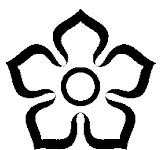


# St. George's Cultural Quarter

Action Plan (2016-2025)



CONSULTATION  
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# Foreword



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**Cllr. Sue Waddington**  
**Assistant City Mayor for Jobs & Skills**  
**and lead for St. George's Cultural Quarter.**

In recent years St George's Cultural Quarter has undergone an impressive development programme which has brought about many changes to create a critical mass of arts and cultural venues and also a place for new creative sector businesses to start up and thrive. The partnership between public and private investment has established Curve, Phoenix, Leicester Print Workshop, Two Queens, LCB Depot and Makers Yard, and an eclectic mix of bars and restaurants which has transformed St George's. More people are now choosing to live in this area creating more activity and vibrancy.

Economic development linked to arts and the creative industries remains one of the City Mayor's key priorities and there is an opportunity to build on the strengths of what has already been achieved in St George's by setting out clear ambitions and actions to further develop and enhance the area.

Our plans between now and 2025 include creating more high-quality workspaces and places to live, continuing to support and promote our arts venues to grow and thrive and encouraging the sustained growth of creative industries. We want St George's Cultural Quarter to be a lively place through the day and with a vibrant evening economy. Our plans to transform St George's churchyard and public space in Orton Square will create a stronger central focus for the area for the community and visitors to enjoy.

We will continue to work closely with our valued partners including the Cultural Quarter Association, Curve and Phoenix to accelerate the development of the Cultural Quarter and promote this area as a home for arts and creative industries with a national reputation.

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# Executive Summary

Much has been achieved in the development of the Cultural Quarter in recent years with several key projects successfully delivered.

The success of Curve, which has seen audiences up by 25% in the last 12 months, and Phoenix, where ticket income is 177% higher than five years ago, has cemented the reputation of the area as a strong arts hub with a regional and national profile. A substantial portfolio of creative workspace for businesses and designers goes from strength to strength with Maker's Yard, Two Queens and Leicester Print Workshop adding to the established offer provided by LCB Depot and Phoenix workspaces.

Other work has included the creation of St George's Street children's play area and the creation of more car parking provision to support the arts venues and evening economy.

Bars, restaurants and cafes have opened around Rutland Street and Halford Street and more people now live in the area than ever before, making it a more vibrant active place, day and night.

The Cultural Quarter Association has formed a Community Interest Company to unite the businesses and residents to develop the creative character of the area as a great place to live, work and explore in partnership with the council.

It is recognised there is much more to do to build on what has been achieved to deliver a step change in what the Cultural Quarter has to offer.

The growing creative sector in Leicester is made up of over 1,600 businesses and nearly 5,000 employees and is a key priority for the council. St George's is the natural home and main focus for this.

Supporting development by the private sector of new homes, cafes, bars restaurants and businesses to enhance the vibrancy of the area will continue to be a priority for the council.

Continued improvement of the public realm will include transformation of St George's Churchyard as a public space linked to an extended Orton Square and creating improved connectivity to the railway station. Improved signage, wayfinding and gateway improvements will help raise the profile of the area and make it more accessible from the city centre and the railway station.

Supporting investment in Curve, Phoenix and other developing arts venues will reinforce the artistic potential of the Cultural Quarter and attract more visitors. Encouraging local artists and creative learning for local people will support grass roots opportunities in the city.

The reputation of the Cultural Quarter needs to be developed further to attract more interest from within and outside Leicester. More active coordinated promotion by the council and art venues will encourage interest to live, work and visit the area and also to invest.

This plan provides the ambition and specific priority actions for the council and its partners to deliver over the coming years. It also provides a commitment and confidence to potential new businesses, residents and investors looking to locate and invest in the area.



