



A CULTURAL ALLIANCE FOR PETERBOROUGH

Towards resilient, inclusive and effective cultural leadership

1. Context

1.1 *Why do we need to formalise cultural leadership at all?*

Peterborough's cultural infrastructure has come a long way in the last decade. The Culture Forum, the multiple examples of independently driven work of creative practitioners, the impact of Peterborough Presents and new National Portfolio organisations working in the city, the audience loyalty for the theatres, music venues and heritage assets are all crucial. Now we need to build a stronger platform for the future: one which promotes the area, helps artists to grow, brings communities together and enables everyone to take part.

Collaboration and multiplying leadership that increases reach, profile and impact will be at the heart of *attracting investment* in the future. Public funders expect to see organisations and practitioners working together. Philanthropic bodies want the maximum impact for their priorities. Private investors, patient or immediate, need results. Working together in a thriving cultural ecology needs robust leadership which can both speak to the area and for Peterborough's creative sectors nationally and internationally. At its plainest: Peterborough needs a collective voice to build investment.

Cultural leadership and life are fundamental to the drive to create better connections between people and place and *build inclusive communities* – whether part of new growth or established settlements – especially as pressure on services, infrastructure and resources looks set to intensify. Culture – celebrating heritage and taking joy in creation - is at the heart of successful neighbourhoods, strengthening those informal and creative networks which bring people together in productive, non-confrontational ways whether to make art (eg singing) for its own sake, or to improve the quality of the environment or to build skills and economic capacity.

Involvement in heritage, creativity and culture can be ends in themselves but are also effective ways to *support other core outcomes* for Peterborough. We have seen in the pandemic how creative endeavour has been invaluable to people's mental health – whether making extraordinary gardens or drawing as a way to cope with loss, isolation and challenge. Peterborough undersells itself culturally, from its magnificent heritage offer to the diverse music or comedy audience – a significant opportunity to grow markets and the visitor economy.

1.2 *Learning lessons from the past*

'Culture' is taken to mean heritage attractions and intangible history, voluntary and professional arts and to range across all disciplines and artforms. We are deliberately using the term in this broad way, not restricted to specific buildings, particular organisations or artforms and we want to build everyone's cultural activity, whether as audiences, participants or professionals. Restricting 'culture' limits everyone's opportunities.



At the beginning of this Strategy, we recognised the importance of learning from experience. Peterborough has a mixed history in trying to achieve resilient, inclusive leadership for its cultural life; the area's infrastructure is weak and punches below its weight. We asked ourselves what needed to be different about this Strategy and a revised approach to leadership.

Recent Arts Council research emphasises the value and opportunities from cultural activity and organisations in reviving our town and city centres as experience-based destinations. Strong collaboration within the cultural sector and between that sector and other elements of Peterborough's life, offers ways to build back better using cost-effective interventions. We are therefore urging for a strategic approach to performance measurement, with a shared vision for the outcomes across all partners. And we would like to see all partners regularly asking themselves what they are contributing to Peterborough's culture

Building a 'cultural infrastructure' takes a long time and sometimes there will be missteps along the way. Just talking to 'the usual suspects' does not create diverse cultural leadership, whether in terms of race or age – despite the young, diverse population of the city – and it is essential to find an approach which reflects that population.

It takes a city to make a culture: not putting one organisation/approach first, or conversely, putting all the cultural expectations into one box, allowing everyone else to ignore its importance while leaving the team with little or no support. While a team is needed, to guide the work and make the connections, achieving the vision for 2030 relies on partners working together, understanding there is room for all, and how everyone's work adds to the vision and can benefit from it.

Partnership beyond the Peterborough boundaries is also crucial, not least with the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). The culture of Peterborough has tended to under-estimate the value of relationships with other surrounding areas; a new approach to leadership will enable learning and mutual support.

1.3 The proposed Alliance sits within the Cultural Strategy as a whole

The approach set out here is based on the consultation, on research into the evolving models used elsewhere and the lessons from Peterborough's experience. Nearly everyone consulted said they wanted to see a strong voice for the sector in Peterborough, they wanted a way to build for the future and they saw strategic leadership as crucial to investment.

