

Title of meeting:	Culture, Leisure and Economic Development Decision Meeting
Date of meeting:	5 February 2021
Subject:	Social and Economic Access to Culture, Leisure and Sport
Report by:	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Wards affected:	ALL
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline Culture, Leisure and Sport's development of an economically accessible model in recent years and to highlight the importance of continuing to provide social impact as the city looks to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel was considering this subject before Covid-19. However it is felt important to provide an update now given the impact of the pandemic.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the long-term development of a low-cost, high impact model in delivering culture, leisure and sports and its contribution to widening social and economic access is noted.**
- 2.2 **That an emphasis on social impact and social value in delivering culture, leisure and sports services going forwards is noted.**

3. Background

- 3.1 In recent years Cultural Services have sought to offer services which are more economically sustainable by generating income but which are also more accessible for our most vulnerable residents and communities.



- 3.2 In recent years there has been a move in the wider cultural sector towards viewing cultural services and venues as commercial operations as a result of the need to be more financially sustainable. Whilst this has made them more financially viable it also risks marginalising audiences who may derive the greatest benefit from engagement.
- 3.3 A number of initiatives have taken place aimed at widening access to culture and leisure. These have included free entry to some venues, removing fines in libraries, changes to opening hours to meet demand, audience-focused marketing, initiatives such as Heritage Open Days, or moving services to new locations, for example Southsea Library in Palmerston Road. Recent initiatives to embed culture around the city have involved placing heritage around the city. These have included panels marking people from the city who were killed during the First World War and the D-Day campaign. Their location around the city means that there are few barriers to access, and they empower and encourage residents to explore and discover.
- 3.4 The City Council receives Experian MOSAIC demographic data annually which allows us to analyse the socio-economic background to our communities and to identify trends year-to-year. Overall, the MOSAIC data suggests that while there are a growing number of students in the city and a high proportion of graduates who remain here, a significant proportion of our residents are either within lower income segments or within groups like 'transient renters' and 'rental hubs' who, whilst slightly better off, are likely to be living in rented housing and might not have much spare income or time and competing demands for their finances and their leisure time.
- 3.5 Portsmouth City Council has commissioned Cultural Audiences Reviews from The Audience Agency, which have been repeated with a level of regularity since 2005. The most recent research in 2020 covered arts, galleries, music, museums, theatres, libraries and music venues, managed or supported by PCC and independent. We therefore have a long-term understanding of trends in cultural participation.
- 3.6 The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation, released in September 2019, records that Portsmouth's most deprived Lower Super Output Area is ranked 192nd in the country (in Charles Dickens ward), whilst the least is ranked 31,332nd (Drayton and Farlington ward) out of 32,884. The IMD data suggests that a significant proportion of Portsmouth's population - 75.2% - live in areas in the lower 50% of deprived areas in the UK.
- 3.7 The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Taking Part Survey 2018/19 found that 50.2% of adults in Britain had attended a museum or gallery within the past 12 months. 32.9% of adults in Britain had visited a library within the past 12 months, while 77.4% had engaged with the arts. Taking Part also suggests that 39% of people living in areas in the lowest decile of the IMD visited a museum or gallery within the past 12 months, while for the highest decile the figure was 58.4% (a difference of 19.4%). 32.3% of people in the lowest IMD decile had visited a



library in the past 12 months, compared to 35.2% in the highest decile (a difference of 3.2%). In areas in the lowest decile 66.8% of people had engaged with the arts, compared to 85% in the highest decile (a difference of 18.2%). Where somebody lives - and the socio-economic characteristics of an area - is clearly a factor in the likelihood of them engaging with culture and leisure. Taking Part suggests that the 12% of residents living in our most deprived communities are on average 11.2% less likely to visit a museum, 0.6% less likely to visit a library and 10.6% less likely to engage with the arts than the UK average.