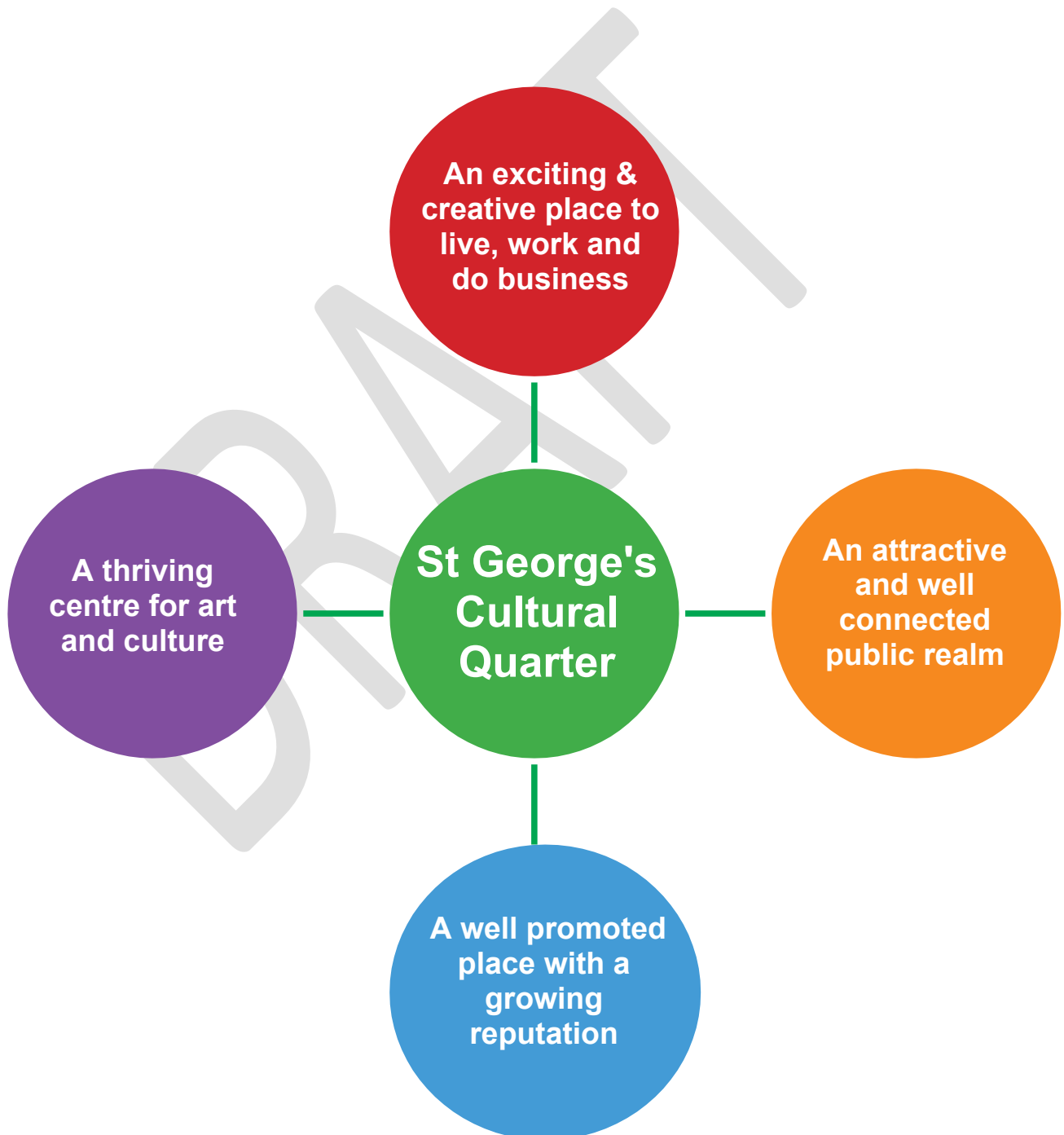
# 1. What we want to achieve by 2025

- To develop a strong reputation for St George's Cultural Quarter, within and outside of Leicester, we will actively promote the area as a creative place to live, work and experience a high quality artistic offer
- To encourage creative sector businesses to relocate, invest and grow in the Cultural Quarter we will support development of 20,000 sq ft of new workspace as part of the LLEP creative sector growth plan.
- To create a more attractive public realm we will transform St George's Churchyard into a public space linked to Orton Square and will invest in improving gateways and signage to assist Quarter visitors
- To accelerate numbers of people living in the Cultural Quarter to bring more vibrancy, and also support for the evening economy, we will actively encourage developers and landowners to bring forward development schemes for new homes cafes, bars and restaurants
- To support a step-change in arts and culture we will work closely with venues to facilitate their development and expansion plans and develop a programme of exciting events to showcase artistic talent



# Themes

The Council will work closely with its partners to deliver actions in St George's Cultural Quarter under four themes:



# Actions to 2025

The following actions will deliver a step change in the St George's Cultural Quarter over the period to 2025. The actions are detailed in Section 3.

## Theme 1: An exciting and creative place to live, work and do business

	2020	2025
1. Support creative sector businesses to start-up and thrive, including identifying grant opportunities and training and apprenticeship/graduate opportunities.	✓	✓
2. Support the development of more creative workspaces to support growing businesses.	✓	✓
3. Encourage more quality places for people to live.	✓	✓
4. Support more cafes, bars and restaurants in the area.	✓	
5. Put in place planning policies to enable the right mix of development to happen.	✓	
6. Enhance visibility of the Cultural Quarter at key gateways.	✓	✓
7. To support the accelerated roll out of Superfast Broadband.	✓	✓

## Theme 2: An attractive and well connected public realm

1. Improve the public realm to enhance the historic character and vibrancy of the area.	✓	✓
2. Deliver a high-quality public realm scheme at St. George's Churchyard.	✓	
3. Identify opportunities to increase the pedestrianised area including at Orton Square.	✓	✓
4. Make the area better connected and more accessible for people by foot, cycle and public transport.	✓	
5. Deliver the 'Legible Leicester' scheme to make it easier to move around the Cultural Quarter and link to other key parts of the city centre including transport nodes.	✓	
6. Ensure there is adequate visitor car, coach and cycle parking in the area particularly serving cultural attractions and the evening economy.	✓	✓
7. Install feature lighting to highlight historic & architectural features in the Conservation Area.	✓	✓
8. Identify and deliver opportunities for new public/street art and other initiatives that visually identify the area as a cultural and creative place.	✓	
9. Address untidy sites, improve cleanliness and general maintenance throughout the area.	✓	✓

**Theme 3: A well promoted place with a growing reputation**

	2020	2025
1. Develop a stronger reputation through effective promotion with partners of what the area has to offer as a place to live, work and visit.	✓	✓
2. Develop a creative sector-based promotional strategy, to make a compelling case to attract development and investment.	✓	
3. Work with partners and visitor attractions to promote the area's unique qualities to the business and leisure tourism sector.	✓	
4. Support the Cultural Quarter Association to promote the area.	✓	✓
5. Work closely with partners to develop a programme of events that promotes the area and showcases local talent.	✓	✓

**Theme 4: A thriving centre for art and culture**

1. Work with key attractors, Curve and Phoenix to support them providing the infrastructure they need to develop and improve their arts & cultural offer.	✓	✓
2. Encourage more workplaces and venues suitable for designer makers and artists.	✓	✓
3. Support artists to be more active in the area.	✓	✓
4. Encourage creative networks	✓	✓
5. Support learning and skills opportunities for local people through arts venues and local arts groups	✓	✓
6. Support local artists, to make a physical artistic mark on the cultural quarter.	✓	





## 2. St George's Cultural Quarter

### Introduction:

St. George's Cultural Quarter is located at the heart of the city centre just a couple of minutes' walk from both the city's main retail space and Leicester Train Station. Bounded by Humberstone Gate/Road to the north, Charles St to the west and St George's Way (A594) to the east, the area is easily accessible from other destinations including London, just a 1 hour 9 minute train journey away. 26 million people are within 2 hours reach of Leicester.

