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ACTION PLAN FOR CULTURE

1

FOREWORD FROM COUNCIL LEADER



Norwich has a history of being a focus of regional cultural activity and with much to be proud of. The city has six theatres, a UK top four international arts festival, an award-winning arts centre, nationally significant museum collections and an ever-growing number of diverse independent galleries. It also has 1,500 listed buildings, a castle and two cathedrals.

The Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, housed in the magnificent Forum in the heart of Norwich, is one of the most-visited public libraries in the UK and lends more items than any other in the country. Norwich draws immense benefit from the creative output of being home to the University of East Anglia, the Norwich University of the Arts and Norwich City College.

In 2012, Norwich consolidated its position as England's foremost literary city by becoming the

country's first UNESCO City of Literature, joining an elite international network that now includes Edinburgh, Melbourne, Iowa City, Dublin, Reykjavik, Kraków, Nottingham, Dunedin, Granada, Manchester and Prague.

Today, people in Norwich spend more per capita on culture than anywhere else in the UK and the city remains a destination for poets, novelists, biographers, playwrights, translators, editors, literary critics, social critics, historians, environmentalists and philosophers.

Investment and active involvement in the arts and cultural sector is a political priority of the city council. Despite local government funding pressures, we have managed to maintain funding and support for the sector. The council is also an active participant through its own programme of free cultural events,

as well as acting as a convenor of partners using its civic leadership role.

Through our strong relationship with Arts Council England (ACE) and membership of the 27 strong Key Cities Group, Norwich has played an influential role in shaping cultural policy at the national level. We were represented on the Cultural Cities Enquiry (2019) which first recommended Cultural Compacts. Norwich was one of the first pilots. The recently published 'Culture and Place in Britain' (February 2023): a collaboration between Key Cities and Arts Council England, confidently asserts the proposition of the vital role arts and culture can play "to create healthier and more prosperous places for everyone". A view which is gaining traction with national politicians and across a growing number of Whitehall departments.

Arts and culture are critical to realising the five underpinning themes of the Norwich 2040 Vision. A city which is 'creative', 'liveable', 'dynamic', 'fair' and 'connected'; the arts and culture strands permeates and blends into each theme, in turn shaping the city council's Corporate Plan.

The ambition and purpose of the Action Plan for Culture confidently asserts that cultural expression has

a wider societal purpose and goes to the core of what it is to be human. 'The Inner Level' (2018) by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett demonstrates how more equal societies improve everyone's well-being. In such societies the arts have been shown to flourish, participation increase and creativity spreading its roots. Fostering that positive direction is the purpose of this report.

Linked to tackling deepening inequality, is the climate crisis. In November 2022, 'A climate mural for our times' was installed in City Hall's council chamber. The mural is a collaboration between the artist Gennadiy Ivanov; The Climatic Research Unit at UEA; and Norwich City Council which captures visually, in the most impactful way, the challenges that we face. It is a call to action to avoid disaster. It is the

power of art to reset our priorities and, by doing so, help us to work towards building a sustainable society with equality at its core.



2

INTRODUCTION

This action plan has been developed by Norwich City Council with input from key stakeholders as part of the Norwich Creative City Compact. This action plan commits the city council to a series of deliverables and actions that will support the development of a Cultural Strategy for Norwich in 2025, aligned to the Norwich 2040 Vision. This document articulates the key areas of focus around which other stakeholders can mobilise to contribute to the vibrant ecosystem of arts, culture and creativity in Norwich between 2023 and 2024, and through which a longer-term strategy and collaborative action can emerge.

This document has both a short-term and long-term aim. In the short-term it will enable the city council and its partners to consolidate relationships and initiate collaborative action after

a period of disruption due to Covid, organisational change and changes in funding. In the longer-term it will enable the city council and its partners in the Creative City Compact to build on the existing strong foundations of our vibrant creative city to co-produce a Cultural Strategy for Norwich from 2025. It is intended therefore to be both a firm commitment to action and collaboration in the short to medium-term as well as providing key building blocks for that future strategy. It is also intended as a platform for wider engagement with a range of diverse stakeholders, and as an invitation to action and dialogue within the arts and culture ecosystem of the city. It will also support the strengthening of relationships between Norwich and key national funders and investors, such as Arts Council England.

The Creative City Compact has been supported by Arts Council England and Norwich City Council with a mission to champion the role of culture, attract investment, and facilitate impactful collaboration and exchange across the cultural ecosystem of Norwich. The current membership consists of National Centre for Writing, Norwich Business Improvement District, Norfolk Museums Service, Norfolk & Norwich Festival, Norwich Arts Centre, Norwich City Council, Norwich Theatre, Norwich University of the Arts, The Forum, Young Norfolk Arts Trust and University of East Anglia. The action plan has been developed by the partners through commissioning background research from Tom Fleming Consultancy, identifying individual and collective opportunities and assets, and co-creating a vision to which they can align strategically.





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There is a complex and changing policy landscape in which this action plan is situated. Locally, the Norwich 2040 Vision sets out a shared overarching strategic vision for Norwich. The city council's own Corporate Plan articulates the city council's role in achieving this vision. Regional cultural strategy and ambition is captured by the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board's 'Culture Drives Impact' whilst the accompanying data pack shows the significance of arts and culture to the region, and the criticality of Norwich within that. At a national level, Arts Council England's 10 Year Strategy 'Let's Create' lays out the national vision and outcomes that shape their investment. Individual cultural stakeholders, including the Creative City Compact Partners, also produce their own organisational strategies. This action plan has been developed with reference to this complex landscape, but is primarily focused on the key assets, activities and resources that the city council has at its disposal.

Norwich City Council has a key role within the arts and culture sector in Norwich. For many years the council has been and continues to be, a driving force for culture in the city. Despite years of austerity from central government and when many other local authorities have stepped back from a role in culture, Norwich City Council has continued to invest just over £1million per year in the sector. The Council supports arts and culture organisations, both financially and through 'in-kind' provision of assets and resources and helps others to access funding streams. It maintains its own programme of free cultural events, such as the annual Lord Mayor's Weekend and supports a vibrant programme of festivals and events in our city and parks. Its assets, including the Halls, Dragon Hall, the Guildhall, historic churches, parks and open spaces, and many more, provide key cultural infrastructure for the city. However, arguably, its greatest role is as a civic leader and convener of partners. All these roles are reflected in the following pages.

3

THE IMPORTANCE OF ARTS, CULTURE AND CREATIVITY



Norwich is one of the UK's leading cities of culture. Culture is central to its economy, its communities, its sense of place and its wider reputation. Culture is the very essence of a city – one that has brought diverse communities together for centuries, to thrive through proximity, connection and exchange.

Norwich is a UNESCO City of Literature and a City of Refuge, proud of its deep long-standing international connections. The city has a depth and breadth of historical assets, renowned organisations and institutions and a thriving ecosystem of artists, producers and performers. Economically and intellectually boosted by two world-class universities, the city has a thriving knowledge-based economy, with creativity at its heart delivering research, innovation and productivity.

Norwich has a vibrant visitor economy, driven by culture, heritage, nightlife, independent retail, food and drink. Culture plays an important role in the city's social provision, helping to tackle the challenges faced by the most vulnerable and marginal groups and bringing communities together.

Key metrics of the importance of the sector to the vibrancy and economy of the city and the region include:

- Norwich is the leading local authority GVA from culture in the New Anglia LEP area (c. £50m in 2018 – the latest available data)
- At least 4.6% of the Norwich workforce is employed in businesses defined as in cultural and creative sectors (not including many self-employed/freelancers and those employed in businesses who are not VAT registered) compared with 2.6% for the wider LEP area (2021 data).

- Arts Council England invest nearly £4m per year into our National Portfolio Organisations
- Developing evidence of the impact of arts and culture on health, wellbeing and community is an ambition as part of this action plan but case studies throughout this document show that the impact is wider than simply the economic. The city council and its partners are committed to building on these strong foundations through the achievement of its co-created vision.



4

VISION

Our vision is that culture, arts and creativity enhance their contribution to the life of the city and to the achievement of the Norwich 2040 Vision, through the realisation of the five themes of that co-produced vision:

Creative City

“Norwich is a place where culture and creativity play an important part in how the city feels about itself and others perceive it. In 2040, Norwich will be world-renowned for its creativity – a leader in innovation, culture, education and invention.”

We are seeking to create a city where talent is developed at all stages of life and career, including children, young people in their early careers or post tertiary education, freelancers and people in mid-career who are looking to pivot or refocus their careers into arts and culture.



Liveable City

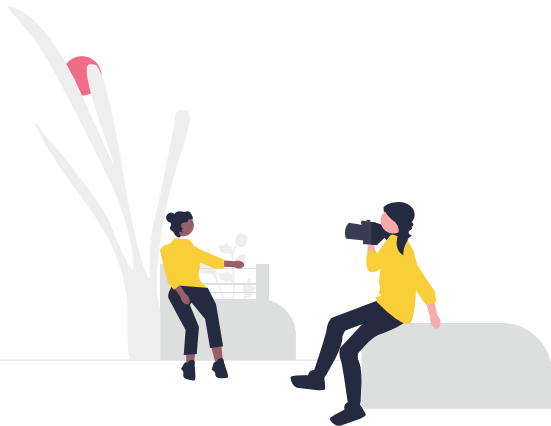
“The city takes pride in being a place with a great local environment that people value. We are committed to shifting to clean energy by 2040 (carbon-neutral by 2045). We will support and promote sustainable living – where today’s citizens meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations.”

We are seeking to enhance the contribution of cultural activity and the creative sector to both debate and action around the environmental and climate crisis. We will do this through what we do (eg events, platforms and creative activity) as well as how we do it (eg sharing resources and reducing environmental impact).

Dynamic City

“Norwich has two successful universities and thriving life sciences, creative, tech, leisure and retail sectors. In 2040, Norwich will be a place where entrepreneurs, social enterprises, national and global companies choose to provide good jobs, prosperity and success.”

Arts and culture already bring significant investment and represent regionally important economic activity. We are seeking to consolidate and build on this by building the evidence base for further capital investment and creating the conditions and infrastructure for creative entrepreneurs and businesses to thrive.



A Fair City

“Norwich is a place where many already enjoy a great quality of life. By 2040, the health, wellbeing and life chances of all our citizens will be improved. We will remove barriers to achievement and a high standard of living will be enjoyed by everyone.”

We are seeking to enhance the contribution of arts and culture to the health and wellbeing of residents, whilst increasing the inclusivity and diversity of cultural activity, with a particular focus on those who are identified as marginalised.



A Connected City

“At the heart of any good city is how well it connects with both its citizens and the world at large. In 2040, Norwich will have a modern transport system, be at the forefront of digital connectivity and create opportunities for all residents to link with each other.”

Arts and culture will play a key role in connecting communities to each other and act as a platform for connection to the wider world, through attracting visitors, creative people and attention to the city, including to national funding and policy programmes.



Norwich City Council deliverables

Over the period of this action plan (2023-24) Norwich City Council are committing to a series of deliverables and actions laid out in the following tables. These are grouped by themes for ease of navigation.

Infrastructure

The council and other stakeholders own and maintain a range of buildings, spaces and other assets that enable creative activity and businesses to thrive. We will take action to maintain and enhance these so that they contribute to the realisation of our shared vision, whilst ensuring they are 'fit for purpose' for the foreseeable future.

CITY COUNCIL DELIVERABLES	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
A shared cultural needs analysis for the city	Undertake a cultural needs analysis for the city, including requirements for investment, and opportunities for enhanced use of assets (such as meanwhile use or community asset transfer) and environmental impact	April 2024
Redevelopment of The Halls, including improvement in environmental sustainability of The Halls	Deliver Halls Plan redevelopment project to create a fit for purpose multi-purpose venue with improved infrastructure, accessibility and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Halls.	Summer 2024
Continued support for events, festivals, and activities in public spaces	Practical advice and support for organisers using our parks and the city centre to ensure safe and successful delivery eg liaison with Safety Advisory Group	Ongoing
Investment in Hay Hill and public spaces	Support delivery of outdoor events and cultural activities to take place on the redeveloped Hay Hill.	February 2024
	Put culture and events at the core of our placemaking activities	Ongoing
Use of Assets	Use the Strategic Asset Management Framework to assess and protect the city's heritage and cultural assets and work with partners to identify opportunities for further investment in assets to improve the heritage offer	Ongoing

People and collaboration

People and the relationships between them, whether it be audiences, residents, creative professionals or system leaders are at the heart of arts and culture. We will enhance the opportunities for inclusive engagement and participation in arts and culture in the city, including for freelance creatives, whilst strengthening key partnerships.

