to ensure excellence, innovation and sustained cultural activity of high quality.	Encourage cultural partners in developing visions based on ambition and excellence to deliver high-quality activity in their relevant fields and that investment is allocated appropriately to enable sustainable cultural activity.	Ongoing.	Service Level Agreements with core partners.  Annual funding review.	Cultural partners Oxford inspires
<b>2. People and Participation—strengthening local engagement in cultural activity</b>				
To increase participation in all cultural and recreational activities .	Work with partners on a citywide audience development and access programme using open spaces and non-traditional locations i.e. parks, squares, including Bonn Square.	Prioritise events/activity.  Audit of unusual locations in the city. (February 2009)  On-going.	Data collection.  Qualitative feedback.  .	Cultural partners Oxford Inspires Oxford Preservation Trust OX1

Objectives	Action	Targets/Timescale	Monitoring & Evaluation	Key Partners
To nurture social inclusion, through creative learning opportunities.	Working with other partners and professional groups, e.g. Police & PCT, to identify participatory projects and funding for positive cultural activities that offer learning outcomes and audience development.	Ongoing.	Data collection.	PCT Oxfordshire County Council (Adult Social Care) Learning and Skills Council Etc.
To encourage diverse communities to engage with one another to become more cohesive and engage with mainstream arts activity.	Continue to fund a lively, inclusive citywide programme of activities which reflect the city's diverse cultures and communities and encourage communities to create and participate in events e.g. Cowley Road Carnival, the Mela, Leys Fair, Elder Stubbs Festival.	Annual grants process.	Attendance figures.  Evaluation feedback via grants process.	Cultural partners Community groups
To support and improve the cultural offer for the City Council's priority communities e.g children and young people, older people, socially excluded groups to enable and support active & healthy lifestyles.	Work in partnership across services to develop improved facilities for young people across the city, e.g. through community centres, community development workers and youth workers.	Identify external funding sources, audit of provision and need. Collaboration with Positive Activities for Young People Programme.  09/10	Central youth venue.	Oxfordshire County Council Oxfordshire Youth Arts Partnership Creative Junction
	Promote awareness of the positive benefits of dance and support dance development .	Annual Dance Development Plan.  On-going	Audience data.  Evaluation report.	Dance partners ACE SE

Objectives	Action	Targets/Timescale	Monitoring & Evaluation	Key Partners
To explore opportunities via the public realm to improve community cohesion and pride in the city.	To promote public art as permanent commissions and recreation & play facilities through the use of S106 agreements. Increase capacity to commission public art, in partnership with others.	Policies in place, (09/10) Assessment on case by case basis. (On-going) Increase specialist staff capacity for public art commissioning. (09/10)  Review of S106 contributions. (By Dec 09)	Recognition of role of Public Art.  Clear procedures leading to consistency of approach.	Oxfordshire County Council District Councils Arts Council England
<b>3. Places &amp; Productivity—supporting local talent &amp; creative industries.</b>				
To improve the capacity for the creative sector with particular emphasis on studio and rehearsal space and premises for start up businesses.	Ensure the delivery of the West End Cultural Strategy incorporates creative workspaces/artists' studio space in the action plan for culture and is adopted as a priority in other parts of city council e.g. planning, economic development.	Implementation plan.  (10/11)	New cultural quarter.  More creative industries.	Oxfordshire County Council Landowners Universities SEEDA
	Explore the potential for S106 contributions to be used centrally to develop more creative workspaces in the city as part of new developments.	Review S106 contributions.  By Dec 2009.	Central fund for cultural use.  More creative workspace, income generation.	
	Introduce a Film Office for Oxfordshire to manage location and maximise income from film & TV production.	Invest to Save.  Spring 2009.	Increased usage of Oxford as a location.  Income generation.	Universities Tourism sector

Objectives	Action	Targets/Timescale	Monitoring & Evaluation	Key Partners
To ensure greater links with training and education providers to enable the creative sector to grow and thrive.	Within the regional Diamonds for Growth strategy to identify most fruitful opportunities for cultural and creative industries development in the city.	Produce action plan by July 2009.  Establishment of a creative industries business support service. (10/11)	Economic Impact Study.	Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
	Work with Arts Council England, Oxford and Cherwell Valley College, Brookes and other partners to identify means to nurture creative talent through training, information services, etc. with a focus on groups which are underrepresented in the creative workforce.	To raise at Area Investment Programme Board.  On-going		Creative Partnerships Oxfordshire Economic Partnership
To build capacity within the cultural sector to become independent and self-sustaining wherever possible and to enable organisations to continue to thrive.	To work to maximise funding coming into the city and increase support for the cultural community by 10%:	Establish baseline of cultural funding received by the city by April 2009.  Develop income generation targets by July 2009.	More robust creative economy.  Sustainable arts sector.  Inward investment.	Oxfordshire County Council District Councils Arts Council England Oxford Inspires
<b>4. Performance through Partnership—working collaboratively</b>				
To mainstream culture into the work of public bodies and their partners in the City of Oxford improving service delivery and allocation of resources.	Promote the role of culture in delivering core services through internal and external partnerships.	Improve communications.  Regular proactive marketing plan. (09/10)	Recognition and understanding of culture's role.	Oxford Inspires Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership
	Long-term investigation into different funding models and opportunities via national agenda.	New public realm.  Ongoing.	Documentation.	Oxford Inspires



Objectives	Action	Targets/Timescale	Monitoring & Evaluation	Key Partners
	Identify a common framework for evidencing the impact of cultural services and a global aim for culture.	Undertake economic impact study of cultural activities by April 2010.	Data collection and evidence.	Oxford Inspires Oxfordshire County Council Oxfordshire Arts Partnership
To continue to consult with partners on the development of one all-encompassing cultural strategy to incorporate citywide goals and ambitions.	Through the restructure to identify a member of staff to lead on the coordination and implementation of the Cultural Strategy.	Cultural Development Manager.  By April 2009.		Cultural partners Oxford Inspires
To provide clear evidence and advocacy for culture at all levels within the city and beyond.	To review existing performance measures and monitoring against this action plan and make necessary improvements to fill any gaps.	Evaluation report.  April 2009.	Economic Impact Study.  Effective monitoring mechanisms in place.	Oxford Inspires
	To link in with the Local Area Agreement monitoring and evaluation of relevant targets.	Ongoing.	Performance against targets/indicators.	Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership