



Portsmouth

CITY COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE & LEISURE
SCRUTINY PANEL

Engagement with Culture & Leisure - widening
social participation in Portsmouth

Date published: 24 March 2023

Under the terms of the Council's Constitution, reports prepared by a Scrutiny Panel should be considered formally by the Cabinet or the relevant Cabinet Member within a period of eight weeks, as required by Rule 11(a) of the Policy & Review Procedure Rules.

PREFACE

Engagement with Culture and Leisure across Portsmouth should be of paramount concern to ensure that those facing barriers to engagement are offered the greatest assistance in achieving access to cultural and leisure facilities with relative ease.

Portsmouth can be proud of a number of initiatives put in place by different organisations that go a long way to increase and widen access to culture and leisure. However, as this report sets out, there are a number of ways in which the Council can improve its offer and signposting to services available to residents which would help to increase access and engagements as well as properly monitoring such improvements.

At a time where the BBC are cutting back on a number of its orchestras and the BBC Singers, we must show that Portsmouth is striving to improve its cultural offering rather than holding back or diminishing this. Through such initiatives as the Portsmouth Leisure Card, we could see this improved and widened to many more residents.

As Chair of this Panel, may I also take this opportunity to thank all Witnesses for taking time to attend panels and providing us with the evidence of the work being done in the city and helping to highlight any gaps that need addressing. Thank you also to all of my fellow Panel Members and Allison Harper from Democratic Services for their assistance in preparing this report. I formally commend this Report to Cabinet."

Councillor George Fielding
Chair, Economic Development, Culture and Leisure Scrutiny Panel.

Date: 24 March 2023

CONTENTS	Page
Purpose of the Report & Recommendations	3
Background	4
The Local Picture	5
Evidence & Conclusions	5

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to present the Cabinet with the recommendations of the Economic Development, Culture and Leisure (EDCL) Scrutiny Panel's review of the engagement with culture and leisure and widening social participation in Portsmouth.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet/Cabinet Member:

- a. Consider greater advertising of the Portsmouth Leisure Card;**
- b. Reviews and updates the eligibility criteria for the Portsmouth Leisure Card;**
- c. Reviews the places the Portsmouth Leisure Card can be accepted, including old and new businesses, with greater engagement with culture and leisure providers across the city;**
- d. Creates a webpage for listing Portsmouth Leisure Card participating partners with the discounts they offer;**
- e. Increases the numbers of Looked after Children and their carers who are aware of and take up the Portsmouth Leisure Card;**
- f. Reinstates the reports from the Audience Agency Project to increase the demographic knowledge on engagement with culture and leisure providers across the city;**
- g. Congratulates the Kings Theatre on their work with different ethnic groups and dementia groups;**
- h. Congratulates the Groundlings Theatre for their work with the Detectives of the Conan Doyle collection;**
- i. Congratulates the Guildhall Trust on their work with schools providing workshops and the Dance Live events;**
- j. Returns the price of the piano hire in the Portsmouth Central Library to its previous price - reversing the recent 40% increase in prices;**
- k. Congratulates the Library Service for the removal of reservation fees and fines;**
- l. Keeps all library buildings open to the public as they are an essential space for the City Council and essential warm and safe spaces for residents;**

- m. Repairs the moving floor of the Mountbatten swimming pool which is a key feature for accessibility of the pool;**
- n. Supports the Mobile Library Service;**
- o. Consider the installation of new facilities in the north and northwest of the city where there is a lack of provision;**
- p. Creates a cultural network to enable all organisations within the city to share data and information to avoid doubling up on the work being done;**
- q. Welcomes the creation of the Museums Trail and recommends it should be extended to other cultural premises to further encourage engagement with culture and leisure.**

3. Background

The Scrutiny Management Panel prioritised this topic for review at its meeting held on 18 September 2019.

The topics that had been suggested by the Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services were:

- Heritage Regeneration
- Access to Culture and Leisure
- Performance Venues
- Visitor Economy
- Volunteers
- Food Economy

The topic of Access to Culture & Leisure was chosen recognising the social value of increasing cultural audiences. National research had also suggested that access to culture and leisure can have significant social and economic and other life opportunities to those who are not always accessing these services.

Scope of the Review

The review looked at ways to increase social participation via the following objectives:

- a. Consider the wider social value and health benefits of involvement in culture and leisure.
- b. Review the existing provision, take up and support given to lower income families (such as the Portsmouth Leisure Card).
- c. Investigate the barriers to engagement (such as pricing, transport to and siting of venues and activities)
- d. Hear how external providers seek to increase participation.

- e. Examine 1 - 3 possible pilot initiatives linked to funding opportunities to address barriers and encourage increased participation.

The panel met twice more on 20 January 2020 at the Civic Offices and 25 February 2020 at Southsea Library.