CITY COUNCIL DELIVERABLES	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
Strengthen relationship with key funders	Re-establish senior management level relationship with ACE Share Cultural Strategy with key funders Represent the city's cultural and creative objectives at key meetings e.g. at Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board, Norwich 2040 Board, Arts Council England, Key Cities	Summer 2023 November 2024 Ongoing
Strengthen relationships within sector	Hold annual inclusive stakeholder engagement event(s) to inform development and implementation of strategy (including freelancers and key funders) Review city's cultural partnerships to align with countywide arrangements	Ongoing January 2024
Co-ordination of the development of Cultural Strategy	Agree a work programme for Creative City Compact partners Continue to support and act as secretariat for Creative City Compact meetings Develop and publish Cultural Strategy, in collaboration with compact partners	July 2023 Ongoing October 2024
Connecting young people with decision-makers around culture and creativity	Facilitate dialogue via 'Get Talking Norwich' with Young People's City Vision Hub and connect with Creative City Compact. Develop and share Action Plan for Culture and Cultural Strategy with LCEP partners	On going March 2023
Ongoing programme of free events, including opportunities for creatives	Build freelance opportunities into Lord Mayor's Weekend event and other free events Improve accessibility and inclusivity of free events and funded cultural activity (factoring in Equality Act protected characteristics and socio-economic status). Gather data on engagement and participation to establish targets and ongoing improvement	Annually Ongoing Ongoing
Advocacy, advice and support	Regulatory services and asset functions utilised as a key lever for culture NCC continues to act as an anchor organisation in the city	Ongoing Ongoing
Enabling everyone to have access to culture and creativity	Work with culture and leisure partner to increase access to reduced ticket prices via Go 4 Less scheme Monitor development of ACE Access Card	Spring 2023 Ongoing

Investment

Investment and funding enable creative activity to take place. The city council invested just over £1million last year and continues to invest in a range of activities. We will make best use of existing investment whilst seeking to attract more funding and investment into the local creative sector.

CITY COUNCIL DELIVERABLES	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
Review of council arts & culture funding	Review council arts and culture grants programme and reporting requirements to ensure strategic alignment and enhanced inclusivity, as well as transparency and clarity of funding opportunities.	March 2023 (stage 1) March 2024 (stage 2)
Co-ordination of central government investment bids considering cultural priorities	Continue to lead on central government investment bids including through partnerships working within the Towns Deal and any future opportunities e.g. power in Chapelfield Gardens reducing the need for generators at events	Ongoing
Enabling organisations to utilise our heritage buildings to support cultural activity	Provide regular updates to Creative City Compact partners about current status of funding opportunities Maintain partnership arrangement e.g. Dragon Hall, Guildhall Identify opportunities for heritage buildings within Asset Management Framework and Cultural Needs Analysis	Ongoing Ongoing April 2024

Impact

Understanding and articulating the impact of investment and activity in arts and culture will support our longer-term ambition. We will collaborate to share and improve the data and analysis that we have, so that we can demonstrate the difference we are making.

CITY COUNCIL DELIVERABLES	ACTIONS	TARGET DATE
<p>Exploration of how existing data (such as shared anonymised and aggregated audience data) could evidence impact of arts & culture</p> <hr/> <p>Work with partners to inform people of the city's offer</p> <hr/> <p>Support the recommendations of, and work in partnership with, Key Cities and national network of Cultural Compacts</p>	<p>Discuss pilot of Norfolk arts & culture dashboard (with district aspects) with NSCP & NODA</p> <p>Include data in Cultural Needs Analysis</p> <hr/> <p>Working with Norwich BID, Visit Norwich, Visit Norfolk</p> <hr/> <p>Support the presence of a Cultural Compact as a quality mark for public and private sector place-based investment.</p> <p>Share best practice models of community engagement that can better connect diverse communities, encourage meaningful civic participation and build community cohesion.</p> <p>Work with the Key Cities Innovation Network to develop new models for monitoring, evaluation and longitudinal research into the contribution of culture to place-based development, including models for optimal data collection to suit both hyperlocal and generalised needs.</p>	<p>December 2023</p> <p>April 2024</p> <hr/> <p>Ongoing</p> <hr/> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

The progress towards the longer-term strategy will be overseen by the Creative City Compact partners. Collating and improving understanding of data is a key part of this work and will enable the city council and partners to better understand and evaluate the impact of arts and culture in the city. Decisions about council resource allocation and priorities will remain within the council's governance, informed by the views of the partners. Decisions about council resource allocation and priorities will remain within the council's governance, informed by the views of the partners.



