Nottinghamshire County Council

FUTURE DIRECTION FOR CULTURAL SERVICES 2017-2027

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FOREWORD

I am delighted to introduce this vision statement for Nottinghamshire County Council's Cultural Services.

Culture is a passion of mine, in all its forms, and it is close to the hearts of many of our residents and visitors. We live in challenging economic times, however local people remain entitled to access a wide range of cultural provision secured by the County Council and its partners. This new document represents the Council's cultural offer and also sets out in broad terms what the County Council, in conjunction with its partners, can do to enhance and develop its offer.

Our cultural services have a critical role to play in the wider services that the County Council provides. It is, therefore, important to note the beneficial impact our cultural offering has on children and young people, adults and elderly people in care, community safety and our work to develop local communities.

Nottinghamshire has a number of unique cultural selling points that deserve widespread promotion and recognition. Nottinghamshire is the Sporting County, an epithet that is well deserved in the light of the recent sporting achievements of many Nottinghamshire based Olympic athletes. At Holme Pierrepont we are proud to provide the home of the National Watersports Centre, a facility and country park that is something we can all be proud of.

Our Libraries, Archives and Information Service *(now operating as Inspire, a new charitable company that is providing an innovative approach to meeting the financial challenges faced by many libraries services*) is one of the biggest and most successful in the country, and the Council continues to make significant investment into modernising our library buildings to make them fit for purpose and sustainable. Our libraries aim to be vibrant community centres that provide a modern reading, information, heritage, learning and cultural focus to each of their localities. And through Inspire we are continuing to support high quality community arts activity.

Our Country Parks and Green Estate Service includes the two most visited sites in the East Midlands – Rufford and Sherwood – one a scheduled ancient monument, the other critical as a National Nature Reserve, the fourth most important site of its kind in the UK and Sherwood is home to the county's most internationally famous son – Robin Hood.

In conclusion, we provide a fantastic range of cultural opportunities in Nottinghamshire. I encourage all of you to enjoy them to the full and to support our vision for strong, vibrant and sustainable cultural services.

Cllr John Knight
Chair, Culture Committee,
Nottinghamshire County Council

PURPOSE

This document sets out a clear, coherent and comprehensive overview of why Nottinghamshire County Council provides and supports, both directly and indirectly, a range of cultural services for the people of Nottinghamshire

It sets out the long term direction of travel for our cultural and related services. It provides a high level framework for a number of more detailed, service specific plans that underpin the work of those services that contribute to the delivery of cultural services in Nottinghamshire.

In recent years we have adopted an innovative commissioning approach for the delivery of our Cultural Services. In doing so, we have significantly reduced the costs associated with managing our services whilst securing investment and improvements to our facilities, the customer experience and, significantly, to the long term sustainability of some of Nottinghamshire's most treasured assets.

In doing so we are addressing:

- The continuing budgetary pressure placed on all County Councils services and the different approach we now have to delivering services.
- The need to ensure our Cultural Offer is sustainable and is able to develop and evolve over the coming years.
- How our cultural services make a significant contribution to the wider priorities of the Council.

We will use the document to:

- Underpin the continuing development of our key cultural services.
- Emphasise the County Council's continuing commitment to delivering and supporting strong and effective cultural services in Nottinghamshire.
- Support our efforts to attract investment to the cultural sector in Nottinghamshire.
- Further develop our joint work with key cultural service partners to maximise the range of cultural opportunities available to local people and visitors.

What will this approach achieve?

- People in Nottinghamshire will be happier and healthier because of the lives they lead, with culture playing a central role. They will have improved physical and mental wellbeing.
- Nottinghamshire's communities will be stronger and safer because of culture's role in enhancing relationships and social networks within communities.
- People in Nottinghamshire will be able to access a wide range of cultural opportunities that will support their ability to achieve their learning, sporting, artistic, vocational and personal potential.

THE VALUE OF CULTURE

The recently published white paper on Culture, www.gov.uk/government/publications/culture-white-paper the first in 50 years, sets out how the Government will support our cultural sectors over the coming years and how culture will play an active role in building a fairer and more prosperous nation that takes a lead on the international stage.

Culture no longer simply means being familiar with a select list of works of art and architecture, but with the accumulated influence of creativity, the arts, sports, museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage upon all our lives. When we talk about our 'cultural impact sectors', we are referring to an extraordinary network of individuals and organisations, that together preserve, reflect and promote who we are, in all our rich diversity. There will always be an aesthetic aspect to culture in its many forms, but each community has its own culture – its own history, museums and traditions. In this global, interconnected economy, what is local and unique has a special value and should be supported and encouraged. We should no more dictate a community's culture than we should tell people what to create or how to create it. One role of local government is to enable great culture and creativity to flourish – and to ensure that everyone can have access. The cultural sectors are already an immensely important part of our local economy and society. We know that investment in culture not only has immense economic value; it also has a wide range of benefits that touch all our lives every day. We can see the difference that culture has on children's education, and we are beginning to understand better the profound relationship between culture, health and wellbeing.