The initial panel members comprised Councillors George Fielding (Chair), Will Purvis (Vice-Chair), Frank Jonas BEM, Hugh Mason, Jeanette Smith and Robert New. The standing deputies were Councillors Jason Fazackarley, Hannah Hockaday, Scott Payter-Harris and Linda Symes.

The covid pandemic then caused considerable disruption to scrutiny across the Council and the panel's next meeting was not until 29 December 2022 when the panel agreed to continue with the review as set in September 2019. This was agreed by the Scrutiny Management Panel on 16 January 2023. The first meeting to receive evidence was held on 12 January 2023.

The Panel members now comprised Councillors George Fielding (Chair), George Madgwick, Lee Mason, Stuart Brown, Abdul Kadir and Gemma New. The standing deputies were Councillors Charlotte Gerada, Tom Coles, Ian Holder, Mark Jeffery, Leo Madden, Robert New and Benedict Swann.

4. The Local Picture

For many years Portsmouth City Council (PCC) has supported low-income families to access culture and leisure opportunities through schemes such as the Leisure Card and the BH Live experience. The Council is conscious of the social importance of keeping public libraries accessible through initiatives such as removing fines, keeping museums free and offering free events in the city. There is clear evidence from Experian MOSAIC research into cultural audiences that price sensitivity is key for many of the lower income residents, and recent national research suggests that access to culture and leisure can have significant social and economic impacts and offer life opportunities to our most vulnerable communities.

5. Evidence and Conclusions

Monday 20 January 2020

At the meeting on 20 January 2020, evidence was received from Stephen Baily, Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services. He introduced his team with Claire Looney (Partnership and Commissioning Manager), James Daly, (Cultural Development and Projects Officer) and Jane Mee, (Museums and Visitor Service Manager) attending.

Stephen Baily provided the background to the current model of delivery (see minutes of the meeting at Appendix A). The panel also heard from Adrienne Pye and Dan Cowley from the Audience Agency who presented their report (at Appendix B).

Tuesday 25 February 2020

This meeting was held at Southsea Library and considered:

1. Case studies from Southsea Library
2. The value of cultural and leisure engagement - literacy, learning and wellbeing education
3. Libraries and core library initiatives
4. Targeted access work
5. Value of volunteers - Friends of Southsea Library; adults with learning disabilities.
6. Evolving access

The panel were given a tour of Southsea Library by Lindy Elliott, Library and Archive Services Manager. The public meeting was held in the café area with members of the public in attendance. Lindy Elliott gave a presentation (see Appendix C).

The minutes of this meeting outlining the evidence presented can be found at Appendix D.

Thursday 12 January 2023

The panel met at Portsmouth Gymnastics and Tennis Centre, Portsmouth and received evidence from:

- Paul Tilley - University of Portsmouth (Ravelin Centre)
- Hermione Garner - Andrew Simpson Sailing Centre
- Rob Cunningham - BH Live

Also, in attendance were:

- David Moorman - Strategic Development Manager, Sports and Leisure, PCC
- David Evans - Seafront Manager, PCC on behalf of the Sports Council
- Mark Woolnough - PCC recreation

Andrew Simpson Sailing Centre

Hermione Garner told the panel that approximately 20 - 25% of users of the centre received some form of subsidy or were fully funded to attend. Means testing was not undertaken by the centre but the centre worked with schools for referrals based upon the 'pupil premium'. In addition, the relationship that the centre had with PCC was key, in particular 'HAF Fun Pompey'. Hermione advised that the foundation gave direct grants to some users.

Hermione noted that 2021 had been a particularly good year for self-funders attending and this reflected the UK leisure industry generally as people were out of covid lockdown restrictions but could not go abroad. 2022 had seen a drop in self funders.

Transport was considered a barrier to engagement. The Centre had one minibus which, whilst primarily for schools, was used outside of term time for other groups. Additional minibuses would assist given the location of the centre. Geographically, the children who attended came from all over the city.

It was acknowledged that more could be done to promote the centre, particularly to the BAME community. The centre had tried to advertise as much as possible and agreed that promotion through the Council's 'Flagship' magazine would be beneficial. The foundation had a fundraising manager who worked across all the sites.

BH Live

Rob Cunningham advised that, for various medical reasons, residents were given three-month referrals to BH Live and these were subsidised at a concession rate with the remainder being self-funded. Often the three-month period was an initial test period and the referral at the concession rate continued for a time thereafter. These members received full membership. After the referral period some converted to full membership and others continued on a 'pay as you go' basis.

Rob provided a full analysis of pool use across the city encompassing all pools at the given time for both the pre and post pandemic world.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2022	45192	48422	48294	49863	50966	51905	55283	48990	58809	53613	50187	79720	641244
2021				13190	25714	29821	33729	33576	37875	39124	51374	44560	298963
2020	49589	46758	32705					9777	12638	13909		11700	191076
2019	51223	51059	48923	50733	55497	48875	42498	45195	44731	46401	48583	40250	573968

Rob advised that BH Live offered a 40% discount to Portsmouth Leisure Card holders. All Portsmouth schools could use the BH Live facilities free of charge with 58 schools making use of the Mountbatten Centre.