The area comprises of a mix of high-profile listed buildings as well as bold, iconic new ones-the Rafael Viñoly designed Curve theatre for example. Work to regenerate the area began in 2001 with culturally-led capital developments initiated by Leicester City Council which aimed to support the wider creative environment through investment in public realm works at Orton Square.

The Cultural Quarter is home to three of Leicester's award-winning key venues-Phoenix cinema art, café bar, Curve theatre (considered to be one of the country's leading producing theatres) and Leicester Print Workshop. The area is also home to several successful annual events-Skyride Leicester, St George's Festival and Light the Night.

St. George's Cultural Quarter is not just a place to work-in fact it houses the largest concentration of residents in the whole of Leicester City Centre following the conversion of many of the older Victorian red-brick factories into apartments. These residents are important to the area as they create pedestrian footfall in the area 24/7 which not only helps to create an active and vibrant Quarter but also provides custom for local leisure uses such as the restaurants, cafes, bars, cinema and theatre.

The Cultural Quarter has grown over the years and has become an exciting hub of artists and creatives, who have embraced

the workspaces. The Council is keen to continue the momentum with its light-touch nurturing approach, considered important in a creative environment. It has successfully delivered the LCB Depot and Maker's Yard workspaces which have already seen businesses successfully graduate into alternative grow-on spaces, many within the St. George's Cultural Quarter.

More recently, the Council has supported Leicester Print Workshop which has relocated into the Quarter with the help of the Arts Council and other partners. The Council is currently helping the refurbishment of a 15,000sq ft building on Humberstone Gate East to create a music education hub, working closely with the building owner, developer and Echo Factory. The Council remains committed to working with building owners, developers and creative businesses to unlock empty or underutilised buildings for creative uses. Going forwards the Council commits to maximising the use of its own assets to benefit the local community such as the proposed transformation of St George's Churchyard.

The Cultural Quarter is fortunate enough to benefit from several large companies on its doorstep which includes Hastings Direct - a recent Inward Investment success for the city, creating over 1,000 jobs Leicester is a global city and has a diverse and relatively young population with 55% of people under 34. It is home to two renowned universities, producing more than 30,000 work-ready graduates each year.

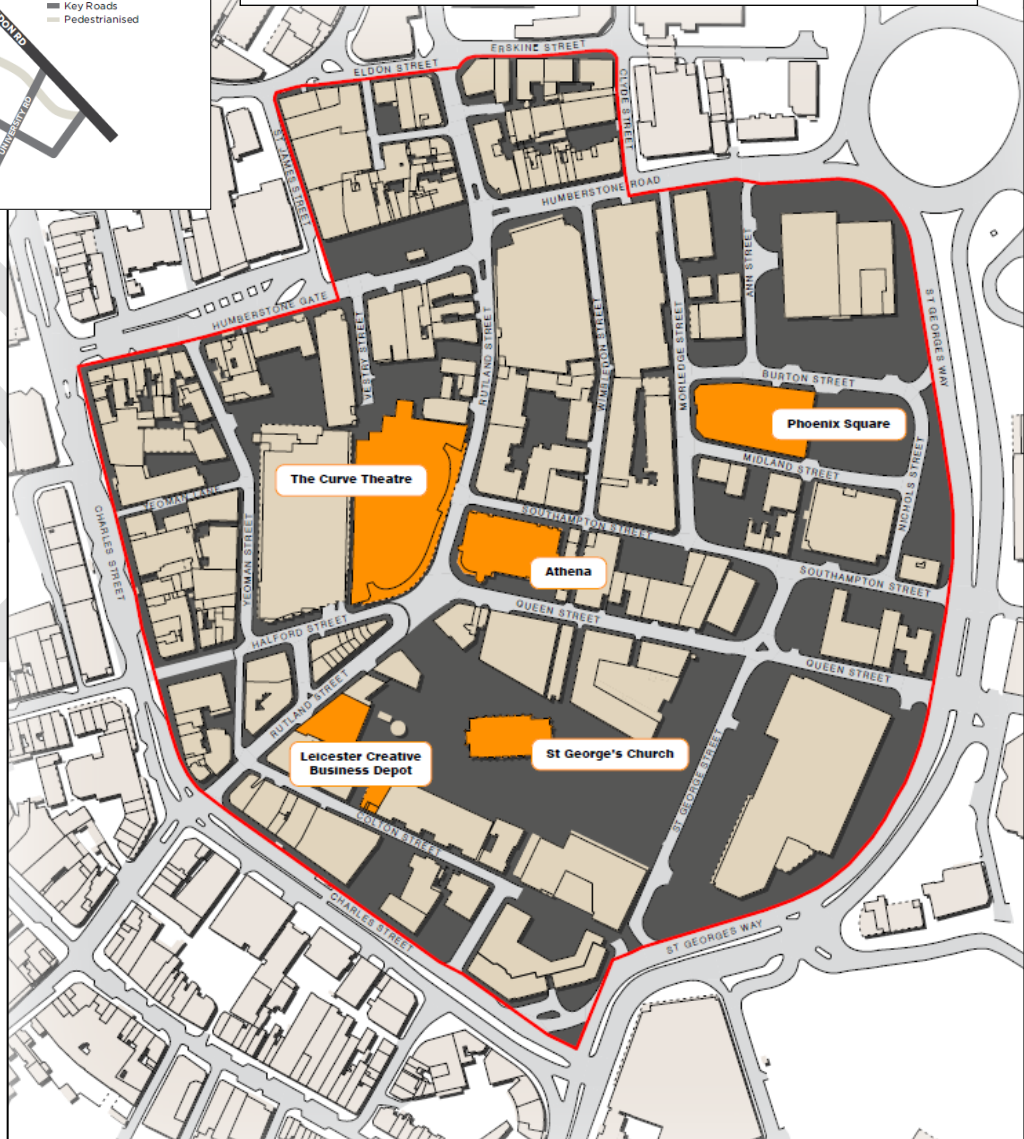
The Council has strong, established relationships with the key partners locally such as the Cultural Quarter Association (a Community Interest Company run by businesses and residents) and continues to work closely with them to develop ideas and thinking.

# Plan of St George's Cultural Quarter

PLAN OF LEICESTER CITY



PLAN OF ST. GEORGE'S CULTURAL QUARTER



### 3. Action Plan

This Action Plan outlines the principal actions proposed to improve the St George's Cultural Quarter area for businesses, residents, and visitors.

The actions are derived from various sources:

- Ongoing Leicester City Council work in the area.
- The Cultural Quarter Association (CQA)-a Community Interest Group.
- A 'Community Planning' event which was held in 2014-a well-attended public event run by the CQA to discuss the future of the Quarter.
- Engagement with Leicestershire Business Voice.
- Leicester and Leicestershire Creative Industries Sector Growth Plan 2015.

The actions have been grouped into four themes:

- Theme 1: An exciting & creative place to live, work and do business
- Theme 2: An attractive and well connected public realm
- Theme 3: A well promoted place with a growing reputation
- Theme 4: A thriving centre for art and culture

Leicester City Council will work together with the key stakeholders in the area such as the CQA (which has a strong active membership of local businesses and residents), Phoenix, Curve, Leicester Print Workshop, St George's Church, owners/developers of significant properties and sites, the community of creative industry businesses, residents and potential funders to make sure that the area thrives going forwards.

The following section lists out the actions proposed to be carried out under each of the above themes.



## **THEME 1: An exciting & creative place to live, work and do business**

### **ACTION 1: SUPPORT CREATIVE SECTOR BUSINESSES TO START-UP AND THRIVE, INCLUDING IDENTIFYING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AND TRAINING AND APPRENTICESHIP/GRADUATE OPPORTUNITIES.**

Leicester City Council provides business support services to tenants within its creative industries workspaces at LCB Depot, Maker's Yard and Phoenix. These services include one-to-one business coaching, hot-desking, business workshops, staff and team development, assistance with recruitment processes as well as strategic planning to help businesses grow. Shared meeting spaces are provided to reduce costs for new business, helping them to focus on business growth.

The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) Creative Industries Sector Growth Plan identifies a number of potential opportunities to develop business in the Cultural Quarter. Further support is recommended through a potential Creative Agency and actions to: link partners in the sector, improve broadband, additional business support advice, assistance through the LLEP Business Growth Hub, finance assistance and cross sector working, particularly with universities and colleges.

The City Council has successfully implemented a Leicester to Work programme which has delivered support for apprenticeships, work experience and graduate placements and other training opportunities. The Cultural Quarter provides further opportunities to develop new talent and also retain more university graduates within the city.

**The Council will work with the LLEP**

and universities to identify funding opportunities to provide support for businesses to succeed, including support through the Business Hub. Proposals contained in the Sector Growth Plan will be further developed where funds permit.

The Council's Employment and Apprenticeship Hubs will target opportunities in the Cultural Quarter for apprenticeships, 6-12 month work experience and graduate placements to retain and develop talent in the creative industries.



'Leicester Print Workshop's recent relocation to the Cultural Quarter presents us with a vast array of new opportunities. Not only do we have a unique, fit for purpose building that will enable us to grow the number of artists who use the space, but we have a higher profile and access to a larger audience for our exhibitions, education programme and shop. As we celebrate our 30th birthday in 2016 we look forward to growing our reputation as a national and international centre of excellence for fine art printmaking'. **Lucy Phillips, Director, Leicester Print Workshop**

## **ACTION 2: SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE CREATIVE WORKSPACES TO SUPPORT GROWING BUSINESSES.**

Several successful workspaces have already been delivered including LCB Depot, Maker's Yard, and Phoenix. The take-up has been such that there is clearly demand for more.

The council's workspaces in St George's Cultural Quarter have proven popular and are currently fully let, suggesting further demand in the area for similar space. The land and property owned by the council is largely already developed apart from the recently acquired land adjacent to Phoenix. This valuable site is ideal for future development opportunities including further workspace. There are however a number of potential vacant or underused buildings in private ownership that may provide good opportunities for additional growth on workspace. Some of these are in key locations in the Orton Square and Humberstone Gate areas.

**The Council will work with building owners and developers to identify opportunities for creating new workspace to allow creative business start-up and growth. A further 20,000sq ft of creative workspace is our target to 2020.**



## **ACTION 3: ENCOURAGE MORE QUALITY PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE.**

A flourishing residential community has grown within the Cultural Quarter, in part due to the nature of the large, Victorian warehouses which lend themselves so well for conversion to apartments.

The residents have become an important part of the community helping to create a sense of place and welcome to visitors to the area. The popularity of the theatre, cinema, bars and restaurants with residents and visitors alike has established the area as a vibrant, safe and exciting area to explore.

The varied programme of festivals and events throughout the year attracts hundreds of people to the area to join with the local residents to enjoy the family entertainment and spectacles. The area is bursting with characterful buildings, largely from the Victorian period. The area is protected as a Conservation Area, meaning that all planning applications are considered in context of their benefit to the historic environment.

Redevelopment of the former International Hotel, including for residential and commercial ground floor uses is a particular priority to address this currently redundant and unsightly building.

The Council is keen to support creative solutions to encourage the provision of high-quality housing. Whilst the Council's approach generally prefers active frontages/uses on the ground floors to attract business and visitors, the height and scale of many of the buildings lend themselves well to upper floor residential units.

**The Council commits to working with owners, developers and architects to identify opportunities, promote high-quality design and to encourage the residential community to flourish by delivering a target of 40,000sq ft of residential space.**

#### **ACTION 4: SUPPORT MORE CAFES, BARS AND RESTAURANTS IN THE AREA.**

The cluster of bars restaurants and cafes around the Orton Square, Halford and Rutland Street areas has developed a stronger presence in recent years. As the Cultural Quarter grows and more people live, work and visit the area, additional commercial opportunities will arise for investors.

