



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

**A Cultural Strategy for Nottinghamshire
County Council 2011 - 2021**



Lime Tree Avenue, Rufford Abbey

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The Winding Engine House at Bestwood Country Park



1. Foreword

I am delighted to introduce this Cultural Strategy for Nottinghamshire County Council that will provide a strategic framework for all our cultural services during the next 10 years.

Culture is a passion of mine, in all its many forms, and I know too that it is close to the hearts of many of our residents, citizens, customers and visitors to the county.

Despite the fact that we live in challenging economic times, our public and residents still want to go out enjoy themselves and in so doing, if we can help them to spend their time in and around Nottinghamshire then so much the better.

Nottinghamshire has a fantastic history and heritage which is often understated and underplayed. This is something that the County Council wants to change and the Strategy will help us do it.

The strategy represents all that is great and good about Nottinghamshire and sets out in broad terms what the County Council, in conjunction with its partners, can do to make improvements. Below are just some of the highlights:

- Nottinghamshire is the sporting county and in the coming Olympic Year 2012, we will be flying the flag to cheer on our sportsmen and women and hope to bring back more medals than in 2008.
- Nottinghamshire is proud host to one of the most precious nature reserves in the country at Sherwood and home to one of its most famous sons – Robin Hood.

The Council has tried for the past ten years to build a new visitor centre that befits tourists in the C21st and within the next two years we are very hopeful that a stunning new visitor attraction can be developed.

- Nottinghamshire has a proud record with its library services and when other local authorities are closing their libraries, we are not only keeping all ours open but are continuing a tradition of significant investment in new or refurbished facilities across the County.

It is also important to stress that our cultural services have a critical role to play in other activities and functions that the County Council provides. So, in our Cultural Strategy, there are strong references to its beneficial impact upon children and young people, adults and elderly people in care, community safety and our work to develop local communities.

In conclusion, there are a fantastic range of cultural opportunities in Nottinghamshire and I encourage all of you to enjoy them to the full.

Councillor John Cottee

Portfolio Holder for Culture and Community



2. Purpose

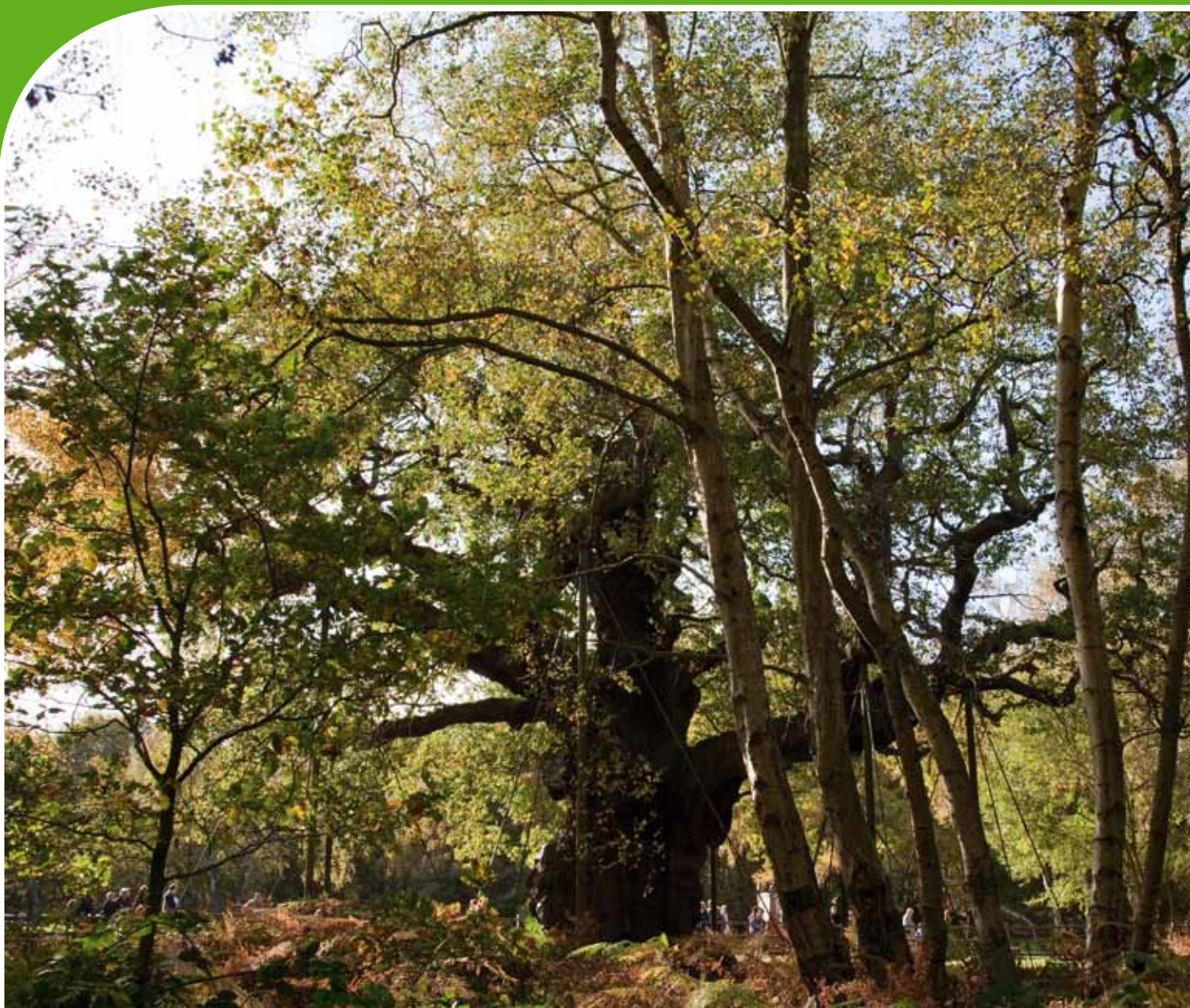
Our Cultural Strategy sets out a clear, coherent and comprehensive overview of why Nottinghamshire County Council provides and supports, both directly and indirectly, a range of cultural services for the people of Nottinghamshire and the many visitors who are attracted to the County.