Everyone should have the chance to experience culture, participate in it, create it, and see their lives transformed by it. This document responds to the challenge of creating more cultural opportunities, particularly for those whose chance to experience culture is more limited.

This document assesses the challenges and opportunities ahead. It explains how we will help to secure the role of culture in our society, using it to inspire our young people, rejuvenate our communities. It addresses financial resilience and the need for partnership working across and beyond the cultural sectors. And it sets out how strong leadership can deliver this vision at a local level.

Economic Impact

The national economic value of culture and the economic contribution of museums, galleries, libraries and the arts is in excess of £5.4 billion, representing 0.3 per cent of the total UK economy. This is up 59 per cent (in nominal terms) since 2010 – a massive increase compared to total economic growth of 16 per cent (nominal terms) over the same period. Heritage tourism accounts for 2% of GDP contributing £26 billion per year. The number of people employed in the cultural and creative sectors has been increasing since 2011 and now stands at 321,000. It is vital that the County Council embraces the intrinsic, social and economic benefits of culture and ensures that its services continue to contribute to this volume.

The Benefits of Culture for the Individual

We recognise that culture is of benefit in and of itself. Cultural activity is worth supporting because it is at the centre of people's lives. Cultural activities, in whatever form, enrich the lives of their participants and of communities as a whole. Such activities, whether music, literature, dance, rugby or walks in country parks, allow people an outlet for their creativity and self-expression which they may not have through work or domestic duties. For the individual, they have a value beyond pure monetary and utilitarian measures.

We know that culture is about more than a list of activities and services. It is about the way people live their lives and the opportunities that can be created to give local people and visitors maximum opportunities to take part in as wide a range of cultural experiences as possible. Nottinghamshire County Council's cultural services, therefore, are very much focused on improving the quality of life of individuals and communities.

For Communities

On a broader scale, the delivery of cultural services is an integral element in improving the quality of life of Nottinghamshire's communities and helping to tackle social, regeneration, economic development, health and other issues. For example, cultural activity makes a significant contribution to informal learning and developing practical and social skills. It also builds self-confidence and teamwork. This is an essential component of regeneration. Present day culture embraces the historic environment of the County. Its buildings, landscape and settlements, created through cultural and social change, reflect the culture of the County and, in particular, express its distinctiveness.

The Impact of Culture

- A significant contribution to health and wellbeing – through support to the ageing population, looked after children, loneliness, supporting older people to stay active, independent and away from social care.
- Economic growth through increased visitor numbers, more tourists to the County, more employment opportunities for our residents and more efficiently run services.
- Inspiring everyone to take part, get involved and feel part of a wider community, taking pride in their local area, facility, services and people.
- Children and young people become more engaged with the culture and history of the County and develop the skills and knowledge to become better citizens and equally reduce the frequency of anti-social or disruptive behaviours.

OUR DEVELOPING CULTURAL OFFER

Below are some examples of how our cultural services are responding to the twin demands of improvement and cost reduction

Rufford Abbey Country Park

In 2017 we established a partnership with Parkwood Leisure to have develop and manage the commercial offer at Rufford, achieving a reduction in running costs and major improvements to the facilities and services provided.