University of Portsmouth (Ravelin Centre)

Paul Tilley told the panel that the university do not offer a discount for Portsmouth Leisure Card holders but wouldn't object to doing so, but the subsidy would need to be paid for by a body other than the university. They had received enquiries about discounts, but none related to the Portsmouth Leisure Card. On those occasions they had been signposted to BH Live facilities.

The Langstone Harbour pitches would remain, and the hockey pitches would be upgraded and whilst the university would like additional pitches, additional locations had not been identified.

In relation to memberships, there were two cheaper options open to the public, but these had sold out and the centre was full in terms of capacity (8000 members). This membership comprised more students and less public than had been expected. The public may use the facilities on a 'pay as you go' basis (approximately 3000 people do so). The geographical demographic of users was not yet available but a full analysis would be available in the summer of 2023.

At this meeting, David Moorman, referred the panel to a number of useful resources:

[Sport England's Ten Year Strategy](#)

[Energise Me](#)

[Sport England's Future of Public Sector Leisure Report](#)

Following the meeting David Moorman sent through, the following information on the Portsmouth Leisure Card, for the panel's consideration:

Portsmouth Leisure Card

The Leisure Card originated in the 1990s as part of the Council's commitment to tackle poverty. The card is available to:

Primary users: Portsmouth residents (PO1 to PO6) on means tested (income based) benefits.

Secondary users: Foster Carers and Looked after Children in supported accommodation and asylum seekers.

The card is issued for a 12-month period and can be renewed provided the application is still eligible. It entitles the bearer to a range of discounts (usually 40%) on a range of cultural and leisure opportunities in the city.

The card is advertised/promoted via the following:

- *City of Sanctuary*
- *Flagship Magazine*
- *Revenues and Benefits renewals*
- *Children & Family Services, including HAF and Pupil Premium*
- *BH Live*
- *City Libraries*
- *City Housing Centres*
- *Portsmouth City Council website and Cost of Living Hub*

The period under review below looks at the 3 years from 2020 to 2022 inclusive.

Service Improvements - In January 2020 the service launched the online leisure card application process. This improved customer turnaround times as it avoided double entry via a paper form.

Sustainability - the online process also meant a reduction in paper usage. In addition, since summer 2021, the cards purchased have been produced on material that is recyclable.

Statistics¹ on issued card applications

Overall cards issued.

During the pandemic the card applications dropped considerably (as expected). They have now recovered and exceeded pre-pandemic levels (64% increase from baseline), suggesting that residents are fully engaging in the offer and that demand is strong.

Year	Total cards issued
2022	4257

¹ Cards are issued per household, so card numbers can represent from 1 up to 5 cards.

2021	1135
2020	534
2019 baseline	2596

Breakdown by eligible benefit shows that the majority of users are applying under Income Support (now Universal Credit) and this has been consistent for the past 3 years.

	Asylum Seekers	Council Tax Benefit/CT support	ESA/JSA	Foster Care/LAC in Supported Accommodation	Housing Benefit	Income Support/Universal Credit	Pension Credit
2020	4	48	34	11	62	70	20
2021	0	77	49	17	93	210	35
2022	12	238	110	26	157	1037	51

Breakdown by postcode area shows highest demand in PO1 and PO2 consistently over the past 3 years:

	Charles Dickens, Fratton	Nelson	Hilsea, Copnor, Baffins	Milton, Southsea	Southsea, Somerstown	Farlington, Drayton, Cosham, Paulsgrove
Area/Ward	PO1	PO2	PO3	PO4	PO5	PO6
2020	141	149	29	65	114	36
2021	287	225	116	191	208	108
2022	849	1168	341	544	635	720

Statistics on usage

Statistics on usage area available for the discounts on council services or contracted council services. Usage statistics are not available from

independent suppliers. Council services or contracted services under the Leisure Card include:

- Beach Hut weekly rental
- Allotment hire
- BH Live leisure

Beach Hut Weekly Rental Hire

Beach Hut weekly hire is available throughout the year to Leisure Card holders. The percentage of leisure card holders taking advantage of the offer has increased in the past year, perhaps due to promotion efforts.

Year	Total Beach Hut Weekly Rentals	Leisure Card rentals
April 2020 - March 2021	35	9 rentals, 26% of total rentals
April 2021 - March 2022	69	14 rentals, 20% of total rentals
April 2022 - to date	52	22 rentals, 42% of total rentals

Allotment Rentals

Allotment rental is available throughout the year to Leisure Card holders and demand has remained consistent.