These discussions showed that many practitioners, venues, community leaders, politicians and investors recognise the need to build a resilient and empowered cultural leadership that acts collectively, and is not reliant on a few key individuals. We need arrangements which are more representative of the great diversity of Peterborough, and fulfil Peterborough's potential to attract investment and market our cultural life.



The Strategy also firmly links cultural activities to other key priorities for Peterborough – from building skills to improving mental health. The Strategy recognises and celebrates the intrinsic value of art and heritage while also recognising their importance to healthier, more prosperous and connected communities.

As the lessons above demonstrate it is important that the Alliance is itself a learning organisation: that any structure and relationships create the opportunities to reflect on both high points and low, without waiting for crises to happen.

This proposal is a key part of the recommendations of the Cultural Strategy.

2. Objectives and ways of working

2.1 Our core criteria are that the leadership structure should

- Establish a credible and substantive organisation, capable of strong leadership, taking liabilities and adding real weight to any bidding process, public, philanthropic or private
- Have a resilient and creative approach
- Be well connected into other bodies and communities, especially those often under-represented in Peterborough’s leadership structures, and
- Enable support to other strategic objectives for Peterborough while building long term support for our cultural life.

2.2 The leadership model has seven key objectives:

- Overseeing delivery of the adopted strategy including its vision and values
- Building partnerships within and heritage, creative, voluntary, professional, business, education and community bodies
- Ensuring good communications around progress and between the different stakeholder groups
- Being a focal point for discussions about culture in the area, including progress towards bidding for City or County of Culture;
- Ensuring cultural investment meets the core values of the strategy around connection, excellence and environmental stewardship
- Maximising cultural investment from all sources (eg by brokerage, partnerships and skills development)
- Being ambassadors for cultural Peterborough

2.3 To achieve these objectives the leadership model will need clear **features**, some of which are in tension:

- *Effective*: it will have a job to do, and will need the resources, tools, capacity and gravitas to do it;
- *Transparent*: operate in ways people can see and understand;

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- *Inclusive/listening/open/connected*: reflecting the core values that have informed the strategy;
 - *Plugged in* : to the other leadership structures in Peterborough, including around climate emergency and economic development;
 - *Resilient* : not dependent on one or two individuals, and be capable of adaptation and change;
 - *Learning* building both on experiences in the past and what happens over the life of this Strategy

3. **PETERBOROUGH CULTURAL ALLIANCE : a set of relationships**

3.1 **A new Alliance**

CSG propose establishing a *Peterborough Cultural Alliance (PCA)*. This will begin life as a board entrusted with the remit of delivery of the Strategy, embedded in and accountable to a structure of wide and ongoing consultation and inclusion. Those relationships are **as important** as the board.

As set out above, it is crucial that this Alliance learns from the past and does not repeat it. The objective is an effective, inclusive body which provides the structure to strengthen the broad cultural infrastructure of Peterborough and positions the area to maximise both financial input and the quality and range of its cultural life.

Building those relationships and the required trust across Peterborough will take time, patience and strategic vision: goodwill will also be an important condition for success. Where there are 'big projects' especially capital based, they should be run by organisations best equipped to do so. Conversely those organisations will need to be well linked and responsive to the network around the cultural leadership.

The Alliance needs to be supported by a team, albeit a very small one. CSG strongly recommends a Director role, with the capacity and experience to ensure the connections and vision built so far are maintained. This role should be supported by a recommended two FTE enabler/connecting roles to

- Facilitate the relationships and accountabilities envisaged in this model;
- convene the work needed to establish a shared approach to audience measurement and data;
- support strategic bidding;
- work with communities and practitioners.

We recommend that the two roles each have a specific focus. One would take the lead on developing the heritage networks and community envisaged in the Strategy. Given the importance of intangible and oral history, this role would require strong relationships with diverse communities across Peterborough. The other would have a primary focus on young people, building that articulate and empowered voice for people under 25 in the cultural life of the area; this role would also work with isolated, especially rural communities to make sure they are fully represented and engaged.



Ultimately we envisage the PCA developing into its own small, nimble body, which will continue to put emphasis and resources into relationships and be able to work across the wide range of stakeholders and partnerships. Those relationships will be codified into terms of reference and memberships, but most of all will rely on all the individuals working together to create the impact embedded in the future vision.