These uses create active frontages and vibrancy throughout the day and into the evening, supporting the growth of local retail food and drink business and creating a 'café culture'. Growth from the existing critical mass around Orton Square is most likely, given the number of suitable buildings in this location.

**The Council will provide appropriate support, through its planning system and business support programmes, for new cafes, bars and restaurants in the Cultural Quarter, building on the current successful food and drink offer to grow a critical mass. We will engage with the owners of 6 key buildings to assess their suitability and support their potential development.**

#### **ACTION 5: PUT IN PLACE PLANNING POLICIES TO ENABLE THE RIGHT MIX OF DEVELOPMENT TO HAPPEN.**

Residential and commercial schemes have been developed within the Cultural Quarter. Following the recession however, going forwards, it is important to ensure that the City Council's planning policies support high-quality development and are flexible enough to allow new opportunities to be developed.

**The Council will ensure the Local Plan review includes appropriate supportive policies and guidance to assist the sensitive growth of the St George's Conservation Area.**

#### **ACTION 6: ENHANCE THE VISIBILITY OF THE QUARTER AT KEY GATEWAYS.**

In 2006 the CQ art programme created artworks in sandblasted granite embedded into the floorscape of St. George's Cultural Quarter.

The artworks are situated at entrances on pathways leading to Curve, and were designed with the assistance of Leicester's wider creative community. The 8 gateways were:

Humberstone Gate/ Yeoman Street  
Humberstone Gate / Vestry Street  
Humberstone Gate / Rutland Street  
Humberstone Gate / Morledge Street  
St George Street / Queen Street  
St George's Way / St George Street  
Rutland Street/ Charles Street  
Church Street / Charles Street

The Council has recently installed a projector in its offices at City Hall which projects images during the hours of darkness onto the wall of Ramada Encore Hotel - a key gateway into the Cultural Quarter from the city centre. Local artists based in the Cultural Quarter or people holding events in the area are encouraged to submit images for projection to an independent panel for consideration. The projector also promotes events at the Curve, Phoenix, LCB Depot, Makers Yard and Leicester Print Workshop. The projector serves to highlight a key entrance to St George's Cultural Quarter.

The entrances to the area do not presently maximise the opportunity to promote the Cultural Quarter and what it can offer. This is equally true for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicle drivers.

**The Council intends to create better and more inviting gateways into the Cultural Quarter on roads and paths, including from the Ring Road, Granby Street and Humberstone Gate East.**

**ACTION 7: TO SUPPORT THE ACCELERATED ROLL OUT OF SUPERFAST BROADBAND.**

From work carried out as part of the Leicester Superfast Broadband Programme to identify gaps in the network, it is expected that the Cultural Quarter will receive full superfast broadband (minimum 30mbs) coverage over the period to 2020.

**The Council will encourage private sector delivery organisations to accelerate this programme to get early coverage to support the business and resident community.**

## THEME 2: An attractive and well connected public realm

### ACTION 1: IMPROVE THE PUBLIC REALM TO ENHANCE THE HISTORIC CHARACTER AND VIBRANCY OF THE AREA.

Substantial public realm works were carried out as part of city centre improvements some years back, particularly at Orton Square, Halford and Rutland Street and in the vicinity of Phoenix. The CQ art scheme also saw public art provided to complement and enhance this public realm improvement.

**The Council will carry out further targeted actions to improve the public realm as set out below and will work in partnership with the CQA on these schemes to provide street furniture designed to reflect the, reflecting the creative environment.**

### ACTION 2: DELIVER A HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC REALM SCHEME AT ST GEORGE'S CHURCHYARD.

The Council currently maintains and landscapes the churchyard area, which is the largest green space in the city centre. There are plans to open up and enhance the churchyard to increase natural surveillance and by transforming the space, this will create a community-friendly environment and also help address incidences of anti-social behaviour.

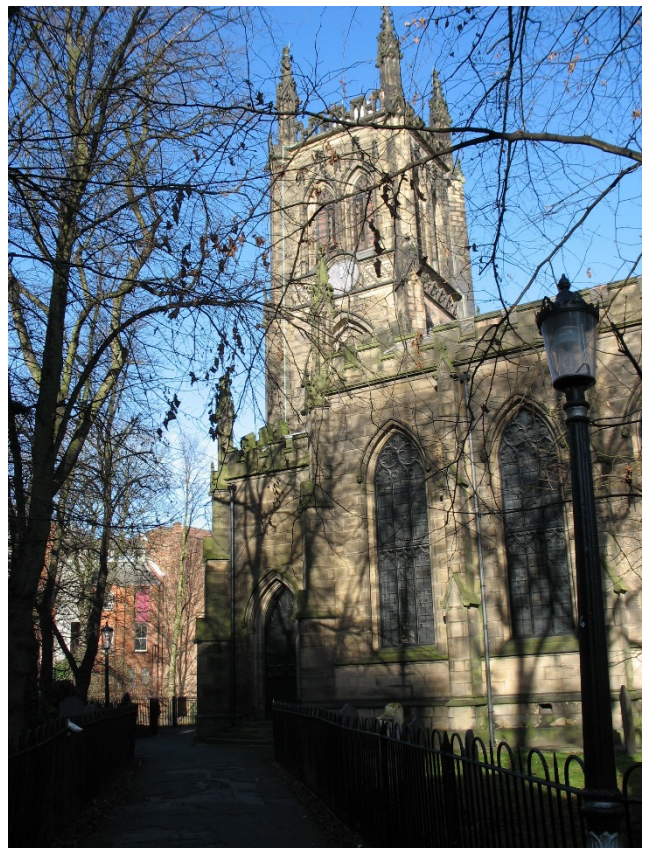
**The Council will in 2016 deliver a high-quality public realm improvement scheme in St George's Churchyard.**

In consultation with the Serbian Orthodox Community who occupy the church for worship, the scheme will be designed to include high-quality footways and the creation of a more visible entrance at the St George's Street end to improve connectivity. An access will also be created into the rear of the City Council's

LCB Depot, which will open up their courtyard area and provide a potential improved space for outside eating and event.