The Strategy sets out a direction of travel for our cultural and related services for the next

ten years until 2021, though the immediate focus of work is the four year period to 2015 to reflect the Council's current Strategic Plan.

The Cultural Strategy 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.

The Major Oak, Sherwood Forest National Nature Reserve - donated by Martine Hamilton-Knight of Built Vision



3. Vision, Aims and Priorities

Our Vision

The Vision for the County Council is for **Nottinghamshire to be a place where people enjoy life, are healthy, safe and prosperous; and where business is able to thrive. We are proud of our past and ambitious for our future.**

The Council's cultural services have a key role to play in helping the Council to achieve its ambitions in the following ways.

Our Aims

- We will work throughout Nottinghamshire to promote, deliver and support cultural services that are high quality and accessible to all.
- We will be guided by our communities and visitors to create, nurture and deliver a wide range of inspiring, fun and quality cultural experiences that will excite and engage them.
- Our services will show pride in Nottinghamshire's rich cultural heritage, and we will be ambitious in our aims to protect, enhance and build on our current service provision for the future.

Cycling at the National Watersports Centre



By creating more and better opportunities for people to take part in cultural activities, we will deliver the very real benefits culture has for individuals and communities - improving health and well-being, raising aspirations, increasing happiness and the enjoyment of community life - helping to make Nottinghamshire a prosperous place where people can be proud of their cultural heritage.

Our Strategic Priorities

This Strategy is clearly referenced within the priorities of the Council's Strategic Plan, specifically:

To promote the economic prosperity of Nottinghamshire and safeguard our environment.

At the end of 4 years we will have:

Sought out opportunities to contribute to enhancing Nottinghamshire as a tourist

destination and increased the number of visitors to the county

Regenerated our market towns and rural areas

Ensured our environment is well managed and our countryside is protected

Created enhanced opportunities for citizens and visitors to take part in cultural activities

Key Actions to take:

Physically improve the local natural and historic environment through the delivery of the local improvement schemes programme

Prepare and implement a new strategy to deliver changes to our cultural services

Nottinghamshire Archives



4. Defining Culture

This strategy uses the broad definition of culture set out by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport:

'Arts, sports, libraries, museums, heritage, archaeology, archives, architecture, crafts, children's play, reading, parks, tourism, countryside recreation, etc.

Other activities such as entertainments, design, fashion, food, media, visiting attractions, and other informal leisure pursuits.'

However, 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.

It follows that a key measure of the success of our Strategy will be its contribution to building healthier, more vibrant and thriving Nottinghamshire communities and economy.

