

# A Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester



Leicester  
City Council

Arts & Leisure

# welcome

## **Welcome to the consultation draft of Leicester's first cultural strategy.**

We want to commend this document to you as we firmly believe that it sets out an exciting vision for our future and demonstrates how, together, we can build on our historic cultural strengths to improve our lives and our city, as we move forward into the 21st Century.

Formulated in response to the government's requirement for all local authorities to produce Cultural Strategies by the end of 2002, this document describes the kind of place Leicester wants to be and the quality of life we want people to enjoy here and it describes the challenges we will need to meet if we are to achieve this vision.

This cultural strategy provides an overarching framework to encourage people from across Leicester to work towards the cultural development of our city, without prescribing in detail the ways in which you and your partners might want to contribute to its implementation. It sets out the vision and goals which you have established should be local priorities and the challenges which face us all if those are going to be realised. It is clear in reading these, that we at the City Council cannot and should not implement this strategy alone, and we hope that you will want to:

- endorse the proposals contained within this document.
- commit to considering its objectives in your own detailed planning.

There has been real strength in the process through which the strategy has evolved and we would like to thank the many of you who have contributed time, energy and ideas to the process. You have helped to shape a document through which we can change our own and other people's views of Leicester. We are confident it will help to focus the energy, and generate the resources, which are needed if we are to make our city an even better place in which to live, work and play.

We can now – with your help - establish a Cultural Strategy Partnership. Through the Partnership, we will put together an action plan to deliver the change envisaged here. This will involve some hard decisions and the Partnership will have a vital role to play in ensuring a co-ordinated approach to establishing the immediate priorities for action and investment.



Its first task will be to challenge the local authority to:

- revisit key corporate strategies from across the local authority and individual cultural service plans (the Sports Strategy, Arts, Media and Broadcasting Strategy, Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy, Library Plan, Museums and Heritage Strategies) in the light of this document.
- create the detailed short, medium and long term action plans which demonstrate how we are going to prioritise the allocation of resources in response to the vision set out here.

We expect that you, our partners, will be inspired to do the same. This document sets out the challenges which face all of us and proposes some headline objectives which we need to work together to address.

This is a draft that we are circulating as the final phase of consultation on this project. At the back you will find a freepost address, as well as the contact details for the officer who will be responsible for assembling all your comments.

We would be very grateful if you could respond to us by Friday 6th July, in order that we can produce the final version of this, our Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester.

We look forward to receiving your feedback and to working, in partnership with you to deliver the bold and ambitious A Vision for Life in Leicester

**Cllr Ross Willmott**

Leader of the Council

**Cllr Nigel Holden**

Cabinet Lead  
Arts, Leisure,  
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**Rodney Green**

Chief Executive

**Michael Gallagher**

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## Government guidance on Cultural Strategies

We share the belief of Central Government that culture is fundamentally important in our drive to improve the quality of life for everyone in the City because:

- culture gives pleasure and enables people to fulfil their own potential and broaden their horizons.
- cultural services can play a crucial role in tackling social exclusion, contributing to regeneration, promoting safer communities, encouraging healthier lifestyles, providing opportunities for voluntary and community activity and stimulating lifelong learning.

### This Cultural Strategy

describes the ways in which we plan, here in Leicester, to fulfil the government's requirement set out by the Rt Hon Chris Smith MP, Minister for Culture, Media and Sport, to:

"...help cultural activities – in their widest sense – achieve the recognition they deserve and become central to the lives of [our] communities and to the work and corporate objectives of [this] local authority..."<sup>1</sup>

## Some facts about Leicester's cultural heritage

The city has been an important commercial centre for the UK since Roman times with its forum, courts of justice and leisure facilities such as its bath house.

It has been described as the birthplace of the modern English language which was forged here, where the cultures of the Vikings, the Anglo Saxons and later, the Normans fused.

# introduction

- > **This document takes on the immense and important task of summing up the spirit of Leicester and how its residents would like life to be. It provides a framework for the cultural development of this – an already confident city - over the next five years.**

**It describes a shared Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester and sets out some of the challenges which we will need to rise to, in partnership, if that vision is going to be realised.**

**It focuses specifically on the ways in which culture and cultural services can change our city. However, culture and cultural services are inextricably bound up with – for example - education, healthcare, policing, the environment and economic development.**

This Strategy is therefore of importance to anyone who is interested in, or has a role to play, in shaping the quality of life of all those people who come to the city or make it their home. It will affect and influence the planning of all the City Council's departments, as well as the work of an extensive network of partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors across the East Midlands. The Cultural Strategy Partnership will have a crucial role to play in ensuring effective joined up working between these many bodies.

This document summarises the main issues and actions which we need to address in planning cultural change. It recognises the role of Leicester in the county and the region, and its aspirations harmonise with those contained in the East Midlands regional cultural strategy – A Time for Culture.

# ion



In the middle ages it became an important market town for the rich agricultural lands which surround it and the regional centre for manufacture and commerce which it remains today.

Hosiery was a dominant industry by the 18th century and Leicester grew into a world leader in this field by Victorian times.

The Leicester Permanent Library, established in 1791, was one of the earliest public libraries in any English town.

By the end of the 19th century Leicester had all the features of a prosperous industrial city – learned societies, libraries and galleries, museums, grand buildings and parks, railway connections, universities, substantial shops, prosperous suburbs and slums.

## The aims and objectives of this cultural strategy

### Aim

**To set out a common vision and shared goals for all those involved with the cultural life of the city in order to promote:**

- the identity of Leicester as a city of cultural diversity.
- the personal well-being of people of all ages who live, work, play, learn and/or enjoy their leisure time in the city.
- the renewal of Leicester's neighbourhoods.
- the changing role and identity of the city centre.
- the economic regeneration of Leicester.
- the quality, variety and innovation of cultural activity and opportunity in Leicester.
- new and more effectively targeted investment in the cultural sector.

Thomas Cook conducted his first tour (from Leicester to Loughborough) in 1841.

In 1938 the first local authority archaeology service in Britain was established here.

BBC Radio Leicester, the first local radio station in Britain started broadcasting in 1967.

In the 20th Century Leicester's traditional manufacturing industries - particularly knitwear - contracted under global competition and changes in the markets. New industries, many of them cultural, started springing up.

Always a city of immigration, Leicester is now home to a diversity of people and cultures, many of them of either African Caribbean or South Asian descent, and is soon to be the UK's first city with a population of predominantly non-European descent.<sup>1</sup>

Leicester has outstanding higher education, has attracted new industry and led the way in environmental issues (becoming the UK's first Environment City in 1990), capitalised on the benefits of cultural diversity, achieved outstanding success in sports, and offered a prosperous, welcoming, integrated and energetic impression to the visitor.

## Objectives

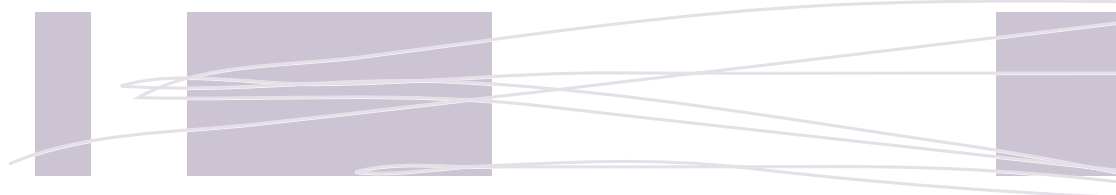
**This strategy is built around seven objectives which have been agreed through an extensive process of consultation.**

Together with the challenges which underpin them, they are designed to ensure that:

- energy and resources are focussed on action which will deliver real change to the quality of life in Leicester.
- this strategy helps to deliver the goals set out in the Community Plan, under the six themes of, Diversity, Community Safety, Education, Health and Social Care, Environment, Jobs and Regeneration.
- all those with an interest in, or influence over, culture can formulate a detailed action plan in response.

### **The objectives of the strategy are:**

1. To celebrate, promote and build on the fact that the city's culture is defined by the diversity of its people's cultures and to increase respect and understanding for the integrity of each of the city's cultural traditions.
2. To invest in the development of cultural activity which contributes to the economic, social and personal well-being of individuals at all stages in their lives and to increase access to and participation in cultural activity.
3. To invest in cultural activity and opportunity which contributes to the sustainable development of our neighbourhoods by empowering individuals and communities.
4. To create a city centre which exemplifies the richness of the city's cultural diversity and which is accessible and welcoming to all.
5. To exploit fully the potential of cultural activity to contribute to the economic regeneration of the city.
6. To develop the quality and range of cultural activity and opportunity in Leicester in sustainable ways.
7. To sustain and make best use of all existing financial, physical and human resources for the nurture of cultural opportunities and to attract new investment through which to grow the cultural sector in Leicester.



## Defining culture

Culture means different things to all of us. In Leicester, there are at least three common ways in which the word 'culture' is used. People talk locally about:

- the culture of their city, neighbourhood and community when trying to describe the personality of the place, their way of life or the identity of a particular place or group
- their own culture when describing their ethnicity and/or religion.
- cultural activity or just culture – a broad term which is used to describe creative and leisure activities, particularly those which help to foster personal and social growth.

## A vision for the culture of our city

The aims and objectives are designed to deliver the vision set out during the cultural strategy consultation when local people described a future Leicester:

- where the cultural diversity of the population is seen as one of the city's overwhelming strengths and defining characteristics.
- where cultural difference can be celebrated, cultural heritages and traditions are understood and valued and opportunities to promote and develop culture are embraced.
- where cultural activity has helped to make social disadvantage a thing of the past.
- which is served by first class professional, voluntary and participatory cultural facilities that are programmed, managed and operated in ways which make them genuinely accessible to all sectors of the population and which attract cultural tourists.
- which is renowned as a festival city.
- which is clean, green, attractive and sustainable.
- with sustainable transport systems which make it easy to access cultural facilities in neighbourhoods and the city centre, from shops to sports centres and from restaurants to evening classes.

## Cultural activity

Cultural activity and opportunity is a phrase used throughout the document to describe all those organisations and individuals who are providing a service or facility through the public, private, education and voluntary sectors in any of the following fields:

- all forms of the arts
- architecture
- built and buried heritage
- community and neighbourhood facilities and projects
- countryside services
- festivals and other public celebrations
- film, broadcasting and media
- libraries and literature
- museums
- parks and open spaces
- physical recreation and sport
- play
- religion
- restaurants and bars
- some forms of retail (creatively derived artefacts from clothing to software)
- tourism.



## Government Office for the East Midlands

“A Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester is a helpful expression of the cultural priorities for the city and is a document which should be of particular interest to organisations which have the ability to fund the kinds of projects and schemes which will arise in the course of its delivery.”

Geoff Milner, Department of Culture, Media and Sport Regional Representative

### Core values

This cultural strategy is based on the belief that:

- Leicester has a rich cultural heritage and ambitions to build on it by tackling the challenges of the future.
- the opportunity to exercise one's creativity and access to cultural activities are fundamental rights for local citizens.
- all communities should be able to celebrate, express, explore, share and develop their own culture.
- the contribution of cultural organisations and businesses to the cultural, economic and social well-being of the city should be recognised and maximised.



- cultural activities can help unlock the potential of individuals, improve our environment, renew our neighbourhoods, raise educational standards, improve health, reduce the fear of crime and promote Leicester positively to the rest of the world.
- individuals and organisations engaged in culture and cultural participation at any level are to be encouraged and supported, with a focus on quality and innovation.
- where opportunities to access excellent formal and informal educational and training opportunities exist for everybody regardless of age and which is known as a learning city.
- which is, and is perceived as, a confident, cosmopolitan and exciting city.
- which is the cultural and economic hub for the surrounding county, one of the main cultural hubs for the region and home to a growing number of centres of national and international cultural excellence.
- which demonstrates in practical ways a belief that access to cultural activity and freedom of cultural expression are a basic human right.
- where there are sufficient resources available to the cultural sector to enable it to deliver its contribution to this vision.

## Drafting and delivering this cultural strategy

This Strategy is about Leicester people, their voices, their views, their opinions. Unlike many authorities, Leicester has devised its Strategy through an inclusive process and resources have been concentrated on asking people who live, work, play and invest in the city what they think and want.

This Strategy is about partnership – it sets out a shared vision for the many people and organisations that are concerned with culture in Leicester. It is not just a Leicester City Council document.

The Council has been given responsibility to lead and co-ordinate it by the Government. It has provided the resources to make the innovative consultation led process happen, ensuring that at every stage local people have been given the opportunity to have their say.

The Council also expects to take a lead in responding to the challenges and is confident that creating this cultural strategy this way has brought the public and other sectors together in Leicester, creating an environment in which a robust partnership can now be formed to drive the delivery and implementation of A Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester.

As major providers of cultural services and an important statutory body, the Council is now commending this draft cultural strategy to its partners, and looks forward to working with them to prioritise and co-ordinate the detailed action planning through which it will be delivered.

### **The Lonely Planet Guide, 2001**

“Leicester has suffered the triple disasters of wartime damage, uninspired post war development and catastrophic industrial decline, but it has reacted to it better than most, reinventing itself as an environmentally progressive, ethnic entrepot of a city that could teach other, bigger cities a thing or two about multiculturalism.”



Leicester:

a culturally

diverse

## Objective

To celebrate, promote and build on the fact that the city's culture is defined by the diversity of its people's cultures and to increase respect and understanding for the integrity of each of the city's cultural traditions.



## 1991 Census Data:

The 1991 census showed that:

- ethnic minorities made up 28.5% of the city's population, compared to the UK average of 5.5%.
- the Asian and black communities had a higher proportion of under 30 year olds than the rest of the population, with the average ages for both Asian and black Leicester citizens being 28, compared to an average of 38 for white citizens.

## Current school records

The most reliable recent indicator of changes in the population comes from the records of the city's schools, which demonstrate that in the school age population:

- 48.9% of the school population is white British.
- 42% of the school population is of African Caribbean, South Asian or Chinese descent.

# city

**This is the most fundamental and important objective** of this cultural strategy, and has been the key issue running through all the consultation. It is crucial that this Strategy recognises and builds on the strength of the cultural life of each of the city's communities. The major facilities and institutions which are provided for the city as a whole, must change to reflect the changing cultural profile of the population, and make themselves fully accessible to all sectors of the community.

## The roots of the city's diversity

The city's unique cultural diversity is its defining characteristic and, in planning for cultural change, the over-riding concern must be meeting the changing needs defined by the shifting and complex nature of the population. Whilst the city's diversity is not simply an issue of ethnicity, this is a key factor. The challenges this poses for the cultural sector must be met by this Strategy, but so too must the needs of those minority communities who are not defined by ethnicity – for example disabled people, bisexuals, lesbians, gay people and those who are economically disadvantaged.





## “A British City Finds that Tolerance is Good Business”

“Leicester defines itself as the tolerant, multicultural city of Europe, and I think I go a long way towards agreeing with that... There is greater diversity in two or three square blocks here than anywhere I can think of in Europe.”

Prof Richard Bonney, Director of Leicester University's Center for History of Religious and Political Pluralism in the *New York Times*, February 8th 2001.

## “A positive view of City welcomed”

“It's a wonderful City, people live in harmony and all communities are catered for. It's open for everybody”

Pravin Raichura, in the *Leicester Mercury*, October 21st 2000

On the evidence of the 1991 census and current school records, it appears that the changes in the demographics of the city are based on shifts in proportion of one community when compared in size to another, and the fact that overall the population is getting younger, rather than on a growth in the number or range of communities choosing Leicester as their home. Within this, the growing proportion of South Asian populations is a key factor.

## Expressing our cultural diversity

The vitality that comes from having many different cultures living and working together is expressed every day in Leicester through a range of cultural activity – such as sport, art, music, architecture, commerce, fashion, festivals and food.

The city is renowned for:

- its Diwali celebrations – the largest outside India.
- its Carnival – the second biggest street festival in the UK after Notting Hill.
- its Christmas, New Year and summer festivals.
- for the Belgrave Road – probably the City's best known street.
- for being at the forefront of cultural initiatives designed to combat prejudice, like “*Kick Racism out of Football*”.

## The debate underpinning this Strategy has therefore been about finding ways to:

- allow each community to celebrate its own cultural identity, religion, heritage and tradition in the ways people live their everyday lives and come together in celebration.
- make people more aware of, and engaged with, each other's cultures.
- find places and occasions where people can come together and express the city's collective culture.
- ensure that the major cultural institutions in the city are accessible to everyone regardless of their ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality, nationality, gender, education or economic status.
- ensure that in planning cultural provision, account is taken of the fact that the boundaries between cultures, and the nature of cultures shift, merge and change over time.
- ensure that the needs of the city's children and young people, who are becoming an increasingly significant proportion of the population, are met.

The changing shape of the city's communities means that culture in Leicester is not static; it is influenced all the time by the transregional and transnational connections that its people have, and it is in constant evolution – for example the city's young people often have very different cultural values, aspirations and tastes from their parents and grandparents.

This has been true of the city's culture throughout its history. Leicester has been a settling place for immigrant communities and its cultural and physical fabric are built on its ability to adapt to radical cultural shifts. Immigration has contributed enormously to the economic, social environmental dynamism of Leicester throughout that time and continues to create new and vibrant cultural, economic and social opportunity and to shape the environment of the city.

# diverse city challenges

This Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester must prioritise the actions which need to be taken if we are to celebrate our own and each other's cultural traditions, build on the diversity of our cultural identity and fulfil our potential to become the UK role model for cultural diversity and inclusion. Set out below are the key challenges facing our culture and cultural services over the next five years as a result of our cultural diversity. They are:

1. To establish cultural services which respond to the demographic evolution of the population and anticipate and respond to the changing needs of our children and young people.
2. To plan the evolution of the city centre so that it eventually meets the needs of all communities in terms of its physical accessibility, retail entertainment and cultural offer, atmosphere and built and natural environment, particularly, in the evenings.
3. To identify the particular barriers to cultural access and participation facing all the city's minority communities (however that "minority" status is defined) and put in place the strategies and incentives needed to remove them.
4. To sustain and create opportunities for the celebration of the city's many cultures and to find ways to improve our understanding of each other's cultural heritage.
5. To create opportunities to develop those aspects of culture which are common to many communities in the city and county.
6. To invest in cultural activity and provision which tackles racism.
7. To invest in cultural activity and provision which helps alleviate poverty.
8. To invest in cultural activity and provision which challenge homophobia.
9. To invest in making all cultural provision accessible to people with disabilities.
10. To promote and invest in provision for Leicester children to come together, understand and share the play and leisure activities of their respective cultures.

## Promoting trust and understanding between communities

The City Council will put in place a strategy to promote the wide range of multi-cultural and multi-faith events which take place across the city and to increase attendance at such events by at least 5% by December 2002.<sup>2</sup>

This will be achieved in partnership with a wide range of voluntary sector partners, for example, those responsible for promoting:

- Black History Month
- International Women's Week
- Leicester Pride
- Christmas
- New Year's Eve
- Leicester Comedy Festival
- Carnival
- Diwali
- Navratri
- Language theatre.