3.2 ***The Peterborough Cultural Alliance Board***

The Alliance will need a Board which meets the criteria set out above and in particular one which can ensure inclusion, good partner relationships, strength in accessing funding, and expertise in creativity and sustainability.

The PCA Board would have terms of reference modelled on charity governance, so that

- Each member serves for not more than 3 years and not more than 2 or 3 terms
- Two members nominated by PCC
- Up to four other key institutional partners, eg ARU, the Cathedral, NPT, UCP nominate one each
- At least six and up to eight other members which are expected to include at least some members of the current CSG
- Potential observer status for major funders

The Strategy identifies three particular communities prioritised as missing out on the cultural life of Peterborough, particularly badly hit by the pandemic and often under-represented: young people under 25, people from black and minority ethnic communities, including those from Eastern Europe, and people living in rural areas. These priorities should be reflected in the Board's membership. (Also see below on young people's interaction with Alliance.)

The primary job of this body would be delivering this Strategy and in particular funding, creating and delivering the small team of creative enablers and deliverers envisaged.

The *Chair* of the Alliance will have a crucial role. It is recommended the inaugural chair be sought through open advertisement, and a recruitment pack has been prepared. CSG has identified some potential candidates who will be encouraged to consider the role, but the process will be subject to interview and evaluation.

The Chair will then have a key role in the transparent recruitment of a Board which reflects the diversity and values in the Cultural Strategy as well as the formal skills required. S/he will also lead recruitment of the proposed staff team and work with them and partners to determine the final formal structure of the Alliance.

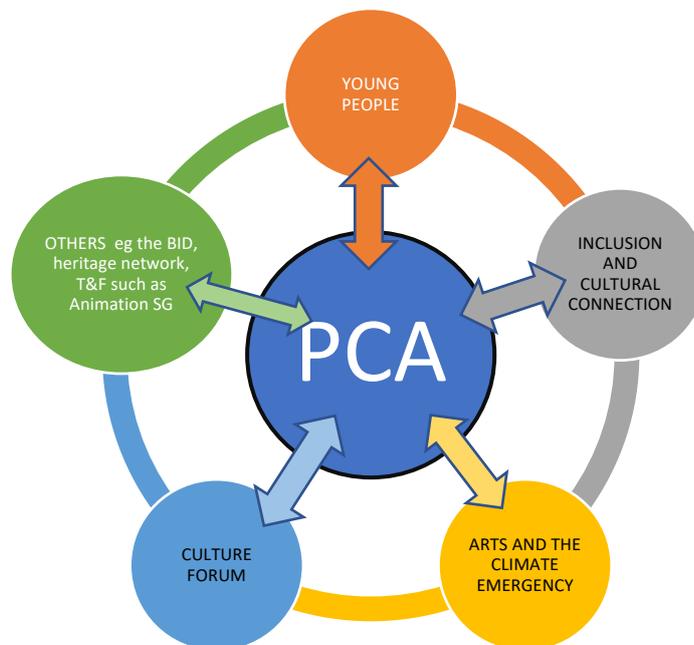
The Alliance will promote *transparency and accountability* through:

- Publishing its founding documents and an annual report alongside the Strategy impact monitoring
- Holding its meetings in public (unless specifically commercial or personal information involved)
- An annual general meeting which must be held in public
- Working with or establishing the forums through which to work with communities (of interest or geography)
- Ensuring its events and procedures operate in ways which don't shut people out through unnecessary formality and bureaucracy.

The *costs* to directors (members of the board) will be important. Some will be paid to 'be in the room', particularly the institutional nominees. An important recommendation of the Strategy is that people's time and expertise are valued. People not paid in that way (including community volunteers, freelance practitioners and learners) will be paid an honorarium for the work, including time in meetings and preparation. This must be reflected in the budget.

Patrons and *Ambassadors* have an important role here, not embedded in day-to-day governance but speaking out for Peterborough and promoting the area's culture. Artists, singers, poets, entrepreneurs – many of whom may have come from Peterborough even if they no longer live here, are all potential assets and allies.

3.3 **Relationships and networks**





The relationships and networks across the cultural life of the city are stronger in some areas than others. In particular, the Cultural Forum continues to evolve as an invaluable network and voice/conduit with practitioners and community leaders engaging with culture.