- 3.8 The Turning the Tide of Inactivity report, published in 2014, described inactivity as an 'epidemic'. Inactivity is taken not only to mean non-participation in sport, but also a lack of active travel or low-intensity exercise such as walking. It suggests that the biggest health benefits to society will be gained by people who are currently inactive being encouraged to do even a little exercise. Turning the Tide of Inactivity found that inactivity levels are ten per cent higher in the most deprived areas in England compared to the least deprived. It reveals a general correlation between inactivity and premature mortality; areas with the highest levels of inactivity also have the highest levels of premature mortality. Portsmouth is ranked 120th out of 150 authorities nationally for levels of activity amongst residents, the second lowest local authority in the South East. 33.05% of residents are classed as inactive, and 304.5 premature deaths in the city were attributed to low activity levels. The cost of inactivity within Portsmouth to society was quantified as £21.7m per 100,000 people, or over £43.4m for the whole city.
- 3.9 Portsmouth is home to 13 accredited museums - one of the highest concentrations outside of London - of which Portsmouth City Council operates six. Museum attendance levels in Portsmouth reach into seven figures annually. Portsmouth Museums and Visitor Services are currently developing a new Museums Strategy.
- 3.10 Museums use their collections and knowledge to support society in direct ways. They bring people together and promote community cohesion; they support learning, tailoring their programmes to the curriculum and local education priorities; they assist scholarly research through partnerships with universities; they can promote better health – for example, using collections to work with patients with mental health issues; and they employ and nurture a wide range of skilled people. They also offer spaces where people can explore and understand their place in the world.
- 3.11 Although museum audiences have grown significantly in recent years, there is still significant inequality in participation across socio-economic groups. Evidence from the DCMS Taking Part Survey shows that nationally 63% of people from higher socio-economic groups visit museums, compared with only 36% from lower groups.
- 3.12 In 2017 DCMS published the Mendoza Review into museums in England. It found that free entry - at national museums and other venues - has had a dramatic impact on widening participation, suggesting that admission fees are a significant barrier. This aligns with our experience in Portsmouth that admission fees are the biggest



obstacle to access. Mendoza also warns that ‘...if museums are considered to be a leisure attraction and within the experience economy (for many, they are), then they are in a crowded marketplace.’

- 3.13 The Mendoza Review also suggests that access to culture can play an important role in placemaking. The Local Government Association’s 2017 report on the role of culture in placemaking defines it as what “draws on the combined assets of heritage, people, buildings and landscape to create places for people to fall in love with... giving people the opportunity to connect their individual stories with collective narratives, helping to make their place feel like home”.
- 3.14 Analysis commissioned by the Happy Museums Project suggested that increased happiness and self-reported health can be attributed to visiting museums, with people who visit museums valuing that participation as being worth about £3,200 per year.
- 3.15 Portsmouth City Council operates nine libraries, and has recently confirmed a No Fines and Reservation Fees policy to increase access after a successful pilot since 2018. The sector body for libraries - the Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals advocates for the benefits that public libraries deliver. These include connecting people with information, providing public access to knowledge and information, promoting reading to all ages, enabling lifelong learning, contributing to digital inclusion, serving as community hubs, combating loneliness and social isolation, promoting values such as property, equality, citizenship and democracy, and working with disadvantaged groups.
- 3.16 In 2014 DCMS published the Independent Library Report for England. It records that in England over a third of the population visit their local library, but that in the poorest areas that figure rises to nearly a half. The report also argues that despite the growth of digital technologies there is still a need for modern, safe, non-judgemental, flexible spaces 'where citizens of all ages can mine the knowledge of the world for free, supported by the help and knowledge of the library workforce'. It argues that this is particularly true for the most vulnerable in society who need support and guidance and to children and young people who benefit from engagement with libraries outside of the formal classroom environment. It also argues that libraries underpin communities as not only places for self-improvement, but by offering support, help, education, and encouraging a love of reading. They can help residents to apply for a job, seek housing benefit, or understand their pension rights or the health solutions available to them or to learn to read.
- 3.17 As a city without a surrounding rural 'donut', Portsmouth's parks and open spaces - including the seafront - are even more important to our residents as they are for many the only option for outdoor exercise and activity. As a small but densely populated city exercise outside is even more important for mental and physical health. When social distancing measures were first introduced on 17 March 2020 Portsmouth's parks and open spaces experienced 60% more activity than before. Even during lockdown Portsmouth's parks were still relatively busy, averaging