Creative City Compact commitment

In addition to the city council's own deliverables and actions, the Creative City Compact partners have also committed to continuing to collaborate and to explore the governance of the group in the light of examples of compacts in other parts of the UK. They may for example explore models such as becoming a Community Interest Company or developing a collaborative funding model. It will also explore how this group can link more effectively or formally with the Local Cultural Educational Partnership (LCEP).

Alongside this, the partnership will review its membership to ensure that it reflects an appropriate breadth of stakeholder expertise and perspective, including from outside the formal arts and cultural sector. The group will then establish a work programme to agree collaborative action and support the development of the co-created Cultural Strategy from 2025.



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CASE STUDIES



Inclusive Arts

Arts and culture in Norwich reaches diverse audiences in myriad ways. In 2022, 35% of all bookings made for Norwich Theatre performances and activities were made by those living within the 3 most deprived lower super output area deciles on the index of multiple deprivation. 20% of all tickets at Norwich Theatre's venues are made available at either £10 or with targeted concessionary discounts to break down barriers to attendance.

Young people are engaged through the work of many organisations, including Young Norfolk Arts Trust, whose 2022 festival (the first full one since 2019) involved the participation of 1877 young people, whilst 6583 young people took part in the Local Cultural Education Partnership's (LCEP) Figurine It Out and Postcard Poems projects in 2021 and 2022.

Greening the Norfolk & Norwich Festival

The Norfolk & Norwich Festival believe that the arts have an important role to play in exploring, communicating and taking practical action against issues around climate change and the environment.

The festival recognises that operations and activity have an impact on the environment, and are committed to measuring, understanding and reducing the festival's environmental impact. They seek to encourage dialogue and inspire change through the artistic and learning programmes, and in work with artists, partners, networks and audiences. In 2022 this includes:

- In collaboration with Norwich City Council, installing renewable mains electric into Chapelfield (Festival) Gardens

- Registered with Culture Declares Emergency and joined Vision: 2025, aiming to reduce Festival greenhouse emissions by 50% by 2025
- Provided compostable toilets in the Festival Gardens
- Using programming to educate and advocate. Manifesto and Flood were just two of these projects in the 2022 programme
- In the Festival Gardens, applying 'Green Trading Standards' which include ensuring all serve ware is compostable, all drinkware reusable and food offerings are meat and fish-free.

Connecting communities through literature

The National Centre for Writing's creative engagement programmes makes spaces for people of all ages to be creative with words and imagination. This includes Multilingual Creators, which is a school's programme connecting the centre's learning, participation and translation work.

Four Norfolk-based emerging literary translators were trained to deliver workshops in secondary schools for 180 young people who are Additional Language Speakers or have an interest in languages. This work was part of a network with sister regional literature development organisations in the North and Midlands, with 15 translators in total delivering similar sessions in their areas.



Art and Culture means Health and Wellbeing

Norwich University of the Arts has an ongoing partnership with Hospital Rooms, a national organisation co-creating art with users of mental health in-patient services that transforms the healthcare environment. Their work at Northside House in Norwich has involved artists including Associate Professor Carl Rowe, France-Lise McGurn, Norwich University of the Arts' graduate Jade Montserrat, and Turner prize-nominated artist Dexter Dalwood. The projects were funded by the University, Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust, and Arts Council England. They evidence the power of creative arts to build a fair and creative city, where wellbeing leads to inclusion, changing lives for the better.

Norwich Theatre's Creative Community Recovery Programme

In March 2020 Norwich Theatre closed its venues due to Covid-19 Government restrictions. As it was unable to welcome people to see shows or to take part in workshops and classes in person, Norwich Theatre adapted and re-invented its Take Part programme specifically to meet the needs of the local community in the wake of the pandemic. Through the Creative Community Recovery Programme, it was able to continue to connect with those most in need. Norwich Theatre was awarded the Best Age Friendly Outreach Award at the national Fantastic for Families Awards for the project.



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