Year	Leisure card rentals	Percentage of total allotment holders
November 2019 to October 2020	96	5.41%
November 2020 to October 2021	91	5.30%
October 2021 to November 2022	97	5.41%

BH Live Leisure Centres

A Leisure Card holder is qualified for a free BH Access Card which enables discounted activities at BH Live Sports Centres. Activities include swimming, casual gym, fitness classes, Exploria and badminton/sports hall bookings.

Currently, BH Live have 189 Leisure Card members using Mountbatten Centre, Charter and Pyramids. Weekly use of the leisure card is around 500 - 800 visits per week.

Further documents for consideration were sent through for the panel by Stephen Bailly, Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services. These were:

- EDCL Scrutiny Panel - Access to Culture and Leisure Briefing Paper and it's addendum (see Appendix E & F)

- Cost of Living Briefing Paper (see Appendix G)
- [Warm spaces - Portsmouth City Council](#)

Monday 30 January 2023

The panel met at the Guildhall Portsmouth and received evidence from:

- Susanna Collier - Groundlings Theatre
- Andy Grays - Guildhall Trust
- Paul Woolf - Kings Theatre
- Angela Parks - New Theatre Royal
- Aysegul Epengin - Portsmouth Film Society
- James Ralls & Terri Ralls - Victorious Events.

Also present at the meeting were Clare Watkins, Business Development & Projects Manager, James Daly, Cultural Development & Projects Officer and Claire Looney, Commissioning and Partnership Manager.

Angela Parks - New Theatre Royal

Angela provided the following evidence:

- Across the whole company there was difficulty engaging with those from lower incomes or those with other barriers to access. The best way to engage people is by organisations they already have a link with.
- A central, detailed list of organisations to link with would be highly valuable to cultural organisations when trying to reach out to hard-to-reach parts of the community to encourage engagement.
- One challenge is finding an audience for events, so a suggestion was made for a general PCC social media account to promote events and a 'What's On' in Portsmouth and Southsea (especially free events) which could be utilised by organisations running cultural events. This would help better promote events across the city.
- Two diverse characteristics that prevent people from accessing culture and leisure - one is income, the other is within certain communities/areas there is a feeling of 'this is not for them'. More could be done to encourage these sectors to feel comfortable or less intimidated in the different settings/venues. A platform for cultural organisations to come together and promote opportunities with entry points lower down the scale (smaller events).
- There was awareness of the Leisure Card, but discount was not given for this. However, free spaces are offered to the same groups of people eligible for the card. If the theatre has tickets left at short notice, particular organisations/charities are contacted, and the spare tickets offered for use by the organisation.
- The theatre offers concessions.
- Other events are run as free as possible especially for those who would struggle without a discount.
- The theatre tends to run professional productions rather than amateur productions. The tough financial period the theatre has just gone through limits the ability to offer discounts due to its own financial circumstances.

- A strategic away day had been held to define forthcoming objectives which included a special post dedicated to community projects. More details would be available in the next 6 months.

James & Terri Ralls - Victorious Events

James & Terri provided the following evidence:

- As many local people and local organisations as possible are involved and engaged in Victorious events.
- Engagement is also with Portsmouth Creates, the Council and the University.
- In the last year, Portsmouth Creates involved 2500 people in projects across the city. These are not just in Southsea but across the city, including the north of the city.
- Issues arise with transport problems and moving people around the city, geographical issues and space.
- People in Portsmouth are keen to attend but don't often come out of their immediate living areas. Portsmouth is hungry for culture so trying to bring it to them instead of the other way around.
- Victorious is keen to have smaller events across the city - there is space but need the willingness and planning. They work all around the country and in Europe.
- 25% of local caterers are given a stall for free. Small stalls are filled with people making homemade items that come through either Portsmouth Creates who run the 'We Create' markets and local creatives.
- Victorious had 180 local bands involved and this year will be taking one local band from Portsmouth on a bus touring around - 'The Road to Victorious' and they will then record an album.
- Insurance cover required for businesses to attend events is signposted through their insurers to arrange a package just for that specific event.
- Victorious had not heard of the Leisure Card and do not offer discounts for it or for people on lower incomes. Victorious tickets start cheap and increase in price as the year goes on and the event date is closer.
- Victorious involves charities and provide free tickets for people with access needs. British Sign Language interpreters are at both main stages.

Andy Grays - Guildhall Trust

Andy provided the following evidence;

- The core purpose of the Trust is - 'To deliver inspirational opportunities so that people want to engage with culture and the creative economy'. The Trust has been running the Guildhall since 2011.
- The Charitable Trust set up a learning participation programme in 2013 and the 'Get Involved' programme.
- The Trust had a close working relationship with the Portsmouth Music Hub and parts of the building are given over free for community use with a close relationship with the Community Hubs.
- In 2018 the Trust started producing their own events such as Comic-Con to engage with a wider demographic.
- Commercial events are run to maintain commercial viability and produce income to maintain the building and venue.