The objective is for the space to become a lighter, brighter, safer area for people to walk through or, spend time in a quiet environment. The scheme will open up the churchyard to the local community and visitors to enjoy, and also create an improved route linking Orton Square with the railway station.

It is hoped that the project, which is at the heart of the St George's Cultural Quarter, will become a catalyst to encourage the reuse of buildings around Orton Square.





### **ACTION 3: IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE THE PEDESTRIANISED AREA INCLUDING AT ORTON SQUARE.**

Orton Square is an important location to offer a critical mass of bars and restaurants for the day and night time economy, which will complement the Square's biggest occupier, Curve.

**The Council will implement an experimental closure of the road through Orton Square between Rutland and Halford Street to create a greater space for food and drink uses around Orton Square and a larger events space.**

This will create an active and animated plaza for local residents and visitors to enjoy. Expanding Orton Square will encourage owners of adjacent vacant and underutilised to bring them back into economic use.

### **ACTION 4: MAKE THE AREA BETTER CONNECTED AND MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE BY FOOT, CYCLE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.**

Currently many people do not realise the close proximity of the Cultural Quarter to the wider city centre and transport nodes such as the railway station.

Visitors at the moment may not even realise they have 'arrived' in the Cultural Quarter as there are few directional signs to assist navigation through the area. Directions to car parking could be clearer and essential visitor information is not available at their fingertips.

Through better signposting and mapping the Cultural Quarter could become more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. If the route to/from the train station and Haymarket Bus Station, for example, was made clearer, and felt safer, then not only would this benefit existing users and visitors but more businesses could realise the wider benefits of being located within the area.

**The council will consider all opportunities to improve connectivity in St George's Cultural Quarter through its ongoing Connecting Leicester Programme.**



### **ACTION 5: DELIVER THE 'LEGIBLE LEICESTER' SCHEME TO MAKE IT EASIER TO MOVE AROUND THE CULTURAL QUARTER AND LINK TO OTHER KEY PARTS OF THE CITY CENTRE INCLUDING TRANSPORT NODES.**

'Cultural Quarter', Curve and Phoenix are all relatively well signposted for road users, however, few pedestrians do not realise how close they are to the Cultural Quarter when in the city centre. Pedestrian and cycle permeability is also difficult through the area due to the lack of good signage and information.

**The Council will deliver its 'Legible Leicester' programme in 2016 which will establish a new wayfinding and information network across the city centre, including within St George's Cultural Quarter.**

The 'Legible Leicester' project aims to facilitate ease of movement for pedestrians to, and through the area with clear and succinct highway and footway signage, wayfinding and mapping systems to create pedestrian, cycle and vehicle accessible environments.

The scheme will be delivered at a time when Leicester is seeing a substantial increase in the number of visitors to the City following the re-interment of King Richard III and the recent sporting success including that of Leicester City Football Club.

**ACTION 6: TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS ADEQUATE VISITOR CAR, COACH AND CYCLE PARKING AVAILABLE IN THE AREA, PARTICULARLY SERVING CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS AND THE EVENING ECONOMY.**

In the last few years the Council has identified a number of additional car parking spaces, including for free evening use. On – street spaces and a new car park at Phoenix have been delivered. Further work is being undertaken by the Council to understand the parking needs of the area.

**The Council will work with key attractors to the area-Phoenix, Curve, and other organisations, to ensure there is the parking available to support their requirements. For visitors to Curve, easily accessible coach drop off and pick up parking will be supported. The Council will also continue to identify additional on-street parking opportunities to assist the evening economy. We will also liaise with NCP to encourage appropriate tariffs and special offers for Cultural Quarter visitors and businesses.**

**ACTION 7: INSTALL FEATURE LIGHTING TO HIGHLIGHT THE HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA.**

Feature lighting was installed as part of the CQart programme several years ago. More recently, the Council has successfully worked with business owners throughout the city centre to deliver successful lighting schemes on some of the most historic and architecturally interesting buildings in Leicester. The St. George's Cultural Quarter, as the 'St George's Conservation Area', has

several prime candidates for lighting and the Council is keen to introduce additional lighting into the environment to highlight the interesting historic character.

The Council has recently installed a projector at a key gateway into the St. George's Cultural Quarter, from Charles Street, which works during night time hours to showcase the work of local artists and promotes events within the area.

**The Council will install an Architectural Feature Lighting scheme at St. George's Churchyard as part of the churchyard public realm scheme. Further opportunities, particularly through commercial development schemes will also be encouraged.**



**ACTION 8: IDENTIFY AND DELIVER OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW PUBLIC/STREET ART AND OTHER INITIATIVES THAT VISUALLY IDENTIFY THE AREA AS A CULTURAL AND CREATIVE PLACE.**

The CQA has developed an ambitious week-long series of artistic events, featuring over 250 local and international creatives. The Cultural Quarter will be transformed with mixed media arts from murals to visual mapping and sculptural 3-dimensional pieces to create Leicester's first ever Street Art Festival.

This Festival will create a bright and refreshing visual arts legacy amongst a back drop of historically significant post-

industrial buildings. The aim is to inspire the city through innovative artist-led programmes.

**Working in partnership with key stakeholders in the city and beyond, the CQA will stage Leicester's first ever Street Art Festival in 2017 to create a lasting visual arts legacy in the Cultural Quarter. The scale of this project and the interest in it is expected to attract many tourists to the area.**

**ACTION 9: ADDRESS UNTIDY SITES, IMPROVE CLEANINESS AND GENERAL MAINTENANCE THROUGHOUT THE AREA.**

Whilst the general environment is of a good standard in the Cultural Quarter there are a number of untidy sites awaiting development and a need for regular maintenance of the street scene.