## Developing the riverside

Leicester's riverside is a unifying link in a multicultural city, cutting across the city, linking different neighbourhoods. The Riverside Strategy will maximise the potential benefits of the riverside as a cultural asset which both joins and serves the city's diverse communities.<sup>3</sup>



## Participant in a cultural strategy focus group

"The best thing about Leicester is that it is so diverse – we have a great mix of people – that's the one thing I like about Leicester, I love that about Leicester"

Anon., March 2001

# diverse city challenges

## Planning to meet diverse cultural needs

The Cultural Quarter development planned for the St George's / Rutland Street area of the city centre:

- demonstrates commitment to celebrating diversity through the design of buildings and public spaces.
  - is based on the assumption that the city's theatre, film, media and visual arts institutions need to change radically to meet the evolving cultural needs of our changing population.
  - will be a nationally significant force for driving the celebration and dissemination of South Asian and other minority cultures.
  - presents an opportunity to target economic development support at the kind of micro businesses that can change the culture of the city centre.
  - will contribute significantly to the external reputation and image of Leicester, its pull as a tourist destination and its role as a cultural hub for the county.
  - will generate significant external investment.
11. To unlock the potential of the city centre to be the area of the city which showcases the richness of the city's cultural diversity, is welcoming to all regardless of their individual culture, is safe and accessible and is hailed as the national role model for a tolerant and culturally diverse 21st Century Britain.
  12. To develop tourism strategies which celebrate, promote and exploit Leicester's unique nature as the UK's most multi-cultural city and invest in – for example - the development of the businesses, restaurants, festivals, events and activities to underpin them.
  13. To identify, celebrate and use the international links of culturally diverse organisations and institutions with a view to attracting cultural tourists and inward investment.
  14. To exploit the potential offered by the city's diversity for economic, social, cultural and environmental regeneration by, for example: investing in the uniquely multi-cultural business and cultural sectors, building on the success of events like Carnival and Diwali, developing the existing promotion of the Belgrave Road and exploring the ways in which cultures working together can create entirely new and distinct economic opportunities.
  15. To nominate at least two major schemes - perhaps one cultural and one retail - as pilot projects which demonstrate how the architecture of the city can evolve to express the diverse cultural heritages of its people and to improve the accessibility of the city centre.
  16. To make cultural organisations more representative of the city's diversity in their recruitment of staff and the constitution of their management bodies.





The cultural rights and needs of individuals

# access

## to culture



### Objective

To invest in the development of cultural activity which contributes to the economic, social and personal well-being of individuals at all stages of their lives and to increase access to, and participation in, cultural activity.

new

Building communities through culture



# neighbourhood renewal

## Objective

To invest in cultural activity and opportunity which contributes to the sustainable development of our neighbourhoods by empowering individuals and communities.



# the city centre

The public face of Leicester's culture

## Objective

To create a city centre which exemplifies the richness of the city's cultural diversity and which is accessible and welcoming to all.

...

Economic regeneration:

creating **wealth**  
from culture

### **Objective**

To exploit fully the potential of cultural activity to contribute to the economic regeneration of the city.

...



Developing cultural activity:

investing in cultural

# excellence

## Objective

To develop the quality and range of cultural activity and opportunity in Leicester in sustainable ways.

Resource development:

# growing **support** for culture

...

## Objective

To sustain and make best use of all existing financial, physical and human resources for the nurture of cultural opportunities and to attract new investment through which to grow the cultural sector in Leicester.



Delivery and development:

# what happens next?

...





### Completing the consultation

This consultation draft of the Cultural Strategy has been co-ordinated by the Council. It is now being circulated widely for final comment and amendment by all those who have already been involved in the consultation process through which it was created, and to a wider circle of organisations and individuals who may want to take an active role in some part of its implementation.

This final consultation phase will run until Friday July 6th, after which Leicester City Council will publish Leicester's first formal Cultural Strategy. During this consultation process the council will establish the formal body who will be responsible for overseeing its implementation – the Leicester Cultural Strategy Partnership.

### The Cultural Strategy Partnership

It has never been the intention that this cultural strategy could or should be delivered solely by the City Council, although the Council has taken an active role in leading its creation, and has invested in trying to ensure that the process has been as inclusive as possible. In doing so, attempts have been made to lay firm foundations for a partnership to guide its implementation.

The partnership will need to be large enough to be representative, but small enough to be able to do useful work; it will need to contain a balance of those who speak for communities and those who influence policy and resource development; it will need to involve those who shape the environment, education, health and social care and regeneration as well as those who provide cultural services.

The group will need to be serviced by the City Council's Director of Arts and Leisure Services, and it might include – amongst others – representatives of umbrella and other cultural voluntary organisations, Leicester University, De Montfort University, Leicester College, the Police, the Chamber of Commerce, the Local Education Authority, the NHS Trust, other local strategic and regeneration partnerships and the Regional Cultural Consortium.

## The Cultural Strategy Partnership

### Structure

Consultation suggests that the preferred model for such a partnership is that it should:

- be linked to the new Local Strategic Partnership and the new Urban Regeneration Company
- have representation from the public, private, education and voluntary sectors
- be representative of the city's diversity
- have effective and practical links into local communities
- have local, regional, national (and potentially international) influence.

### Function

- to monitor, evaluate, review and implement this first version of the Strategy.
- to lobby on behalf of this Strategy and the cultural sector.
- to report to the Council twice a year on progress and hold them to account for their role in delivery of the document's actions.
- to ease the creation of task specific partnership groups through whom more detailed action planning might be developed.

## Detailed action planning

This Strategy deliberately does not attempt to set detailed targets in relation to any of the objectives. Its function is to provide a framework for policy and action within which those charged with the day to day realisation of these changes to our culture can plan what they do, and to guide their allocation of human and financial resources without being prescriptive in its detail.

Many organisations will need to clarify the actions they are going to take in order to play their part in delivering this Strategy including the City Council. Once it is clear that the Strategy proposed has widespread approval and that consultation and development is completed, the Council will re-visit and revise all those departmental and corporate strategies whose work will be influenced by the proposals made here. From this, detailed action plans for implementation of this Strategy will be created across the authority.

It is expected that all the authority's potential partners will do the same. The Partnership will then co-ordinate the creation of an overarching prioritised action plan with SMART targets, so that progress within all sectors can be measured and monitored.

## Monitoring and review

The Partnership will be responsible for maintaining a strategic overview of the whole process, and for monitoring the number, nature, detail and effectiveness of interventions by the local authority and others to implement the proposals contained within this document.

They should report bi-annually to the City Council on progress in delivery of the headline objectives and, in compiling their evaluation of progress, they should maintain a rolling programme of widespread public consultation to gather a wide variety of views on how well the Strategy is being implemented.

The vision is a long term one, and some aspects of it may take 10 or more years to realise. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport will require a fundamental review of the Strategy to be undertaken by the Partnership, in consultation with local people every two or three years and for updated action plans to be agreed with all stakeholders.

The realistic shelf life of the report is probably five years, at which point the vision will need to be re-tested, only then will it be possible to prove if this Cultural Strategy has successfully and accurately:

- articulated Leicester's vision of its own future.
- advocated that investment in culture can help achieve real social, environmental, personal and economic regeneration.

## Delivering the Vision

This Strategy is designed to provide an overarching framework for the development of Leicester's culture. If we can deliver it, then Leicester will be a cosmopolitan and exciting city:

- Which gains strength and distinctiveness from its diversity.
- Which celebrates cultural difference.
- In which culture has contributed effectively to social inclusion, and everyone has the freedom to express and explore their own cultural identity.
- With excellent cultural facilities that everyone from both the city and county can access.
- Famed for its festivals.
- With a clean, green and sustainable environment.
- Where the resources available to support and nurture culture are increasing.

### Your role in delivering this Cultural Strategy

Please:

- respond to this consultation draft with your comments and send to the freepost address overleaf.
- think about how the strategy might affect or influence your own planning.
- respond actively to the various partnership initiatives proposed throughout the strategy.

**By doing this you can help us to deliver...**

**A Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester.**



The cultural resources (human, physical and financial) in the city are, extensive and, in many instances excellent:

- the private sector is a substantial provider of cultural resources ranging from bookshops and bars to the football club and the textile, fashion and design outlets on the Belgrave Road.
- the voluntary sector is a vital human resource which breathes much of the creative life and spirit into the culture of the city and runs a number of Leicester's cultural venues.
- statutory and non statutory education providers offer primary routes to cultural expression at all stages of people's lives.
- the cultural sector is funded from a variety of public funds accessed from local, national and European sources – some of these are obviously and directly associated with cultural activities but increasingly, the cultural sector benefits from health, education, social care and regeneration schemes.
- the local authority is a major investor in the cultural life of the city, and expends more per head on leisure and recreation than many similar authorities.

However, accurate and detailed data on the total spend on culture by the wider public sector, business, commerce and the voluntary and higher education sectors is not available. Commissioning a piece of baseline research against which growth in the sector can be measured will be essential and may form part of the economic impact study recommended in the previous chapter.



## City Council Direct Spend

The direct spend on culture through the Arts and Leisure Services Department of the authority, as described in the Council 2001/2002 budget is:

Arts & Culture	£1,683,400
Entertainments	763,600
Libraries & Information	3,902,100
Museums & Heritage	2,090,500
Community Development	2,976,100
Sports	2,979,600
Parks & Grounds Maintenance	4,472,300
Community partnerships (grants)	3,203,000
Cultural Business Services	2,243,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£24,287,300</b>

This figure does not either represent the total of the local authority's investment in culture, (much of which is included in the costs of other departments) or indicate in any way the scale or nature of investment in culture by other sectors.



## Fundraising

This strategy has been designed to be an effective fundraising tool for the city's cultural sector.