- The Trust visit schools to offer free workshops and content to give young people the opportunity to join in, not just with performance but also with off stage skills such as stage management and lighting technicians.
- The Trust engaged with 40 schools in the first year, 62 schools in the second year and was due to engage with 72 schools (roughly 6000 young people) in 2023.
- There was awareness of the challenges in terms of cultural engagement in particular, the divide between the different parts of the wider city as well as for people from low-income households.
- The Trust have £550k from the Arts Council for a dedicated, creative space for young people to develop their creative potential which will offer free provision and free access for young people to come together, focusing on 14 - 25-year-olds. This will be created in the large basement of the Guildhall.
- The Trust did not give discounts for the Leisure Card. Prices for the commercial events are set by the promoters. The Trust is working on a monthly pass with their events and ticketing partner, which will offer hugely discounted access to as many events as they would like in the studio.
- The Trust offered a series of discounts depending on liaison with potential hirers. The main hall is offered free one day a year to the Lord Mayor and some discounts are offered to PCC. There is a free annual summer ball for those young people who cannot attend the usual summer balls.
- The toilets are being refurbished.

Susanna Collier - Groundlings Theatre

Susanna provided the following evidence:

- The charity took over the operational running of the theatre in April 2020 with the charity values being about community.
- There is a drama school, including for adults and productions are self-produced. This involves stage management, participation, and engagement in the arts.
- The theatre is run mainly by volunteers, and they put on local events for arts and crafts.
- The space is also hired out commercially to produce income. The charity survives on its own income and grants and has no ongoing funding.
- The theatre is located in the Charles Dickens ward with good engagement with the local community.
- Pricing is reviewed regularly, and the recent panto was half the price compared to other pantos in the area.
- If any tickets are not sold the theatre reach out to local communities to use the tickets.
- There are group pricing options available.
- Groundlings had not heard of the Leisure Card and did not offer reductions for this although they do provide concession ticket prices.
- They have been involved in the Charles Dickens Project which provides a 2-year pathway for young people with particular needs whereby they use the Conan Doyle collection on a one to one basis.
- There is a challenge in terms of access to the upstairs area for those with disabilities - fund raising is ongoing to remedy this.

- The charity was hoping to employ a Community Lead Developer when funds allow, and a grant had been applied for to deliver a bursary for drama scholarships. Drama school taster sessions are free.

Paul Woolf - Kings Theatre

Paul provided the following evidence.

- The Charity has had many challenges in terms of funding and the building repair, age and design that impacts on community work.
- Commercial events govern the prices to be charged.
- The annual Pantomime is the theatre's own programming allowing links to the community to be built with the ability to set prices and see a different demographic attending. 6500 seats are released at £10 a ticket.
- Community programming in the year includes two amateur dramatics productions who receive the benefit of professional resources. There is a scholarship available.
- The theatre reaches out to different parts of the community and more deprived areas. The Arts Academy goes into schools.
- The charity is highly dependent on volunteers.
- The Charity would like to work more collaboratively with the other venues in the city to all deliver at an affordable price.
- The Charity does not give discounts for the Leisure Card but noted they have given away over a thousand free tickets during the year. If there are any unsold tickets, they will reach out to different organisations and give the tickets away.
- Seats are blocked out in the venue for disabled access in the stalls. This access is being considered in the regeneration scheme.
- Initiatives on discounted tickets have been tried with the Albert Road small traders.
- The venue was given over to the Dementia singing group who attended once and did not return, despite being offered it any daytime.

Aysegul Epengin - Portsmouth Film Society

Aysegul Epengin provided the following evidence (for more detailed information see Appendix H):

- The Southsea Community Cinema is 9 months old and fills the gap for less mainstream films.
- Partners to share the building or investment is being sought.
- The Elden building screening room at the University of Portsmouth had been offered to them free of charge to help reach as many people as possible.
- The challenge exists that not many people are aware of the cinema. The venue is run by volunteers.
- Private screenings are offered, and the venue is good for family screenings. Private hire helps with the funding.
- There is a training room available on the first floor for use by community groups. This was going to be used for a film making course.
- Discounts could be offered for the Leisure Card, but overall funding needs to be considered. Senior sessions were offered on a Tuesday afternoon but there was no take up.
- Preparations are underway for the outdoor cinema in the summer (June, July) to generate income.

- There is disabled access with a disabled toilet next to the cinema room. All the furniture is movable to allow for disabled access. The maximum wheelchair capacity is 4 - 5.
- The venue has given screenings to local schools. They engage on a one-to-one basis to show films for schools in the morning. The space can also be used for educational purposes.