Four elements of this network need more development:

- Youth Voice, PHACE and others offer strong voices from many young people. The targeted discussions show that young people want to be engaged with culture (arts and heritage) but want discussions to be around specifics and with immediate impact. CSG, with PHACE and Festival Bridge is designing a specific artist-led project to determine the best way to ensure young people's voices are clear in these discussions over the whole life of the Strategy.
- There have been discussions about a heritage network or community to parallel or integrate with the Culture Forum. This would bring together both attractions and custodians of intangible heritage to build a much more cohesive and prominent offer as well as support bidding. Creating such a network is a key recommendation of the Strategy and priority for the staff team.
- There is growing commitment to environmentally engaged cultural practice in a city which prides itself on sustainability and is surrounded by climate-endangered agriculture. This was very clear in the consultation and artists' commissions. CSG/PCA will work with PECT, Green Backyard and others to consider how this would look in practice for this arrangement.
- There is a strong range of community networks, where relationships have if anything been strengthened through the pandemic. Many have been part of developing this strategy. However there is no single focus and so PCA will need the capacity to ensure those connections continue to grow.

A key task for the emerging PCA will be to build on the Strategy to map and nurture these relationships over the long term. We have chosen to move forward now, and make PCA part of those networks, rather than assume everything else must be perfect before the Alliance can be created.

It is part of the objectives of PCA that it works with the constellation of creative, heritage, voluntary, professional, business, education and community bodies to deliver on the values and vision of the strategy.

3.4 ***Peterborough Community Alliance – becoming formalised***

The CSG recommends that the Alliance should become a formal incorporated body: funders need evidence of legal status and it makes for more required transparency in the long run.

The proposal, subject to discussion with the inaugural Chair and institutional partners is that such a body would be *owned by* up to 5 members – eg the City Council, Nene Park Trust, ARU, UCP and Cathedral. These are the organisations which in the end carry the risk if PCA



does run into trouble. These Members would meet once a year to hold the Board (identified as set out above) to account for compliance with the objectives and work undertaken.

This body would not be a major delivery vehicle, though it should have capacity to employ staff and own assets should that be needed in the future. Its core objective is strategic leadership and to develop collaborative capacity for culture in Peterborough.

A formal body will take a while to be properly established so this should not stop the Board being set up as described above.

4. **Budget and funding**

There are two elements to thinking about the financial elements of this recommendation for leadership:

- (1) The core elements of a board, a legal structure and small staff capacity to take the work forward
- (2) Collaborative projects which demonstrate the principles of this Strategy

4.1 Core elements for the Alliance

A *preliminary* estimated annual budget for PCA would be (assuming start from 1 April 2022 & not including inflation):

Spend	2022/23	23/24	24/25	Total
Director	70000	70000	70000	210000
2 FTE equivalent	50000	60000	60000	170000
Employers contributions	20400	22100	22100	64600
Governance & participation	10000	10000	10000	30000
Small commissioning budget	10000	10000	10000	30000
Communications	5000	5000	5000	15000
Yr 1 fundraising, advertising & formal establishment	10000	0	0	10000
Totals	175400	177100	177100	529600

Staffing: CSG strongly supports the first appointment of a director's role to continue the strategic guidance that has led to the Strategy having a broad base. It is therefore proposed that there be immediate support and funding for a three year Director role to carry this forward (draft JD below). Note that these costs include oncosts including the increased employers NI contributions.

The Strategy recognises that promoting a resilient, sustained and inclusive approach to culture does not 'just happen'. The experience of Creative People & Places (nationally, not only here), Cultural Education Partnerships and others is that the key investment is in time from creative practitioners committed to socially engaged work. If engagement is to grow and hence audiences and empowerment.



The strategy therefore also envisages a small team (2 FTE for funding estimates) of enablers or connectors, recruited initially for two years and with the roles set out above

Governance, participation and communications are essential. Valuing people's time and enabling participation in meetings/events/discussions again requires resources. Without sufficient resource to pay for time, the city will see the same people again having the same discussions. Communications, whether maintain a static website or ensuring capacity to respond to robust debate also carries some cost. (The PCA is not a marketing organisation, and any event specific promotion would need its own budget.)