Craft at Rufford Country Park



5. 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, football 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.



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.

Day Service craft activities

Breaking down barriers and expanding opportunities within Day Services

The Day Service Modernisation programme is bringing people together for their day service, with integrated staff teams and activity programmes provided from shared, multi-purpose buildings across the County. Previously, services were provided separately to each client group (Learning Disability, Mental Health, Physical Disabilities and Older People) within their own bases.

During 2011, around 600 older people moved from smaller community bases into the multi-purpose buildings. Many people have said how much they enjoy socialising with younger people and like the busier

environment. People are delighted with the greater opportunities now available to them such as sugar craft, Tai Chi and beginners Spanish classes in the Ashfield day service. In the Broxtowe day service, the older people's group have been found on the dance floor of the disco! For one woman with dementia, this was the first time staff had heard her sing or say a word.

Service users young and old, and their carers, have commented that their perceptions of other disabled people have changed positively, as a result of the changes to their day service.

6. 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 through the following ways:

- Direct service delivery
- Partnerships with other public, voluntary and commercial operators
- Grant aid and other forms of financial support to independent organisations
- Developing planning strategies, plans and guidance
- Using our regulatory powers such as planning control
- Providing economic development and business support
- Commissioning social and economic development programmes such as Local Improvement Schemes
- Transport planning, public transport provision, highways management and visitor signage

- Building community safety and cohesion
- Supporting and developing Nottinghamshire's tourism infrastructure
- Event promotion, marketing and public relations

We will use the Cultural Strategy to:

- Underpin the continuing development of our key cultural services such as Libraries, Archives and Information, Country Parks and the Green Estate and the Cultural and Enrichment Service
- 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



Robin Hood Festival



National Water Sports Centre

7. Being Customer Focused

Our cultural services will be customer focused to enable them to meet and exceed customer expectations. In terms of customer motivation, as experience of any cultural offer is more likely to be voluntary and elective rather than compulsory or enforced, we will continue to develop activities and programmes that people want to attend and enjoy.

Culture is more than just leisure activities which take place after the apparently more important areas of life essentials (work, education, housing) have been achieved.

Any cultural offer needs to encompass values and activities that give meaning to our lives and should stand alongside those characteristics as being fundamental to civilised living.

Therefore, recognising, understanding and being responsive to people's cultural needs, values and aspirations helps us to understand what they want out of life and what we as a Council should be providing.

Nottinghamshire Libraries



8. Cultural Themes and Outcomes

The Cultural Strategy will deliver the vision of the Council through four key themes that reflect the cultural issues facing the County.

Theme 1. Creating opportunities for everyone to learn new skills, enjoy and participate in culture and have fun

We will work to provide opportunities, both formal and informal, for individuals to extend and challenge themselves, develop their creative thinking, build confidence and learn new skills.

Outcomes -

at the end of 4 years we will have:

- increased the participation and involvement of people in the enjoyment, organisation and development of cultural activities
- contributed to improved life chances and achievement by our young people
- increased the opportunities for older people to share their existing skills and develop new skills
- sought out opportunities to enhance Nottinghamshire as a tourist and cultural destination

Theme 2. Improving the social fabric and participation in community life

Cultural activities have the ability to make a direct, positive influence on health and community well-being. Our Cultural Services provide opportunities for people, especially those facing barriers, to play an active role in their communities and lead cultural development locally. Critically, culture offers opportunities for volunteering and contributing to the concept of the 'big society'.

Outcomes -

at the end of 4 years we will have:

- increased volunteering opportunities in the cultural sector
- supported communities to develop new 'big society' opportunities to improve their local area
- worked with partners to improve communities' health & aspirations
- ensured equality of opportunity and fair access to culture and sport

Hagg Farm Environmental Education Centre



Theme 3. Conserving and providing access to our history and heritage and supporting environmental sustainability

The historic and natural environment is key to unlocking and celebrating the story of Nottinghamshire. The County Council is custodian of a wide variety of important cultural assets: landscapes of archaeological and geological importance; historic buildings; green estates; former industrial sites of architectural and social consequence and growing collections of archives, literature and environmental assets. A number of these cultural assets are in need of substantial maintenance and improvement in order that they may continue to operate to meet customer expectations. There are also cultural assets that the County Council may wish to acquire in order to improve and enhance its stock, while at the same time dispose of other sites that are less critical to the implementation of this Strategy.