Thursday 9 February 2023

The panel met at the Portsmouth City Museum and received evidence from:

- Claire Looney, Commissioning and Partnership Manager, Seafront Services.
- Lydia Mellor, Events Manager, Seafront Services.
- Sarah Lindley, Operational Manager, Community Centres.
- Ross Fairbrother, Manager, D-Day Story.
- Matthew Sheldon, Executive Director, National Museum for the Royal Navy and for Mary Rose Trust.
- Joanne Bushnell, Portsmouth Cultural Education
- Jane Singh, Visit Portsmouth Tourism and Marketing Manager,
- Nicole Clannachan, Head of Housing Community Services

Also in attendance were:

- Clare Watkins, Business Development & Projects Manager
- James Daly, Cultural Development & Projects Officer.

Jane Singh, Portsmouth Museums Service

Jane attended to present on Tourism and Marketing and also as Acting Head of the Museums. In relation to tourism and marketing, less expensive and free activities are actively marketed as much as possible. Jane provided documents that are already in the public domain to consider.

- Tourism and Visitor Economy Strategy 2023 - 2028 (Appendix I)
- Portsmouth Museums Strategy (Appendix J)
- Portsmouth Museums, Stakeholder and Audience Consultation (Appendix K)
- Museums Strategy Consultation Paper (Appendix L)
- Portsmouth Museums, additional information (Appendix M)

In relation to Museums there had been consultation work carried out on engagement with museums. The City Museum was free and had a wide range of visitors. Cumberland House Museum was also free and had a good local following. The Charles Dickens birthplace is open at weekends.

Jane outlined the main strategic objectives of the service which were to be more relevant, more in the thick of things and to be more environmentally sustainable. Some activities had already started with a new exhibition opening in the summer all about the seashore with co-production and involvement of local people in the decisions being made.

The Service had a new Engagement Officer with activities planned to reach out to young people and those who don't currently use the service. The service had a

wide range of volunteering activities and had engaged with the Kickstart programme - some of whom now work for PCC.

Work was underway to move collections online in order to make them more accessible. The Service aspired to create a focus group to ensure more engagement from residents. Jane advised that all Portsmouth Museums are free apart from the D-Day Story.

The Conan Doyle collection, bequeathed to the city and held in the Central Library has an extensive programme to work with the collection. The service was currently considering how best to archive the more than 60,000 objects. The collection is being used to upskill adults with learning disabilities which had proved very successful. This empowered people and gave them confidence and transferable skills.

Jo Bushnell, Portsmouth Cultural Education Partnership and Aspex

The service had been in the city for 42 years and Jo provided the panel with the Generate Impact Report 2022 for Aspex (see appendix N) and a link to a short film <https://aspex.org.uk/exhibition/generate/> and an Impact report here https://issuu.com/aspexportsmouth/docs/impact_report_2021-22_issuu

The service operates gallery space in the Vulcan Building at Gunwharf Quays and seek to create activities and projects to bring together different elements. Their mission is to create an arena of collaborative community and they work both nationally and regionally. They are a National Portfolio organisation supported by PC and the Arts Council.

50% of visitors are from Portsmouth with a total of 20,000 - 25,000 visitors in the exhibition space.

The learning activities have a community reach such as Family Saturdays which are free drop-in sessions. Portsmouth HAF work with the Portsmouth Museum.

They have community engagement at key events and take their mobile arts studio out and about such as into the community parties at Hilsea, Cosham and Somerstown. They also attended the May Fair and the Festival in Victoria Park and the Kite Festival which had huge numbers covering a broad demographic. They also attend Victorious Festival every year.

The service works with schools, further education and higher education in Portsmouth and across the region. Running since 2005 is involvement with people with dementia and a carers support group. The service is reflective, encouraging creativity from early years to a later point in life.

The service works with volunteers and took part in the Kickstart scheme. They are part of the Cultural Education Partnership.

The service does not run studio spaces but they have one free of charge for a short term residence. The service disconnected from Arts Space Portsmouth in 1991 and the upstairs of the premises is not used by them.

Lydia Mellor, PCC Events Team

Seafront Services has supported over 200 events along the stretch of the seafront including large scale free events, such as the Kite Festival all attended by residents in the city.

The service supports commercial organisations, charities, schools, businesses and individual. The programmes encourage people of all ages, genders and abilities to come together. The event spaces across the seafront are quite flat making them very accessible to all.

Lydia provided examples of events bringing communities together such as the Jubilee Street Parties - applications were received from every ward across the city. The service supported organisers by providing PCC public liability insurance and with street closures. Lydia noted that the appetite for people to come together was huge, especially after Covid. The forthcoming Coronation should have the same impact.

The service also puts on large scale events in Victoria Park which is quite a central location with good public transport links. The service has supported free community parties in Hilsea and Cosham which provided local residents the opportunity to engage with a range of different groups.

In relation to health and fitness, there are events such as the Great South Run and other walking and running local events.