- between 25% less busy than normal to at times being busier than before lockdown was introduced.
- 3.18 When social distancing was relaxed in mid-May the city experienced prolonged periods where parks and open spaces and the seafront were on average 50% busier than normal, and at time as high as 200%. Between mid-May and late July there were only six days when parks and open spaces were less busy than the baseline. What is particularly clear from the google mobility data is that Portsmouth's parks were busy on a sustained basis for long periods and regardless of weather, weekends and holidays. On 24 July 2020 activity in local parks was on an upward curve at 125% busier than normal.
- 3.19 BH Live operate seven sports facilities on behalf of Portsmouth City Council. We have been working closely with BH Live recently to realign sports facilities around community needs, including redeveloping the Pyramids into a soft play venue and considering options for the future of Eastney Swimming Pool and Wimbledon Park Sports Centre.
- 3.20 The Sport England Active Lives Survey 2017/18 records that 33.1% of people in Decile 1 in Portsmouth were inactive compared to a 20% average for Portsmouth. Of people in Portsmouth 65% in Decile 1 had done no activity within last 28 days, compared to a city average of 47%.
- 3.21 The Portsmouth Leisure Card was introduced over 20 years ago and is available for residents receiving means-tested benefits. It enables discounted access to PCC operated or supported sports facilities and museums as well as partners such as the Historic Dockyard, Southsea Skatepark, No6 Cinema and the New Theatre Royal. The most common discount offered is 40%. BH Live have introduced the Experience Card Access Scheme for users receiving benefits and support. A list of current discounts can be found in Appendix A.
- 3.22 During the Covid-19 pandemic services have pivoted to provide access during lockdown and social distancing which also reflects wider digital innovation in society. This has included online deliveries such as Facebook Lives, increased social media and civic events such as Remembrance Sunday being delivered online. Heritage Open Days 2020 was delivered completely online and Bookfest 2021 is being delivered online. Libraries have also been offering click and collect services.
- 3.23 Our events team organise and support a large number of free events annually. These include civic events such as Mayormaking and Remembrance Sunday, as well as events such as the Rural and Seaside Show, Southsea Food Festival and Armed Forces Day.
- 3.24 The social benefits of engaging with culture and leisure are well-established. Health and wellbeing figures suggest that even incremental increases in access deliver significant benefits to the local authority and other organisations, in terms of socio-

economic outcomes which are effectively savings by relieving pressures on other budgets.

- 3.25 Recent policy announcements from central Government and funders such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England suggest that they will increasingly be looking for evidence of projects having a legacy in health and wellbeing. The Local Government Association has recently published a Social Value Toolkit. Due to the economic climate and a decline in lottery sales applications to funders will be much more competitive and bids will increasingly have to emphasise intended health and wellbeing outcomes. This is likely to be even more so after Covid and the focus that it has shone on public health.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 Research and policy from sector bodies suggests that engagement with culture and leisure has significant health and socio-economic benefits for residents, in particular among our most vulnerable communities.
- 4.2 Participation in culture and sport delivers savings to the authority in terms of health and wellbeing and increase life opportunities for some of our most vulnerable communities, improving socio-economic outcomes for the city. It addresses the causes of social and economic challenges in society.
- 4.3 National and local statistics also suggest that often the audiences and communities who would most benefit from engagement are less frequent attenders.
- 4.4 There are significant social and economic benefits of engaging with culture. They encourage activity, deliver health outcomes and increase aspirations and confidence, as well as offering more life opportunities to more people. These are all key outcomes that deliver towards the City Council's corporate objectives and the new City Vision.
- 4.5 Research and sector guidance suggests that rates of engagement are affected by specific barriers. Many of these are either social or economic and include cost, time, Geography, Transport, sense of ownership, physical appearance of facilities, quality of the offer, familiarity, competition and user-friendliness.
- 4.6 Broadening participation with culture and leisure benefits our services in terms of increasing visitor numbers and helping us to make a more compelling case to funders. It also helps to evolve perceptions of culture and leisure services by demonstrating the core benefits that they bring to the city.

5. Integrated impact assessment

- 5.1 Integrated Impact Assessment is attached

6. Legal implications

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 There are no financial implications arising from these recommendations.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:

Appendix A: Leisure Card Discount List
Appendix B: Integrated Impact Assessment

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Portsmouth Cultural Audiences Review	
Index of Multiple Deprivation (2019)	link
Portsmouth Experian MOSAIC data (2019)	
DCMS Taking Part Survey	link
LGA: Making the most of your museums: a handbook for councillors	link
LGA: Delivering Local Solutions for Public Library Services	link
DCMS: Mendoza Review into Museums in England	link
DCMS: Independent Library Report for England	link
MA: Museums Change Lives	link



The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/
rejected by on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development