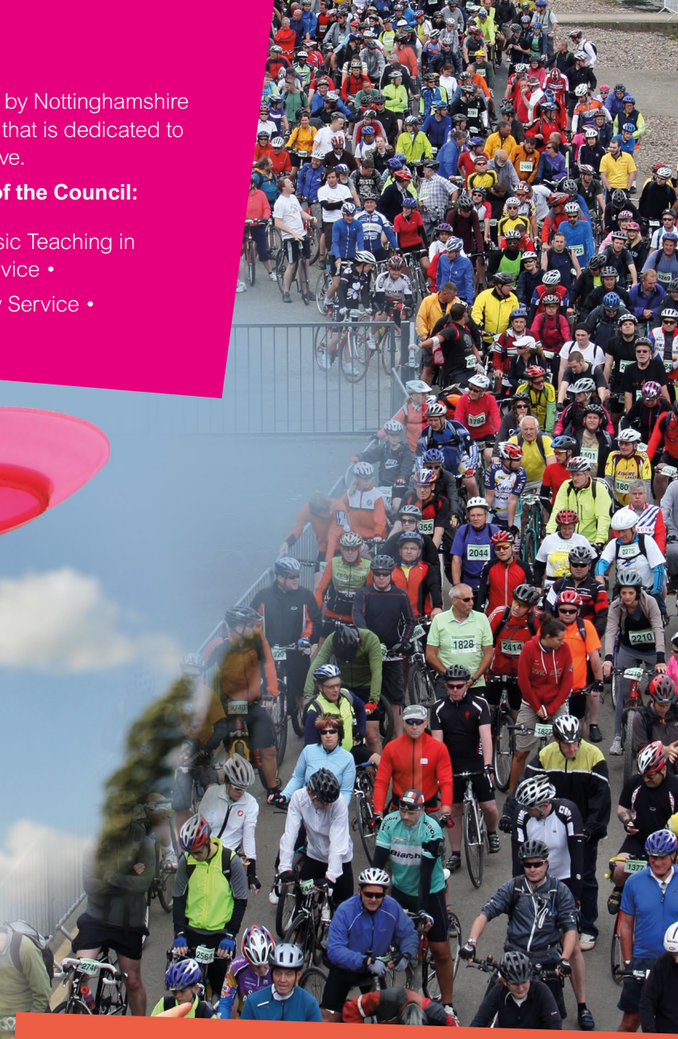
Inspire

Inspire is an innovative new cultural organisation launched by Nottinghamshire County Council in 2016. It is a Community Benefit Society that is dedicated to inspiring people to grow, learn and achieve.

Inspire provide the following services on behalf of the Council:

• Public Libraries • Archives • Arts • Instrumental Music Teaching in Schools • Community Learning and Skills Service •

• Nottinghamshire Music Hub • Education Library Service •



Holme Pierrepont Country Park home of the National Watersports Centre

We established a partnership with Serco Leisure in 2013 to develop and manage this iconic site, achieving a reduction in running costs and major improvements to the facilities and services provided.

Nottinghamshire Sports Development

We have established a partnership with Sport Nottinghamshire, the County Sport Partnership, which has seen us protect and develop our overall sport support offer, particularly for disadvantaged people and communities.

Architectural Design JDDK Architects and 3D design, Form Visualisation
Artist's impression of the proposed new Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre, Edwinstowe.

THE ROLE OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

The County Council is in a position to make a significant contribution to the development of cultural activities across the County. We have the power and resources to influence directly and indirectly an enormous and diverse range of provision, to lead new developments and coordinate implementation in the following ways:

- Partnerships with other public, voluntary and commercial operators – we will continuously seek to strengthen existing partnerships and new partnerships to enhance our cultural offer.
- Grant aid and other forms of financial support to independent organisations – we will continue to proactively source any new funding and inward investment opportunities that would benefit our cultural services.
- Using our regulatory powers such as planning control – we will support the provision of cultural services through a supportive approach to developing facilities.
- Providing economic development and business support – we will ensure our partnerships benefit from wider Council influence and support where appropriate.
- We will fulfil our statutory and legal duties relating to public libraries and archive services and continue to strive for excellence.
- Through transport planning, public transport provision, highways management and visitor signage we will support the provision of our cultural offer and any future service developments.
- We will utilise the Council's wider influence and resources to support event promotion, marketing and public relations.

OUR GOALS

Quality

- We will aspire to achieve quality and excellence in the cultural life of Nottinghamshire.
- Residents and visitors will be able to have meaningful and extraordinary cultural experiences.
- Our cultural offer will have a 'wow' factor – whatever its scale.
- We will innovate, surprise, delight and challenge audiences.
- Our cultural programmes will reflect the diversity and character of the County and its people.
- We will provide good value for money for stakeholders and participants.

A Reading County

- We will inspire reading for all
- Reading interventions, like Bookstart and Summer Reading Challenge will be accessible to all Nottinghamshire children.
- Literacy rates will be improved through libraries and adult learning programmes.
- ALL children have access to a library card
- Reading for pleasure and its positive outcomes will be promoted.
- Reading will be a key part of cultural and community life.
- Access to reading services will not be limited by income.
- Schools will have access to Educational Library Services.

Supporting Creativity

- Creative people and groups thrive in the County.
- There will be good networks between arts practitioners and the public and business sectors, to enable strategic approaches to planning and to attracting investment.
- There will be multiple and varied opportunities for creative work to be showcased in the County.
- Mentoring and training opportunities will be available to artists and creative businesses.
- Creative individuals and groups will be supported to develop funding applications and business proposals.

Participation and Inclusion

- More people will be involved in cultural activities as audience, participants and creative producers.
- Culture will be inclusive and will attract and develop new audiences.
- People will have opportunities to engage in a wide range of activities.
- People will have opportunities to shape and participate in creative activities.
- Communities will be able to come together in cultural activities which are relevant to them. People will feel that the cultural life of the County is important to them, their families and their communities.
- People will be able to find out easily about the cultural opportunities that are available.

RESOURCE, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The level of resources that will be directed to supporting the delivery of our overall cultural offer will be determined within the Council's budget setting process. Much of the activity involved in delivering this work will be through cross agency working and the more effective use of partnerships and collective resources. The County Council will work together with other partners and funders to invest in the future of Nottinghamshire, ensuring that maximum benefit is achieved from our combined efforts and resources. This will include more strategic external fundraising to take advantage of existing and future national and regional funding programmes.

Our services cannot be fixed in stone, and will change and develop over the coming years. Services will evolve whilst partnerships between public, private, and voluntary organisations and individuals will continue to be forged for the benefit of the people of Nottinghamshire. The oversight of our cultural services and our approach to delivery rest with the Council's Culture Committee. The Committee will receive reports and be updated annually on how work is progressing.

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