**The Council will carry out regular audits and walkabouts of the area to identify maintenance and general environmental concerns. It will use its planning and enforcement powers where appropriate on untidy sites, and enhance the general street maintenance regime to improve standards of cleanliness.**



## THEME 3: A well promoted place with a growing reputation

### ACTION 1: DEVELOP A STRONGER REPUTATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE PROMOTION WITH PARTNERS OF WHAT THE AREA HAS TO OFFER AS A PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT.

St. George's Cultural Quarter has a story to be told. Its architectural and historic buildings and spaces are home to residents, businesses, and a creative workforce which makes this a unique place in the city. The area needs to be positioned in place marketing activities to make the most of the physical, social, and cultural characteristics to attract tourists, investors, creatives and residents.

**The Council commits to continuing its place marketing development and activities for the city and character areas including the Cultural Quarter.**



### ACTION 2: DEVELOP A CREATIVE SECTOR-BASED PROMOTIONAL STRATEGY, TO MAKE A COMPELLING CASE TO ATTRACT DEVELOPMENT AND INVESTMENT.

Creative industries is a priority sector for the Leicester economy with the city being recognised as having the second largest cluster of creative business outside of London. The Cultural Quarter is home to over 200 creative businesses and the

council has a strong track record in working with these businesses to help them grow and succeed. High quality workspaces have been developed in LCB, Phoenix and Makers' Yard by the council.

The council is working with private investors to provide support to develop more workspaces in this area. To attract more creative industries from outside of Leicester, it is proposed that research is carried out to identify the factors that would give Leicester the edge over competing cities in successfully attracting creative businesses to the Cultural Quarter and support the LLEP Sector Growth Plan.

The Council's Inward Investment team will help to build an area profile that is relevant to an investor audience and make recommendations for a compelling proposition based on the research results.

**The council commits to undertaking research to identify the relocation requirements of creative businesses they would wish to attract to the Cultural Quarter. For example identifying factors that would lead to relocations to Leicester over other competing cities. It will also input inward investment resources to generate leads to capture businesses looking to relocate, whether from London or elsewhere.**

### ACTION 3: WORK WITH PARTNERS AND VISITOR ATTRACTIONS TO PROMOTE THE AREA'S UNIQUE QUALITIES TO THE BUSINESSES AND LEISURE TOURISM SECTOR.

Curve, Athena and Ramada Encore have been successfully marketed as a new conference hub for the city centre attracting key events such as the Federation of Small Businesses' and Cycle City Active City conferences. This

is a growing market and more conferences have been secured for 2017/18.

The award-winning Curve theatre has evolved into one of the UK's leading regional theatres and attracts thousands of visitors each year. Phoenix has established itself as an independent cinema, art café bar and the eclectic bars and restaurants are popular with residents and tourists.

The area is enhanced by Leicester's unique offer including Leicester Print Workshop, Two Queens and Maker's Yard, all of which add value to the story that is the Cultural Quarter. They also provide additional tourism offers however, it is acknowledged that smaller organisations need support to develop their tourism offer.

The council recognises the importance of the tourism sector and is committed to working in partnership with venues and attractions in the Cultural Quarter and the city to grow visitor numbers and continue to increase the value of tourism.

**The council will continue to provide support to promote the Cultural Quarter as a conference hub to attract more events to increase spend in the area.**

**The Cultural Quarter will continue to be invited to be represented on the Tourism Advisory Board to inform the tourism strategy for the city. New niche markets will be developed, especially group travel and additional coach drop off and pick up points will be provided in the area.**

'In the last 8 years Curve has established itself as a leading a producing theatre in the UK. Last year over 320,000 people came through our doors to see a production, take part in a workshop or attend a conference. The plans for the Cultural Quarter are incredibly exciting and will cement this area of the city as a vibrant, beating heart of Leicester's rich cultural offer.' **Chris Stafford, CEO, Curve**

'The Cultural Quarter Association (formerly CQBA) is proud of the unique relationship that it has forged with Leicester City Council, working directly with them on the area's Joint Steering group. Through this, the Association has become a highly efficient conduit for the area's views and it is hoped that it's recent conversion into a Community Interest Company will facilitate even further the area's growth and vibrancy.' **Jed Spittle - Cultural Quarter Association (CIC)**

#### **ACTION 4: SUPPORT THE CULTURAL QUARTER ASSOCIATION TO PROMOTE THE AREA.**

Support will be provided by the council to continue to promote the venues and activities in the area. The redevelopment of the Visit Leicester website creates the opportunity to better promote the Cultural Quarter's heritage, green space and venues and attractions. The businesses will be able to have a free listing to promote events on the website.

A growing programme of festivals and events take place on Orton Square which is now a recognised event space. These include Leicester Comedy Festival, St George's Festival, City Festival, Indian Summer, Visual Arts Week, and Light the Night. These events attract many visitors which increases spend and helps promote the area to first time visitors. Various guides are produced by the council including the city and county guide and Christmas guide. The Cultural Quarter benefits from editorial promoting the area and businesses have the opportunity of taking advertising space. The guides are distributed throughout Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and neighbouring counties.

Visit Leicester Information Centre provides a service to promote the Cultural Quarter to tourists and also sells tickets for Curve theatre.

New wayfinding is being installed throughout the city centre which will signpost the Cultural Quarter as a destination.

**The council will continue to support the Cultural Quarter Association to promote the area by ensuring they are included in the marketing for the city centre and to ensure that the creative character and vibrant personality of the place is represented.**

**ACTION 5: WORK CLOSELY WITH PARTNERS TO DEVELOP A PROGRAMME OF EVENTS THAT PROMOTES THE AREA AND SHOWCASES LOCAL TALENT.**

Festivals and events can be a great contributor to the cultural and economic development of an area and as a destination promotional tool may increase the demand for local tourism as well as create an image of a place to live, work, and visit.