This year will see Commonwealth Day as an opportunity to celebrate all the cultures and religions across the city.

In relation to commercial events, the service work with then to ensure free input across the city. The service is hoping to expand the Band Stand events across the city along with the 60+ Festival. The Southsea Food Festival allows support for local business prioritising Portsmouth based businesses.

Lydia confirmed the service will consider holding some events in Baffins, such as picnic events as the only event currently is a car boot sale in the summer.

Sarah Lindley, Community Centres

Community centres hire out their spaces to local groups - this is their core business and helps promote social values

There are barriers to access in the north of the city - the accessibility to services is not as good as in the south of the city. A volunteer hub has just been agreed to be set up in the Cosham Community Centre and there is a uniform swap in Paulsgrove library.

In the south of the city, the barriers noticed are trying to reach the BAME community and a new multicultural group for women is being set up.

The service is always looking for ways to work with other services in the city and has non-activity space that can be rented by commercial business to help with the cost of running the buildings.

The facilities in the north of the city are old and not fit for purpose so the service is in the process of looking at alternative options. There are limitations with the building in Cosham only having one large room so it can be a struggle to accommodate ad-hoc events. The service has reviewed its pricing structure for all community centres to ensure good affordability for residents. There is the potential risk should a new community centre in Cosham not be established before the decommissioning of the old centre, for residents to go elsewhere and not return.

Claire Looney, Seafront Services

The city has wide ranging public spaces which are very accessible for residents in the area and is free at the point of access. During the pandemic the use of the public open space increased by over 200% and the service has not seen a drop off since, with people using it for lots of different reasons. Not having housing right up to the shore is a huge asset for the city.

Claire noted the ongoing coastal defence work which is currently impacting on public areas and will be ongoing for the next few years and advised consideration had been given to accessibility issues. She discussed the bus options for the seafront including the vintage double decker buses that run during the summer.

In relation to water safety, there are seasonal lifeguards indicating safe areas from July to September and the service works closely with the lifeguard volunteers and RNLI.

Beach huts are available to hire on a weekly basis for which Leisure Card holders can receive a discount - the use of this has increased. There are plans to acquire extra beach huts with consideration being given to more accessible beach huts. There are plans for decking from the beach huts to the promenade.

In relation to accessibility for all to the beach and water, Claire updated on the design and issues with the ramps and matting being trialled. She highlighted the problems with the shifting shingle on the beaches which mean there is no easy solution to the problem. The service has two wheelchairs for hire to enable access to the water but there are problems with exiting the water so further risk reviews are needed on the use of these. Disabled parking is available close to the matting.

Ross Fairbrother, D-Day Story

The D-Day Story is managed by PCC. The Museum had received two lottery funded grants, one for the Landing Craft and one to fully redevelop the museum. The museum has a target to re-engage with a new and younger demographic of visitors. The service has an international visitor market due to being the only Museum dedicated to D-Day and is widely known across the UK.

The Museum offers volunteering options and currently have over 30 volunteers as part of the team. There is a wide demographic within the volunteer community. The Museum took part in the Kickstart programme and have employed people through this avenue and for some it is their first experience of working.

The building is completely accessible due to its flat design. The full range of accessibility options can be found here <https://thedaystory.com/plan-your-visit/accessibility/>

The museum holds a number of different events during the year and have an active social media presence. For schools, there are specific workshops held in November and March which are hugely popular.

The Overlord Tapestry is still on long-term loan to the museum.

The service offers discounts to Leisure Card holders. The museum is free on some occasions such as Armistice Day. Discounts are available for veterans and the armed forces.

Matthew Sheldon, National Museum of the Royal Navy & Representing Mary Rose Trust

Matthew advised that he was also representing the Mary Rose Trust. Both museums had recently applied for an Arts Council grant but were not shortlisted.

In August 2021, they combined on a joint venture to market both museums. They are separate Trusts, and they rely on self-generated income and although they have received some help from PCC, they receive no revenue funding. Covid and inflationary pressures have impacted on their incomes. There have been 470,000 visitors to the Historical Dockyard in the year to date.

The Trusts rely on admission fees but do discount quite heavily and there are targets for social benefit. Local residents are offered a discount from December to March which also includes some SO postcodes. Naval Base employees receive a discount as does the Leisure Card but there is not a huge take up for this. The Trust liaised with PCC on refugee discounts.

Matthew updated on the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard Operations: Pupil Premium pilot project (see appendix O) in conjunction with PCC, to design a scheme for families that would struggle to afford entry. Free annual tickets for 2 adults and 2 children were offered to all families in Portsmouth entitled to Pupil Premium in liaison with PCC education. Between mid-July and end of December, 2048 tickets were issued and 48% have been used. The tickets were used multiple times resulting in 7500 visits. Take up was strongest in PO1 and PO2 and weakest in the north of the city. The project will be reviewed in the coming months.