Increasingly cultural sector funding applications to the lottery, the various cultural funding agencies (Sport England, the Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Engage etc.), the higher education sector and the commercial world will have to demonstrate how the projects and schemes seeking investment are contributing to the delivery of the Cultural Strategy's objectives, and it will certainly become the key Strategy in guiding the allocation of public sector cultural resources in the city.

Increasingly the growth in resources for culture, very legitimately, lies beyond the traditional world of cultural sector funding described above. This strategy has demonstrated how culture has a vital role to play in delivering:

- Leicester's Community Plan themes of diversity, education, jobs and regeneration, community safety, health and social care and the environment.
- the ambitions of the city's regeneration and economic development strategies.
- East Midlands Development Agency's regional economic development strategy.
- the regional and county Cultural Strategy priorities.

It demonstrates the place of culture in realising the overlapping and mutually supportive goals being set by a wide range of partners, and should legitimise approaches by the cultural sector to "non-traditional" funding sources such as central government health, education, housing, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal funds and European structural funds.

The local authority has a key role to play in providing leadership in this kind of imaginative deployment of resources to nurture culture and in opening the doors to some of these other resources.

## Comparative local authority spend per head on leisure and recreation

### LEICESTER

Authority type	UA
Population	300,500
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (excl. capital charges)	69.14
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (incl. capital charges)	81.20

### NOTTINGHAM

Authority type	UA
Population	287,000
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (excl. capital charges)	56.33
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (incl. capital charges)	77.10

### SANDWELL

Authority type	MET
Population	286,000
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (excl. capital charges)	36.48
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (incl. capital charges)	44.92

### COVENTRY

Authority type	MET
Population	307,200
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (excl. capital charges)	28.67
Total net expenditure £/head on leisure and recreation (incl. capital charges)	38.40

# support for culture challenges



If the resources available to support and nurture provision of cultural activity and opportunity in Leicester are going to be sustained and grown, then these key challenges must be met over the next five years:

1. Carry out research in order to provide a baseline against which growth of investment in the cultural sector can be measured.
2. The City Council needs to provide the kind of leadership and advocacy required to unlock the potential of other funders to support the aspirations voiced within this Strategy.
3. A new partnership approach is needed to maximise inward investment and effective use of existing resources for cultural provision.
4. The contractual partnership arrangements between the public and voluntary sectors should be reviewed to ensure maximum return is being yielded on investment of money and skill.
5. To establish training, mentoring and skill sharing schemes in, and between, all cultural sectors.
6. The City Council needs to continue the work begun to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of its support for the cultural sector.
7. The Best Value process must be used to review where services might be more efficiently provided by existing private and voluntary sector organisations than by the city council and which aspects of local authority provision might benefit from alternative management and delivery mechanisms.
8. The City Council must adopt a planned approach to tackling the infrastructural problems associated with under investment in cultural facilities in recent years. The immediate and most urgent requirements are to implement existing proposals to build a new sports facility in Braunstone, to develop a Cultural Quarter in the St George's development zone, to develop the Heritage Quarter in the Old Town Area and to refurbish New Walk Museum as a flagship facility for the region.

## Understanding the economics of culture

Whilst good research exists both nationally and regionally into the economic impact of culture, very little accurate data is available on either:

- the size of the cultural economy in Leicester
- the nature of the city's cultural industries
- the training needs of the cultural sector workforce
- the investment in culture and cultural activity and opportunity made by the private, education and voluntary sectors in Leicester
- or the inward investment levered into the city through culture and cultural programmes.

If we are to measure and monitor growth in resources available to culture in the city, then establishing this data is a priority.





# and growth

## Leicester's cultural assets include:

- Abbey Park
- Abbey Pumping Station
- Attenborough House
- Aylestone Meadows
- Belgrave Hall and Gardens
- Carnival
- Castle Gardens, Castle Motte and the Great Hall
- Castle Hill Country Park
- Charles Street Baptist Church
- Christmas
- City Rooms
- Comedy Festival
- De Montfort Hall
- Diwali
- Eco House
- Evington Park
- Friar's Mills
- Gateway School
- Gilroes Cemetery
- Goddards Factory, Nelson Street
- Gorse Hill City Farm
- Guru Nanak Gurdwara (Sikh Temple)
- Holy Trinity Church
- Humberstone Park
- Jain Centre
- Leicester City FC
- Leicester Tigers Rugby Ground
- Leicestershire County Cricket Ground
- Navratri
- New Walk
- New Walk Museum
- Newarke Houses Museum
- Old Trinity Hospital
- One of the oldest and largest outdoor markets in the country
- Packhorse bridge, Aylestone

**As well as driving the economy**, supporting neighbourhood renewal, contributing to the development of the city centre and helping individuals to fulfil their own potential, cultural activity has intrinsic value.

**The urge to create or enjoy what has been created by others**, the desire to develop the highest levels of physical skill, the desire to travel, to discover oneself and one's roots, to engage with others in social activity, to enjoy hectic excitement or serene tranquillity, to be in touch with nature, to be surrounded by beauty (in its many forms) are an essential part of our humanity. They are part of the challenge to improve, sometimes to compete.

We forget at our peril the value of art for its own sake, sport as "a matter of life and death"<sup>1</sup>, **play as the child's real and imagined world** in which to learn and mature, heritage as the irreplaceable record of our individual and collective past, and spiritual exploration and fulfilment as a primary cultural activity.

**The city's visible cultural assets** are underpinned by a vast network of local activity which provides opportunities for participation and growth such as; locally provided cultural facilities (e.g. playing fields, playgroups, community centres and branch libraries); pockets of unfunded cultural activity (the Saturday morning rugby session, the school PTA, the young people making music together in their bedrooms); extensive open public spaces (countryside, parks, riversides, allotments and gardens) and the rich tapestry of fine (particularly Victorian) architecture.





## Defining moment for city's cultural future

"It's better than home. I'm going to the theatre.  
There's loads of things to do, a real mix"

Georgina Friar, 21, Student

"I love the city. We like the restaurants, there's  
plenty of choice."

Diane Collins, 50, Kirby Muxloe

"It's as good as Manchester"

Glen Holland, 27, Broughton Astley

Leicester Mercury, October 21st 2000.

Services and projects across the cultural sector need to strive for quality and excellence. **Culture can be developed by providing high quality facilities and opportunities to participate or enjoy.** We need to commit ourselves as a city to challenging people to participate, to try out new experiences, to widen their horizons, to discover their talents and latent interests. People need opportunities to stretch themselves, open their eyes and their ears, to strive to be the best they can. In short, people need to live not just to exist.

**Culture thrives in a confident city** but, at the same time, cultural life helps to create that confidence. It is this attitude amongst the individuals, communities and businesses of the city that has brought the high level of success to date.

The Cultural Strategy needs to harness this confidence across all sectors for the benefit of the city. We need to define progression routes from experience in school into adult life, create programmes to stimulate and promote excellence across the spectrum of cultural activity, be willing to define excellence appropriately for different types of activity growing out of different types of experience and to congratulate and award appropriately.

- Peat House, London Road/East Street
- Portland Buildings, De Montfort University
- Raw Dykes
- Riverside Park
- Ruins of Cavendish House
- Saracens Head Pub
- Sham Castle Gatehouse to HM Prison
- Shree Jalaram Prathana Mandel
- Skeffington House
- Spinney Hill Park
- St Andrew's Church, Aylestone
- St Deny's Church, Evington
- St George's Churchyard
- St Martin's Cathedral Church
- St Mary de Castro
- St Nicholas Church
- The Belgrave Road
- The Guildhall
- The Haymarket Theatre
- The Phoenix Arts Centre
- The Jewry Wall
- The Magazine Gateway
- The National Space Centre
- The Town Hall and Square
- Trinity Hospital
- University of Leicester Botanic Gardens
- Victoria Park and the War Memorial
- Watermead Park
- Welford Road Cemetery
- West Bridge and the Mermaids
- Wygston's House



# excellence and growth challenges

**Culture and cultural services** cannot play their part in enhancing and developing the quality of life of Leicester's citizens, unless we invest in the infrastructure of cultural providers across the public, private, educational and voluntary sectors.

**We must invest in the people**, the skill, the buildings and the equipment through which cultural expression and opportunity are realised. The challenge is:

1. To complete research into Leicester's cultural sector, its economic impact, its clusters of cultural activity and its areas of good practice, excellence and innovation so that strategies can be put in place to support and develop them.
2. To promote the strength, richness and diversity of Leicester's cultural provision, sometimes by selling or transferring individual assets and, where appropriate, through the development of co-ordinated marketing strategies.
3. To fully exploit the potential in the city to increase cultural audiences, participants and attenders.
4. To develop mechanisms to reward innovation and excellence in all fields of cultural activity.
5. To ensure that cultural institutions have sustainable and deliverable development plans which demonstrate their strategies for improving the quality of the city's cultural offer.

## Protecting and enhancing the environment

The built and natural environments are both an intrinsic part of what defines the city's culture and an asset to be actively used and enjoyed by individuals as they seek opportunities for self expression and participation in cultural activity.

The city plans to enhance the role of its parks and open spaces as an amenity for people and a home for wildlife by:

- completing a habitat survey by 2003.
- surveying all sites of importance for nature conservation by 2005.
- putting in place a habitat monitoring programme by 2006.
- creating effective management plans for all environmental assets.
- establishing an urban archaeological database by 2004<sup>2</sup>.



Whilst being led by the Council these initiatives will involve key national partners such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and a wide range of local voluntary sector groups

# excellence and growth challenges



6. For the City Council to re-visit and revise all its cultural sector service strategies in partnership with the providers in the voluntary and commercial sectors, ensuring that the city's cultural sector is working towards the common goals described within this Strategy.