Commissioning leverage: the strategic process has been enhanced by commissioning creative practitioners to support the investigation and development of networks, especially with communities which have had little representation, participation or input into culture across the city. Among other elements, this has demonstrated the importance of creative approaches to finding, presenting and representing the heritage of 'newer' communities in the area, particularly those who have settled post-1945.

The cultural sector is extremely good at leverage, using small sums of cash to find resources for bigger projects or wider dissemination. Following Portsmouth's example, PCA would benefit from this small annual pot dedicated to promoting commissions from local artists working in the area. How it chose artists might vary from year to year and would be a matter for the Board.

Year 1 costs: there are legal and practical costs associated with establishing a new body – from robust advice to new computer equipment. This budget would be a start up cost, which would ensure PCA was standing on its own feet and resilient from the beginning.

Three year planning is assumed as short term 'flash in the pan' funding has been strongly criticised during the strategic development. This would give the Board and its staff time to properly evaluate cost requirements, establishing funding routes and develop a longer term funding strategy.

4.2 Collaborative proposals

The Strategy has sought to articulate and demonstrate new ways of working in the cultural ecology of Peterborough – based on shared values and aspirations, rather than personalities and opportunities.

The Café Culture Animation Steering Group has been an early example of further practising the principles of being inclusive, task-focused and multi-sectoral. CSG has reflected on that experience so far, and on those elements of the ACE *Let's Create Delivery Strategy* that have been published to date.

These suggest that bids might be made to ACE and other partners or investors using place-based investment principles for demonstrator, learning projects which both build towards strategic delivery and further develop Peterborough's practice in cultural activity and



multiplying leadership. Particular possibilities already identified include (but are not limited to):

- Programming the mini-Vine in an inclusive, exciting way
- Creating an equipment bank which can be used by venues and festivals to support their activities
- Developing a the way of working with young people which creates a robust and resilient voice for the future.

These projects would be explicitly linked to the delivery of the Strategy and shared learning for all those involved. A separate paper on resources, opportunities and potential collaborative bids has been developed.

4.3 **Next Steps**

The next steps are set out in the accompany paper on action planning and the timeline. They include (not necessarily in this order):

- Recruiting the inaugural Chair
- Agreeing a 'host organisation' for the interim period
- Creating the formal body for future activities
- Identifying the new board for PCA though a recruitment process
- Putting funding in place
- Advertising the Director role and then the staff team



DRAFT JD FOR THE DIRECTOR ROLE – v1

Objectives

- To support the Peterborough Cultural Alliance (PCA) Board and partners in delivering the objectives and values of the Cultural Strategy
- To work with partners to promote Peterborough as a place where heritage, arts and culture are valued and enjoyed and
- Where investors in all sectors will benefit from the area's creativity, energy and capacity

Responsibilities

1. Brokering strategic relationships and building partnerships for investment and development;
2. Coordinating delivery of the strategy, monitoring progress and aligning manageable reporting;
3. Ensuring the cultural development of the area reflects the values and priorities of connection, joy, self-determination, environmental and economic sustainability and long-term resilience;
4. Developing the vision for city (or County) of Culture and working with the Combined Authority on delivery;
5. Contributing to, coordinating and writing city-wide bids

Early deliverables

6. Building the partnerships and networks envisaged to promote success of the Strategy
7. Ensuring PCA is well-embedded and understood amongst partners and networks
8. Developing funding and support for a small team of cultural connectors and enablers as envisaged in the Strategy and recruiting them
9. Implementing the outcomes of artist-led work with young people to ensure their input and the accountability of PCA
10. Work with partners to develop a strong heritage network capable of collaboration to promote their assets and build a better profile for intangible heritable
11. Work with partners to develop a strong approach to environmental emergency in the cultural sector and robust engagements with culture among the environment sector to support engagement, behaviour change and investment
12. Evaluation, support for and if the right outcome promote continuation of the animation programme for the city and district centres

Criteria

- a. Strategic vision and understanding of the long term aims for Peterborough's cultural life
- b. Understanding of and commitment to the vision, values and objectives of the Cultural Strategy
- c. Ability to build and work in partnerships and networks, promoting collaboration, synergy and close working
- d. Track record in promoting investment in cultural activity including but not limited to marketing, bid writing and joint funding initiatives
- e. Experience in commissioning, working with artists and evaluating excellence and impact