We recognise that our facilities provide tremendous cultural and economic opportunities, so we will make best use of them, maintained and enhanced for the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of our communities and visitors.

Outcomes -

at the end of 4 years we will have:

- responded to the needs of Nottinghamshire's natural and historic environment and heritage to ensure it is conserved and managed in a sustainable manner

- encouraged local communities to value and make best use of our cultural resources, facilities and assets
- created new opportunities for our communities to actively engage with our cultural assets to preserve them for future generations
- reviewed our strategic cultural asset acquisitions and disposals

Theme 4. Supporting the economic prosperity of the county

Culture is a key economic driver and helps drive inward investment and regeneration by contributing to the fabric of local communities, stimulating local economies through the creation of jobs, encouraging social regeneration and the development of sustainable partnerships between local people, statutory and voluntary agencies and the private sector, and supporting the development of Nottinghamshire as a tourist destination. Cultural activities also provide a significant income source for the County Council which can help offset those activities which are fully subsidised.

Outcomes -

at the end of 4 years we will have:

- increased skill levels in the cultural sector
- improved the sustainability of the cultural sector
- increased the commercial opportunities and income of the County Council
- encouraged more visitors to Nottinghamshire

9. Service Area Cultural Action Planning

A number of Service areas either already have or are in the process of developing or updating their own bespoke Strategies/Business Plans.

These plans will provide more details of the specific activities, timescales and resource implications that are being taken to improve our cultural services.

For the purpose of the Cultural Strategy, and extracted from these Strategies/Business Plans, each Service area has identified its top 5 actions that will help to deliver on one or more of the key themes.

Nottinghamshire Performing Arts



Notts Performing Arts

is a training programme for young people aged 7-19 years who want to improve their skills in music, dance and drama through fun and inspiring workshops, rehearsals and high quality performances. Suited to all abilities, with outstanding provision for those with special needs, young people develop creatively and with confidence.

10. Resources

The level of resources that will be needed will be agreed within the Council's budget setting process.

Much of the work involved in delivering the Strategy will be through cross 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 the maximum benefit is achieved from the combined efforts and resources. This will include more strategic external fundraising to take advantage of existing and future national and regional funding programmes, eg: Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery Fund, Sport England.

Worksop Library



11. Unique Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire has a number of unique selling points, which deserve widespread promotion and recognition.

Nottinghamshire is the Sporting County, an epithet that has been well deserved in the light of our recent sporting achievements particularly in support of Olympic athletes in the 2008 games. The County also has a strong community and performing arts heritage.

Our Library Archives and Information Services is one of the biggest and most successful in the country. Whereas many library services are reducing the number of libraries they operate, the Council has made and is still making significant capital investment into new library sites, while in operational terms we are developing a new community outreach and involvement model.

Nottinghamshire Archives is the highest rated local authority archive service in the region.

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. Sherwood is home to the county's premier internationally famous son - Robin Hood.

In addition, Sherwood and Rufford form part of a 'string of pearls' of big parks and stately homes in the north of the County, including Clumber Park, Thoresby Estate, the Dukeries, and Newstead Abbey.

The history and heritage of the County is strengthened through its association with the Pilgrim Fathers, the English Civil War, Byron and Lawrence.



Jousting at the Robin Hood Festival

The Robin Hood Festival

The Robin Hood Festival takes place each year in and around the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre.

It is now the largest public celebration in the country of one of our iconic folk heroes with more than 20,000 visitors enjoying a range of fun family activities ranging from medieval music and craft demonstrations to jugglers, jesters and skirmishing 'outlaws.' Highlight events are, as ever, the weekend falconry and jousting shows.

The festival planning, organisation and management is carried out by the on-site Ranger Team with some external assistance this year from historical re-enactment events company, EventPlan.

The Robin Hood Festival is just one of the hundred's of events - big and small - that take place on our Country Parks and Green Estate sites each year.

12. Monitoring and Review

This Strategy cannot be fixed in stone and it will grow, change and develop over the next ten years as services evolve and any partnerships between public, private, and voluntary organisations and individuals continue to be forged for the benefit of the people of Nottinghamshire.

The progress of the Cultural Strategy and the Service Cultural Action Plans will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis and reported to Council.

The Adult and Community Learning Service





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