7. To provide cross sectoral programmes which nurture growth and transition:

- from assisted participation in schools by young people to independent consumption in adulthood.
- from amateur to professional involvement (where that is what people want).
- through a professional career which begins with a very local ambition and might end within an international market place.
- for children as they mature into young people.

8. To nurture and challenge growth, aspiration and commitment to quality in the voluntary sector.





**Leicester is a distinctive city.** It will be the first UK city with a majority population of non-European descent; it is the UK's first Environment City; it is famed for its extensive programme of religious and secular festivals; it has the largest outdoor market anywhere in the UK; the range and quality of food on sale in the city's shops, markets and restaurants is excellent; it boasts first class sports and arts facilities. The city has a central location in the UK and is well served by major road, rail and air interchanges; it has a fine architectural heritage coupled with innovations such as the new National Space Centre and has a proud history as a booming, adaptable, creative home to major industries. **In short, Leicester has huge potential to generate investment and wealth through culture.**

In planning to exploit this potential the city must market this distinctiveness, promote the cultural uniqueness which arises from its diversity and promote those things which make it unique and attract businesses and tourists.

**Leicester is acquiring a major role as a regional centre for cultural products and services.** However, no accurate detailed data exists on the scale and contribution of the cultural industries in Leicester and acquiring this information is now a priority, if the city is to put in place effective strategies to capitalise on the known trends for regional and national growth in the cultural industries sector.

The city has unequalled cultural links around the UK and the world through its diverse communities and it may well have a richer mix of creative talent than can be found anywhere else in Britain. It is at the forefront in the UK in skills in design, publishing and development of cultural products for, and from within, the city's ethnically diverse communities.

Leicester is well placed to attract cultural businesses. As well as being well located, it can offer relatively affordable quality spaces and there is a nucleus of creativity in the city that is ripe for nurture and development. In order to attract this kind of development, it is necessary to create and send out a strong, confident and clear message about the city. We have most of what we need to make and express culture here, to sell it to others and to create wealth and opportunity from it. We have the massive resource of a talented and diverse community with refreshingly new ideas and ways of doing business here - a community which is decidedly appropriate to new markets and business models.

## The national picture

Across the UK the Creative Industries:

- generate £112.5 billion of revenue.
- provide export earnings worth £10.3 billion.
- employ 1.3 million people.
- account for 5 per cent of GDP<sup>1</sup>

The creative industries sector is growing - in the year 1997/98, output grew by 16 per cent compared to 6 per cent growth in the economy as a whole.

## In the East Midlands

The creative industries employ around 85,000 people - 4.3% of the workforce, and this is rising.

Total annual earnings in the sector are estimated at about £2bn - 4.3% of the workforce are earning 7.4% of the regions income.

The workforce is highly qualified and has a high proportion of self-employed people, as much as 25% in some sectors.

In accordance with national trends, the ethnic minorities are under-represented in the East Midlands region's creative industries but there are indications that the region may be leading a trend to readdress this with emergence of dynamic new business models and cultural hybrids.<sup>2</sup>

There is strong experience to build on locally, and, with a positive attitude amongst partners, Leicester has a real chance to build a cultural economy and share its benefits equitably. The jobs and the wealth that can be created by this revival will benefit all sections of Leicester's communities.

The East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) is driving the regeneration of the East Midlands, within which Leicester is the largest single urban centre. Amongst other key regional documents, EMDA has recently published Prosperity through People – an economic development strategy for the region.

This document sets out a number of objectives which must inform all local regeneration strategies and provide a context for city specific plans. It is a "framework for mobilising the region – its agents of change and its resources", and sets out the following strategic priorities:

- **having people in the East Midlands who have the skills and knowledge to meet the global challenges of the Millennium – by becoming a "Learning Region" in which individuals and businesses value learning; and having education and skills provision that meets future needs.**
- **having businesses that are equipped to compete in the increasingly competitive global market-place – by creating a culture of enterprise and innovation in the East Midlands, leading to significantly higher levels of productivity.**
- **positioning the East Midlands so that it stands to make the most of the opportunities coming from the information and communications technology (ICT) revolution – through a combination of investment, business innovation and skills development.**
- **getting the climate for investment right – by strengthening the East Midlands' industrial structure and skills base and by aiming for excellence in the quality of the region's natural and built environment.**
- **developing strong local communities throughout the East Midlands that are able to benefit from, and contribute to, the region's growing economy – by encouraging urban and rural communities to find lasting solutions geared to their own needs, linked to physical regeneration measures**



## Tourism

Figures produced by the Heart of England Tourist Board in 1998<sup>3</sup> reveal a successful and improving tourism industry in Leicester and Leicestershire:

- 22 million visitors: 2 million over nighters (9%) and 20 million day-trippers (91%).
- a total spend of £520m (£40m per month).
- an increase of 94% in domestic tourism spend and 72 % in overseas spend between 1991 and 1998.
- bed spaces in the county have increased by 2,400 from 9,600 in 1994 to 12,000 in 1998.

The tourism industry in Leicester and Leicestershire supports 13,600 direct tourism jobs and a range of services. £52 million is spent on accommodation, £170 million is spent on retail, £176 million is spent on catering, £55 million is spent on entertainment and attractions.

A significant number of these hotels, restaurants, shops and attractions are concentrated in Leicester.



1 Creative Industries Mapping Document, DCMS, 2000

2 Comedia: Creative Industries Study Phase 1, East Midlands Creative Industries Pathfinder Group, February 2001

3 Heart of England Tourist Board: national, Regional and Local Tourism Statistics – Putting Leicestershire in Context, February 2001

# wealth from culture challenges



## Culturally led regeneration

The city needs to expedite existing plans to invest in:

- Braunstone Sports Centre
- The Cultural Quarter
- The Heritage Quarter in the Old Town
- New Walk Museum
- Abbey Pumping Station
- The new Central Library
- Abbey Park

## Existing strengths in this field

### Leicester Mercury

The Leicester Mercury continues to be at the forefront of local journalism, winning the 2001 Regional Newspaper of the Year Award.

If Leicester is going to realise the potential to generate wealth from culture through private and public sector investment and, encourage the local cultural sector to contribute effectively to the regional Economic Development Strategy, then a number of issues need to be tackled. It will be necessary:

1. To recognise the importance of the cultural economy to the city and to invest in the development and growth of the sector in order to place Leicester at the heart of the East Midlands cultural economy as a hub for cultural industry.
2. To commission baseline research to provide detailed information about the nature and impact of the city's cultural industries, its cultural economy, the night time economy of the city centre and patterns of cultural consumption.
3. To exploit the potential of major capital cultural schemes to drive regeneration and generate substantial inward investment.
4. To develop medium and long term continued re-investment strategies in cultural service provision in local communities and the city centre.
5. To develop small and medium sized cultural businesses within all parts of the community.
6. To place Leicester's cultural economy at the core of its Economic Development Strategy.
7. To engage regional, national and international partners ranging from Sport England to the Bollywood film industry, as well as those working in key economic "gateways" into the city such as the airport, the station, Leicester Forest East, Fosse Park and Meridian in evolving, promoting and delivering this Strategy.
8. To exploit the potential which exists to promote Leicester as a city break destination in both UK and international markets, on the strength of its unique combination of religious and other festivals, the Space Centre, the shopping offer, restaurants, historic heritage and broader cultural offer.

### Midlands Asian Television (MATV) is Britain's first Asian terrestrial TV channel.

- broadcasts for 18 hours a day, 7 days a week, with approximately 60% of the programmes being aimed specifically at the Asian audience and the remainder being cross cultural
- 30% of current output is locally-produced including news, community reports and some commissioned drama.

- started with 22 volunteers, most of whom had no previous TV experience and through rising revenues and in-house training has taken the majority of these on to the payroll.

- estimates a regular viewing audience of about 70,000.
- is forming partnerships with local Further and Higher Education providers for media student and graduate placements.

- plans to extend to Derby, Nottingham and Coventry via cable.

- is a symbol of wider developments which could see Leicester become a leading production centre for burgeoning British Asian creative industries

9. To exploit the potential of the Further Education and Higher Education Sector to be a powerhouse for driving the emergence of the cultural industries sector.
10. To harness the strengths of graduates emerging from Leicester College, De Montfort University, Leicester University and other local universities (such as Loughborough – the leading sports university in the UK) to help forge partnerships between the business and education sectors. This might, for example, provide a very valuable bridge between the design strengths of the universities and the business strengths of the fashion sector, in order to establish Leicester's position as the home of an emergent and exciting regional design

### “We have lift-off”

“The tower of the new lottery-fuelled National Space Centre [rises] above the factory roofs and the sodden banks of the River Soar like some giant prop from a 1950's sci fi film... The centre aims to attract no more than 300,000 visitors a year, mostly children on school trips although it should do better than that.

Why the confidence? First because this is not just another museum dedicated to showing a few exhausted rockets and redundant satellites, but a live centre, connected via the University of Leicester to real space exploration... Secondly the education programme is one of the best around... Thirdly, Nicholas Grimshaw's team of architects and engineers have designed one of the most distinctive and intriguing new buildings in Britain ...”

Guardian, March 5th 2001



While much of our culture and cultural life are expressed within our homes and neighbourhoods, it is important that the city centre should be in every way at the heart of the city's culture and its public face. The city centre needs to become the focal point for the city's collective social, economic and civic life, its shopping, its work, its services and the gathering of its communities in acts of celebration.

The city centre is the public face of the wider city, the magnet for visitors from near and far, the cultural hub for the surrounding county and the essence of the place that is Leicester.