Phoenix is a member of the Leicester Conference Hub. They have supported numerous bids and generally host 5-6 large conferences per year, sometimes in partnership with De Montfort University, which attract many overseas visitors who stay in Leicester.

**The Council will work with local partners to create awareness of the Quarter as one of the city's 'character areas' through its citywide 'Place Marketing' strategy.**

**It will also facilitate joint programming and events within, and linking to, the Cultural Quarter; and ensure that city events have a presence in the Quarter. Together with partners, the Council will develop a future programme of events.**



## Theme 4: A thriving centre for art and culture

**ACTION 1: WORK WITH KEY PARTNERS, CURVE AND PHOENIX TO SUPPORT THEM PROVIDING THE INFRASTRUCTURE THEY NEED TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE THEIR ARTS & CULTURAL OFFER.**

Curve and Phoenix are both successful venues in St. George's Cultural Quarter and they are now beginning to consider how they might expand to significantly increase visitor numbers and the cultural event programme.

**The Council will work with both of these key partners to assist with their expansion plans.**



**ACTION 2. ENCOURAGE MORE WORKPLACES AND VENUES SUITABLE FOR DESIGNER MAKERS AND ARTISTS.**

The Council is committed to providing suitable spaces for designer makers and artists. The Council will work with building owners to encourage the inclusion of affordable workspace within buildings, and work to join up the workspace offer at Makers Yard, Leicester Print Workshop and Two Queens that already exists.



**ACTION 3: SUPPORT ARTISTS TO BE MORE ACTIVE IN THE AREA.**

The Council has recently installed a projector which projects onto one of the main St. George's Cultural Quarter gateways. Artists in the area are encouraged to submit their work to an independent panel for their work to be showcased at night time. The location is in a particularly prominent position facing theatre-goers arriving on foot from the city centre.

The Council and partners will work to identify funding to invest in cultural activity. We will seek to encourage local artists within the Quarter to become actively involved in developing the cultural offer.

**The Council will work with developers and building owners to deliver more workspace suitable for artists and design-makers. The Council will also provide exhibition space for local artists to benefit from and showcase their work and work to join up the cultural offer.**

**The Council will also support the CQA in their ambitions to hold a Street Art Festival, as well as support the public art and festivals agenda.**

**ACTION 4: ENCOURAGE CREATIVE NETWORKS.**

There are several regular networks already in existence and the importance of knowledge sharing is recognised.

The creative sector, unlike others, mostly comprises of one person businesses. It is common for such businesses to work collaboratively to add value to their own businesses-perhaps tapping into colleagues' skills to fulfil larger contracts in terms of plugging skills gaps or additional freelance support. Organised networking events can help to strengthen these links creating a stronger, more inclusive community.

**The Council will work collaboratively with partners and local stakeholders, including artists, to support and amplify the range of creative networks in the area. The Council will support with resources and venues where appropriate, to encourage further networking opportunities.**

#### **ACTION 5: SUPPORT LEARNING AND SKILLS OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL PEOPLE THROUGH ARTS VENUES AND LOCAL ARTS GROUPS.**

The Council has been working closely with local education providers to encourage graduate retention to ensure that skills and knowledge aren't lost to the city. It has recently supported Echo Factory-a 15,000sq ft music education provider on Humberstone Gate East. Its degree courses are due to start in October 2016, and are accredited by the University of Wolverhampton.

Phoenix hosts the largest student/arts initiative in the Cultural Quarter. De Montfort University's 'Film Studies' course is based at Phoenix and works to develop the next generation of film industry professionals. Over 100 students are taught 4 days a week, which adds significantly to the morning footfall. Students also organise an annual film festival in the Cultural Quarter.

The entrepreneurial route is often a favoured direction of creative graduates. The city's universities have recognised this and are working to provide appropriate business space for these business opportunities to flourish. The Council too, with its business support

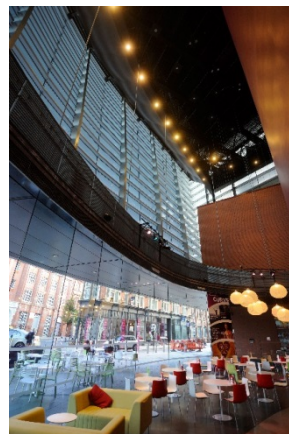
offer, is in a position to encourage these prospects.

**The Council commits to working with businesses and the universities to retain graduating students and encourage more, high-quality work experiences for students and graduates from creative backgrounds.**

**It will explore opportunities for low-cost start-up space suitable for graduate needs. We will involve 2 queens in the progression and development of this action. Together with the networking opportunities listed in Theme 4, Action 2 and the business support listed in Theme 1, Action 4, this will stimulate the right business environment and provide the support tools which new-start businesses need in order to be able to grow and thrive.**

#### **ACTION 6: SUPPORT LOCAL ARTISTS, TO MAKE A PHYSICAL ARTISTIC MARK ON THE CULTURAL QUARTER.**

To involve and support local artists to create and install small arts interventions in the public realm using various art forms, as part of a rolling programme of small creative commissioning opportunities. These small artworks will collectively create the impression that you are in a cultural quarter, and create a sense of local ownership, pride and connections between artists, arts organisations and the physical locality. The art works will use humour, be non-traditional where possible, bring surprises and create a buzz. The work will aim to appear over time, giving the viewer the desire to visit the area regularly, to see what is new where.





## 4. Monitoring Impact

This Plan sets out ambitions and specific actions up to 2025. A baseline report was carried out by Leicester City Council in 2014 and will provide a basis for regular monitoring of delivery progress until the end of the action plan period. This can be reported annually and shared with partner groups. A regular meeting to monitor ongoing progress is held with the council, partners and stakeholders including the key arts venues and business and resident representatives.