It must therefore reflect all that Leicester is – for example, its confidence, its cultural diversity, its fine architectural and industrial heritage, its festivals, its determination to tackle social exclusion, its unique role as a regional centre for restaurants and the range of its food retailing.

Leicester and Leicestershire people should be able to feel proud of the city centre, welcome in it and comfortable with it. It should have a quality, a consistency and a uniqueness that means wherever you are in it, you could not be anywhere else.

Leicester's wider city centre is already home to a range of cultural institutions and attractions. These include, for example: a host of shops, restaurants, cafes and bars, Jewry Wall, New Walk Museum, the Guildhall, Leicester City Football Club, Leicester Tigers, the City Gallery, the Cathedral, Leicester Haymarket, the Phoenix Arts Centre, the Jain Centre and the largest open air daily market in the UK. The Victorian architecture in the city centre is also remarkably fine, although much of its splendour is now to be found at first floor level and above.

Students, who make up 12% of the population during term time, play a significant role in defining and contributing to the cultural economy of the city centre – for example by stimulating new demand for city centre accommodation – and the presence of two major universities is a major contribution to the way the city centre both perceives itself and is perceived by others.

The local and regional transport networks create access to, and ease movement into and around the city centre. Improving these is a key factor in shaping the city's culture, in allowing people to access that culture and in creating an expectation that they will feel safe and welcome as they come into the city to consume its culture. At present, public transport starts to wind down in the early evening and ceases at midnight – creating a range of access problems.

## The benefits of developing a cultural vision for the city centre

- Guide the planning of our streets, spaces and buildings around the lives of our people, and to ensure we value the often very fine built environment.
- Help make Leicester different from other city centres – still attracting the major retail and commercial outlets that it needs, but complementing them with a stronger and more distinctive range of local businesses that reflect the diversity of the city's enterprise, as the very successful outdoor market does already.
- Set standards for quality, accessibility and design which reflect wide cultural influences and are distinctive to Leicester.
- Make us more inclined to be daring, international and visionary in new construction projects.
- Create a vibrant ambience which will attract retail and other commercial activity and new forms of urban living in converted or newly-built lofts and apartments.
- Help place the richness and diversity of the city's cultures visibly at the heart of the city through planning, urban design, public art, horticulture and cultural animation.



- Demonstrate the commitment of the city to quality of life, creativity, and the needs of families and active communities.
- Draw people into regular use of the city centre from all the neighbourhoods, from the county and from further afield.
- Encourage clustering of key cultural organisations.
- Encourage development of well-differentiated 'quarters' with different appeals to different types of user at different times – for example defining areas for people to congregate, stroll, meet and participate in celebratory activities.
- Support the development of a balanced night-time economy.
- Define the role of the city centre in attracting tourists.
- Support job and wealth creation.
- Culture can act as a catalyst for the environmental and economic regeneration of the city centre, and deliver change more rapidly than almost any other form of intervention.
- Attract – and then benefit from – the presence of a substantial student community.

### Some facts about Leicester

- Substantial areas of the city centre, such as the area around Humberstone Gate, are well developed with good property condition and values and active users whilst others, notably St George's, are in poorer condition or derelict.
- Over the last three years, prime retail rates per square foot have risen from £170 in 1998 to £210 in 2001, an increase of 23.5%.
- In line with the Governments' call for more city centre residential schemes, both the commercial sector and housing associations are developing a range of accommodation for individuals and families.
- Currently, within the city centre, 187 new flats have been built, a further 331 are under construction and 477 are awaiting planning permission.

<sup>1</sup> per.com. Neal Moore, Environment and Development May 2001



It is not possible to develop or implement a Cultural Strategy in isolation from those responsible for devising and delivering – for example – the local Transport Plan, the Town Centre Management and Development Strategies, the Regeneration Strategy and the Crime and Disorder Strategy.

An understanding of the culture of Leicester will help to shape the future of the city centre. A vibrant, welcoming varied city centre is essential to the quality and distinctiveness of life in Leicester and Leicestershire- the city centre is, after all, the cultural and economic hub of the whole county.

It is recognised nationally (within the government's Urban White Paper) and internationally (in cities as diverse as Sydney and Barcelona) that culture has a growing role in city centre management and development, and that cultural services, activities, buildings and businesses play a major role in achieving local quality and distinctiveness and in leading and influencing the way the whole city centre grows, develops and is perceived.



# city centre challenges

If Leicester is to resolve some of these issues and realise its ambition to have a welcoming, vibrant and accessible City Centre through which it demonstrates a county wide commitment to cultural excellence and cultural diversity, then a number of key challenges need to be met. It will be essential:

1. To develop a culturally sensitive, holistic and imaginative approach to city centre management which recognises different cultural needs, changing lifestyles and a blurring in the distinction between people's approach to culture, leisure and education.
2. To ensure that the main spaces, the retail developments and extensions, the incoming businesses, and the 'feel' and promotion of the city centre reflect and emphasise the flagship status of Leicester as a place which is not like anywhere else, a place where people of widely different cultures mix, work, play and share together.
3. To ensure that the core Cultural Strategy principles are taken into account in all policies which are relevant to the development of the city centre.
4. To open the city to more radical developments, more exciting architecture and bolder planning and to create better public domain with more areas for public activities, more intermediate (part indoor, part outdoor) spaces, better design, more art, more relevant civic and architectural features and a greater sense of quality.

## Proposed development of a Heritage Quarter

The City Council has produced a set of action plans which set out how they intend to implement the city's Community Plan. One of the proposals is to establish a Heritage Quarter in the Old Town area of the city. A key element of the quarter will be the completion of the Guildhall Visitor Centre in November 2001. It is expected that over time the Quarter will:

- act as a catalyst for regeneration.
- encourage tourists visiting the National Space Centre to come into the city centre.
- enhance and improve access to, and understanding of, the richness of the city's heritage.

## Partners to the scheme include:

- the Leicester Regeneration Agency
- Leicester Cathedral
- the Castle Park Working Party
- the City Council.



## The city centre as a cultural venue

BBC Music Live in 2000, and the New Year's Eve celebrations in 2001 demonstrated how the City Centre can be made to feel welcoming and inclusive for everyone through investment in cultural activity, and provided some of the most successful platforms ever for the city's many cultures to celebrate alongside and with each other.

Music Live attracted over 60,000 people and excellent national press coverage and encouraged the BBC to invest in another major event in the grounds of De Montfort Hall in 2001.

The success of these events must be built on quickly, perhaps through investment in regular, free, outdoor events in and around Humberstone Gate.



### Focus Group participant

"There's not one Asian shop in the centre of Leicester, yet the Asian community makes up 50% of Leicester. If you came off the train at Leicester and walked down into the city centre you'd just think it was a student town."

Anon, March 2001

5. To define clearly which cultural services are better delivered at city centre than neighbourhood level, and how they are going to work together and with providers in other parts of the city.
6. To give a higher profile to the city centre's historic buildings and street patterns where these have been obscured by development in the recent past.
7. To develop a Cultural Quarter that reflects the richness of the city's cultural diversity and creativity and a Heritage Quarter as a secondary, city centre destination for visitors to the National Space Centre – the city's primary tourist attraction.



# city centre challenges

8. To market the city centre successfully as a tourism and retail destination, in part, by taking a much more holistic and imaginative approach to the branding and marketing of the city centre.
9. To improve the vitality and mix of users in the city centre after the shops have closed and to make the City Centre more friendly for families with young children, and young people.
10. To ensure that there is an integrated transport policy and system, a diversification of the cultural offer and investment in the kind of design improvements that will enable all Leicester and Leicestershire communities to use and enjoy the developing amenities of the city safely, affordably and over a longer day.
11. To ensure that there is a cultural dimension to all aspects of city centre management and development (be that street furniture, cultural animation, lighting, colour of buildings, nature of retail outlets or transport systems).



## Independent on Sunday, February 2001

"Leicester has changed enormously over the last couple of years – both the centre and residential areas on the fringes of the city have been redeveloped. Trendy bars and restaurants have popped up all over the place as well as one off shops selling home interiors, clothes and gifts... The city also has an excellent fish market, as well as a large, daily covered market where you can buy local produce such as Stilton and Red Leicester cheeses."

Donna Mawson, 25





## National targets for neighbourhood renewal set by the Government:

### Culture:

Participation, and the provision of services to support participation, in arts and sport, can help address neighbourhood renewal by improving communities' 'performance' on the four key indicators of more jobs, less crime, better health and improved educational attainment.<sup>1</sup>

### Education:

Increase the percentage of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C (or equivalent) to at least 38 % in every Local Education Authority by 2004. A target to reduce the attainment gap at Key Stage 2 (age 11) in English and maths will be announced later in 2001.<sup>2</sup>

Between the cultural life of the individual or family on the one hand, and the city and its diverse cultures on the other lies the neighbourhood. People identify strongly with the area in which they live and this strategy must focus energy and resources on strengthening, celebrating and exploring the culture and diversity of the city's very distinctive neighbourhoods.

Leicester is a tapestry of neighbourhoods, each with different characteristics. Some are made up of people with broadly similar cultural backgrounds, others are microcosms of the diversity of the whole city. Neighbourhoods are unified by a variety of factors – names, a school, a bus-route, an estate, a "village centre", a set of common needs or values. Most of our shared life is lived in the neighbourhood. This is particularly true for children, young people, the elderly and those without access to a car.

The city's neighbourhoods are, in part, defined by their proximity to the city centre and by the mobility, age and income of the people who live in them. Within the city boundaries, there are areas which are predominantly distinguished by their student population, areas whose character is predominantly defined by the ethnic origin of their majority community, areas suffering from multiple disadvantage and affluent suburban areas.

But, perhaps, what particularly distinguishes the pattern of Leicester's neighbourhoods is the relatively high proportion of its population who live in areas of multiple deprivation. The Government's Index of Deprivation ranks 13 of Leicester's wards as being among the most deprived 10% in the UK, and nearly 50% of the city's population live in these areas.

The city's approach to neighbourhood renewal is subsequently very focused on delivering national targets for neighbourhood renewal set by the Government. The Government will soon require local authorities to establish Local Public Service Agreements through which commitments to tackling deprivation at a neighbourhood level can be made.





## National targets for neighbourhood renewal set by the Government – cont'd:

### Government anticipates that to meet the national targets for neighbourhood renewal, local authorities will have to:

- develop a variety of means to work with and consult their communities
- build common purpose and shared commitment
- develop and publicise common aims and priorities
- value the contribution of all partners avoiding domination by particular members or organisations
- share local information and best practice
- identify, encourage and support effective local initiatives.<sup>3</sup>

● ● ● The extensive and localised consultation process through which this Cultural Strategy has been created has demonstrated a commitment by the local authority to start trying to adopt these kinds of practices. To deliver this Strategy, there will need to be real, ongoing partnership between those responsible for regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, education, the environment and culture. Then, the potential for culture to change local environments, build new skills, raise local aspirations, create local pride, generate investment and create opportunities for people to come together to shape the places in which they live, work, play and bring up their children will be released.

In line with government policy as expressed in the Urban White Paper<sup>4</sup>, Leicester is seeking to give much more power and resource to neighbourhoods, so they can take control of their own culture. It is vital that neighbourhoods are able to define themselves and their needs in the full knowledge of their cultural distinctiveness and of the importance of culture to their communities. Neighbourhood cultural life is at least as important to the success of the neighbourhoods as it is to the success of the city as a whole.

Many aspects of culture, however, cannot be tackled or provided at the neighbourhood level. The city centre, new cultural industries, city-wide cultural services and major cultural training opportunities are assets on which people from all the neighbourhoods of the city and county should be able to draw. They need centralised and co-ordinated planning, location in the most effective and accessible places for all and a level of investment that cannot be sustained by any one neighbourhood. But even these Leicester-wide or regional facilities and projects, be they commercial, voluntary or run by the council or public bodies, need to listen to the voice of the neighbourhoods in defining the way they plan and offer their services.

## Employment:

Over the three years to 2004, taking account of the economic cycle, increase the employment rates of the 30 local authority districts with the poorest initial labour market position and reduce the difference between employment rates in these areas and the overall rate<sup>2</sup>.

## Crime:

Reduce the level of crime in deprived areas so that by 2005, no local authority area has a domestic burglary rate more than three times the national average; over the same period, reduce the national rate by 25%<sup>2</sup>.

## Health:

By 2010 reduce by at least 10% the gap between the 20% of areas with the lowest life expectancy at birth and the population as a whole; reduce, by at least 60% by 2010, the conception rate among under 18s in the worst 20% of wards, and thereby reduce the level of inequality between these areas and the average by at least 26% by 2010<sup>2</sup>.

## Housing:

All social housing to be of a decent standard by 2010, with the number of families living in non-decent social housing falling by 33% by 2004, with most of the improvement taking place in the most deprived local authority areas<sup>2</sup>.

2 National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal: a framework for consultation: Executive Summary Cabinet Office, April 2000

3 Local Strategic Partnerships: Summary, Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions, March 2001

4 Our Towns and Cities: The Future Delivering an Urban Renaissance, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

# neighbourhood renewal challenges

To ensure that culture and cultural services fulfil their potential to assist in the process of neighbourhood renewal in Leicester, action needs to be planned which responds to the following key challenges:

1. The local authority needs to engage in practical and meaningful partnerships with local people through which real control over local culture can be devolved to local people. Ensure that the cultural needs and rights of communities are not just protected, but enhanced, when planning the devolution of some aspects of local government to neighbourhood level.
2. To value and empower the voluntary sector as a catalyst for neighbourhood renewal whilst ensuring that developments synergise with and help to deliver the Voluntary Sector Strategy agreed between the voluntary sector and the Council.<sup>5</sup>
3. To implement the Community Plan action plan proposals to increase cultural provision and participation at a neighbourhood level, particularly for children, young people, the elderly and those without access to a car.
4. To develop localised cultural economic development strategies which support the development of cultural industry clusters to create mixed economies and help sustain other local businesses.
5. To recognise and invest in the development of the very distinct identities of each of our communities, for example by: highlighting and celebrating distinctiveness through public art, urban design, landscaping, street furniture, lighting and local festivals; by developing support strategies for cultural businesses; through the imaginative use of libraries as places for showcasing neighbourhood cultural life and by exploiting the potential of new technologies to make connections within and between neighbourhoods.
6. To explore ways to develop the cultural role and offer of existing community based public buildings (schools, youth clubs, libraries, community centres etc.) and open spaces in driving neighbourhood renewal.
7. To make schools available out of hours, in the evenings and during weekends and holidays, for children, young people and adults to access play, sports and arts facilities.

**Culture could be much more of a defining factor in giving people a sense of community within Leicester neighbourhoods:**



Many opportunities for cultural expression or activity are best provided at the neighbourhood level. This is the place to learn and practice a sport, to rent a video, to let the children play safely and imaginatively, to get a group together, to try out learning a skill.

Neighbourhoods can benefit from a clearer understanding of their sense of place – the local heritage or the heritage of a particular community needs to be seen and experienced on the spot.

Access and exclusion can be tackled by creating affordable and appropriate opportunities locally.

Small enterprise in the cultural sector can be stimulated locally and jobs, wealth and pride generated in the neighbourhood micro-economy.

Open spaces, good social and recreational facilities and relevant, locally-defined arts can transform both places and communities.

## Participant in a cultural strategy focus group

“It depends where you live in Leicester – if you live near town there’s lots to do but ... I have to get a bus for half an hour to get into town to do anything – we need stuff that’s spread out more, facilities for young people”.

Anon., March 2001

## The Peepul Centre - Belgrave

Will be a purpose built multi-functional centre of excellence, providing childcare, healthcare and educational training, employment and leisure services of the highest quality.

The centre will be a national beacon for the provision of self sufficient and sustainable community services in the 21st century

## A new leisure centre for the city and Braunstone

In partnership with a range of local partners, the City Council submitted a Lottery bid to Sport England in 2001 to secure funding for a major new sports facility on the site of Wycliffe School in Braunstone. It is anticipated that building work will be completed in 2003, and the resulting swimming pool and exciting leisure facilities will create hugely enhanced cultural opportunities for the neighbourhood and beyond.

## Investing in neighbourhood libraries

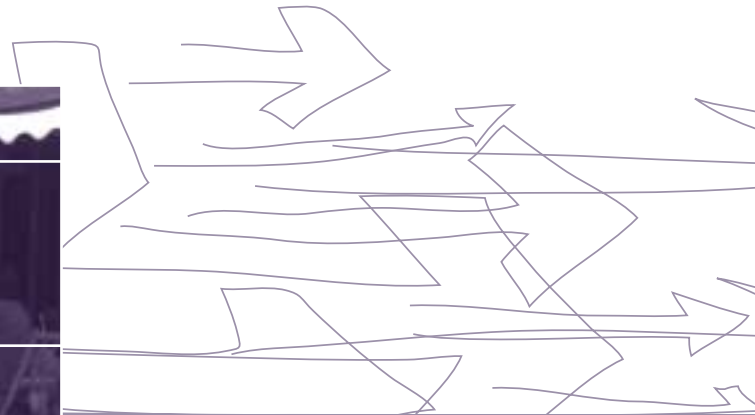
A review of library services across the city was carried out in 2001. After consulting local people, 100 recommendations were made, including Saturday opening at all libraries (implemented in April 2001) and the improvement of library buildings in St Matthews, Stocking Farm and Braunstone. To achieve this resources have been redirected.

# neighbourhood renewal challenges



8. To reinvest in local community based cultural facilities by commissioning research into the development of multi-use cultural buildings rather than the existing single service provision.
9. To foster cultural activity that brings people together within their community (like local festivals, street parties, the school Parent Teacher Associations, maintaining allotments).
10. To balance investment in community based cultural facilities and programmes with investment in major city and county cultural facilities and to create effective links between the two.
11. To re-deploy some cultural resources to enable more extensive participation in cultural activity within communities and to ensure the development of effective outreach and participant/user/audience development strategies by city centre based cultural facilities.
12. To unlock the potential to bring about culturally led regeneration of neighbourhoods through major capital schemes, by, for example, delivering planned major regeneration schemes such as the Braunstone Leisure Centre, the restoration of Abbey Park, the Riverside Regeneration Strategy and ancillary development around the Space Centre.
13. To put in place the mechanisms to ensure effective multi-agency working at a very local level and ensure clear and practical local links to the partnership charged with implementation of this Strategy.
14. Finding ways to enable culture to contribute to establishing links between neighbourhoods, e.g. through heritage and public art trails along the Soar, through festivals, the creation of new public spaces and improved public transport.





## The importance of culture to individuals

Participation in cultural activity, celebration of our own cultural diversity and contributing to the collective culture of our community gives us a better quality of life; it gives us:

- more confidence.
- new skills.
- the chance of doing better educationally.
- better mental and physical health.
- more opportunities to contribute positively to strengthening our community.
- joy and pleasure.
- a stronger sense of identity.
- greater capacity to learn and develop.

**While Leicester is undoubtedly a city of culturally diverse communities,** culture remains an inherently personal thing. While we share common cultural values and behaviours with our friends, family, colleagues and neighbours, what distinguishes us from each other and defines our individuality is our own personal culture. What enables us to define ourselves and to make a positive contribution to society is the freedom to explore, express and celebrate both our cultural uniqueness and our shared cultural heritage – both of which, in Leicester, are often rooted in religion.

We need to be able to do this both when we are alone and in the company of others. This Cultural Strategy is underpinned by the belief that access to this kind of cultural opportunity and freedom of cultural expression are fundamental human rights, and that those with responsibility for cultural provision should do all they can to fulfil *Article 27(1)* of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. This states that "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community".

**Creating the environment** where this is possible depends not only on practical factors like money, transport, opening times, what is on offer and the way a particular cultural facility is managed and designed but also on whether people have the freedom from prejudice, the self confidence, and the health, education, time or other resources to want to participate in and contribute to the cultural life of the city.

## Cultural Strategy consultation, May 4th 2001

"Isn't it great to be in a city like this"

Steve White, Head Teacher, Rushey Mead School



## Key findings of the Leicester City Barometer Survey undertaken in 1998<sup>4</sup>

- 48% of the city population and 29% of the county population go out to watch a sporting event at least once a month.
- 26% of the city population and 19% of the county population participate in sport at least once a week.
- 38% of city and 47% of county residents visit pubs, clubs or café bars at least once a week.
- Over 60% of city and county residents eat out in restaurants at least once a month – more than in Birmingham and Nottingham (52%).
- 38.4% of city residents and 31.2% of county residents are likely to go to a cinema, theatre or live concert on a weekday compared to 30% in Manchester.
- On a weekday evening 27% of city residents who go out for leisure and entertainment choose the city centre for their night out, and 56% use their local suburb. At weekends 35% choose the city centre and 46% remain in their own neighbourhood.
- In selecting a venue for a cultural night out 40% of city residents and 29% of county residents choose the city centre.

### • • • What are the barriers to freedom of cultural expression?

Many barriers exist which stop individuals participating fully in the cultural life of the city:

- Over 50% of Leicester's population live in wards classified as in the 10% most deprived in the UK. Living in poverty can drain people of the practical and emotional resources needed to participate fully in the cultural life of the city.<sup>1</sup>
- The severe and particular health issues associated with poverty affect large sections of the population's ability to enjoy and celebrate their unique cultural identity, not least the fact that people here simply don't live as long. The average years of life lost are 10% higher for women, and 25% higher for men in Leicester than in the rest of the country. One of the ways ill health can be effectively tackled is by increased participation in sport, art and other forms of cultural activity.<sup>2</sup>
- Giving young people the ability to express and enjoy culture will – as recognised in All Our Futures<sup>3</sup> – develop the unique capacities of all young people and provide a basis on which they can build lives that are both purposeful and fulfilling. Schools will play a pivotal role in creating the kind of access to culture that will enable young people to fulfil their potential.
- Individuals questioned during our research cited time, cost, transport, location and safety as the factors most likely to stop them participating in cultural activity and these very practical barriers can limit everyone's ability to participate in the cultural life of the city.
- There are issues around crime, prejudice and access which limit people's cultural freedom, particularly – as identified in the City Council's Crime and Disorder Strategy- in relation to the use of the city centre as the region's cultural hub.

<sup>1</sup> Leicester's Community Plan, Leicester Partnership for the Future

<sup>2</sup> Leicester's Community Plan, Leicester Partnership for the Future

<sup>3</sup> Creative and Cultural Education: All our Futures, National Campaign for the Arts, September 2000

<sup>4</sup> Leicester City Barometer: interim measurement, survey report, Drakes Jardine Ltd, May 1998

# access to culture challenges



## Research to identify barriers to participation

An in depth research project needs to be commissioned which explores in detail the things that stop people participating in cultural activity.

It must address the fact that time, cost, location, atmosphere, cleanliness, transport and safety are all factors which stop people participating in cultural activity but, that what puts people off varies according to their age, where they live, their lifestyle, their own religious or social traditions and what kind of cultural activity they want to participate in.

It should produce information of practical use to the providers of all cultural services about the ways in which they plan and present cultural activity, whether they are in the public, voluntary or private sector.

## The Community Care Plan

This Cultural Strategy links to the Community Care Plan to ensure that those individuals with social care needs can benefit fully from cultural activity.

**Over the next five years** the key challenges we face, if we are to create equality of access to culture, freedom of cultural expression for everyone and the opportunity for everyone to fulfil their own potential, lie in finding ways to resolve or remove some of these barriers. They are:

1. To ensure that cultural provision meets the needs of individuals at all stages of their lives. What is on offer in the city must meet the play needs of children, the entertainment needs of their older brothers and sisters, the leisure requirements of their parents and the social and recreational needs of their grandparents.
2. To identify and lessen the impact of cultural and organisational barriers to individual creativity which are present in Leicester's communities and institutions.
3. To provide opportunities for people to learn to respect and understand one another's cultural heritage, through the programming of museums, libraries, schools, cinemas, parks, sports clubs, sports centres, theatres, galleries, urban design, local media and other cultural outlets.
4. To create safe environments conducive to individual creativity, and in which people can enjoy cultural activities in different settings (e.g. schools, libraries, museums, parks and leisure centres).
5. To create and implement strategies to expand the roles of neighbourhood and community centres, libraries, schools and parks as local cultural hubs which are accessible to all members of the community, and to shift power and resources into those sectors most able to create and offer quality services at a very localised level.
6. To strengthen the voluntary sector which is a key provider of cultural opportunity to individuals.
7. In partnership with those responsible for the Transport Strategy, address the fact that the public transport system is inadequate and expensive and stops people participating as they want to in the cultural life of the city.

## Cultural Strategy consultation, May 4th 2001

“Participation is vital, not just getting people to watch, but to take part, if people are to share each other’s cultures”

Nasseh Bellamy, Leicester United Caribbean Association



### Increasing the opportunities for independent learning

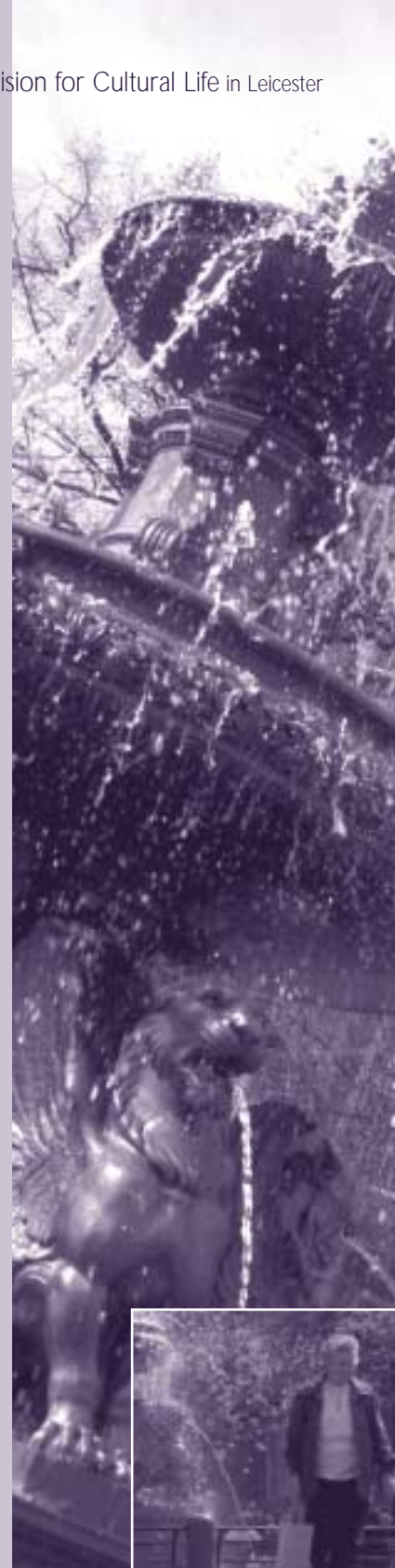
The City Council, in partnership with other Adult and Further Education providers in the City, aims to increase the number of public access PC's in libraries from 55 to 160 by April 2003.

8. To find ways – perhaps exploiting the potential of new technology – to enable people to access information about what's on offer in the city, particularly information about the kind of activity that is provided or happens only at a very local level.
9. To enhance opportunities for people to access educational opportunities, whatever their age, through increased participation in cultural activities.
10. To enhance opportunities for people to improve their physical and mental health through participation in cultural activities.

### Walk for life

This project, which involves the voluntary sector, the Health Action Zone, Loughborough University and the British Heart Foundation:

- encourages participation in low cost cultural activity on people's doorsteps.
- reduces isolation by bringing people together for regular exercise within their own neighbourhoods.
- is directly targeted at people with heart related health conditions.
- effectively minimises the barriers to participation of cost, time, transport and apathy.
- exploits the city's environmental assets- it's streets and parks.



1

## 1. The City Council Arts and Leisure service strategies which underpin A Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester are the:

- Annual Library Plan and Library Review
- Arts Capital Strategy
- Arts Media and Broadcasting Strategy
- Leicester City Heritage Strategy
- Leicester City Museums Service Strategy
- Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy
- Sports Strategy
- Draft Visitor Development Strategy

more information

2

## 2. Key City Council strategies this document is linked to

- The Community Plan
- Behaviour Support Plan
- Children's Play Strategy and Children's Services Plan
- Crime and Disorder Strategy
- Community Care Plan
- Early Years Development and Childcare Plan
- Leicester City Education Development Plan
- Leicester Housing Strategy
- Leicestershire Local Transport Plan
- Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan
- Lifelong Learning Development Plan
- The Leicester Regeneration Strategy
- Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy

3

## 3. Commenting on the draft

If you would like to comment on this consultation draft of A Vision for Cultural Life in Leicester, please do so by Friday July 6th and send your comments to:

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