Matthew advised that the new 4D theatre at the Mary Rose will be opening in March.

Other reports and weblinks

- Better Lives Through Culture & a link to one of the funded projects with Portsmouth Creative Skills [Digital Me Drawing on Our Lives in Portsmouth](#) (& see appendix P)
- Housing Neighbourhood & Building Services - Community Centres (Appendix Q)
- Cost of Living - response to Strategy Team - July 2022 (Appendix R)

Monday 13 March 2023

The panel met at the Portsmouth City Library and received evidence from:

- David Percival, Libraries and Archive Services Manager
- Catherine Burland, Volunteer Futures

Also in attendance were:

- Clare Watkins, Business Development & Projects Manager
- James Daly, Cultural Development & Projects Officer

David Percival, Libraries and Archive Services Manager

David provided an update on the activities of the library service in the city. He update the Panel on recent developments for the library service.

- Cost of living support - 'Warm places, Warm Spaces' agenda where all branches provide free hot drinks with board games and activities for all ages.
- During February half-term there was a breadth of activities put on at all of the branches for families.
- Rhyme and Storytime during the week was well attended. Southsea library run these four times a week and the Alderman library in Baffins runs these on a Friday morning and this is really well attended.
- The whole service is comprised of the Public Library Service and the Archive Service, both of which are statutory services. The Archive Service is being accredited by the National Archive with re-accreditation taking place later in the year.
- The School library service is a traded service with the council providing advisory services and books on loan to schools. The service also includes developmental activities to excite children about reading, sharing reading and talking about books with other pupils.
- The Portsmouth Book Awards has three different categories:
 - Year one for reception pupils with a prize of a picture book.
 - Year five with an event at the Kings Theatre with 2000 children in attendance.
 - Year 9 award is a longer novel for secondary pupils with nearly 4000 pupils taking part annually.
- The service holds literature quizzes for year 5 & 6 pupils, primary year 7 & * and secondary. The secondary quizzes take place at Victory Lounge at Fratton Park and the Mountbatten Centre for the primary quiz.
- Throughout the year there are author visits to schools with around 9000 pupils seeing an author.
- The School Library Service has almost 100% buy in from schools across Portsmouth.
- There are public library - school library collaborative events.
- All the libraries have book exchange visits from pupils.
- Public libraries connect to the Society of Chief Librarians which is an Arts Council funded NPO. Connected to this are two promises - one for the visually impaired and one for children and young people. This means providing free internet access, access to free events, health and well-being information and free online support.

- Public libraries are supported by Libraries Connected - [About us | Libraries Connected](#) - which is an independent charity funded by the Arts Council and is an ACE NPO.
- During 2021 - 2022, 159 residents benefited from the home library service with regular deliveries to sheltered accommodation in the city, where a selection of books are sent on loan for several months at a time.
- The Vision Impairment Service is well regarded with Julie Duffy having been nominated for the 2023 Libraries Connected award for her work with the blind and visually impaired community. Two social groups meet on a Wednesday at Southsea Library and Thursday at the Central Library.
- The Central Library supports the local vulnerable residents with the Society of St James and the Hive being based there.
- A Changing Places toilet is available at Southsea Library and the Central Library, both funded by central Government.
- During the Platinum Jubilee, parties were held for people of all ages with Michael Morpurgo launching his picture book. Local pupils from St Judes' School attended this and it was live streamed to schools across the country.
- Recent funding has seen the launch of Reading Sparks to bring science and technology to a wider audience, particularly girls and people from BME groups. This also included author visits and loaning out of experiments.
- There is a reading friends group to work with adults and people of all backgrounds in the city held in Cosham and Southsea.
- BookFest held about 50 events and consideration will be given to introducing concession charges across the events next year.
- Summer Reading Challenge was very successful with an increase in participation of 10% on the previous year. There was also Summer Reading Challenge Plus - a scheme piloted in 2019 for disadvantaged pupils who complete the challenge prior to the summer holidays.
- Drag Queen Story Time was about supporting the equality agenda in the city.
- Since 2018 there have been no fines and no reservation charges for adults (children are never charged). There are no charges for accessing the ancestry service. In addition, there are free music downloads, E-books and audio books.
- The library assists with sign up to the Portsmouth Leisure Card.
- Cosham Library has had significant investment in its refurbishment and it will be promoted as a place for people to access after hours for literacy support or IT training sessions.
- Portsea Library has a pantry which has resulted in renewed usage and re-engagement with local residents and re-established the link with St George's School.
- The main barriers to access mainly centre around the buildings themselves. The Central Library requires updates to its toilet facilities and the building is showing its age with maintenance issues. David considered the provision of recharging stations and comfier seating would be beneficial.
- David suggested showing museum items in the various libraries would help introduce people to the city's museums.

Catherine Burland, Volunteer Futures

Catherine joined the meeting via MS Teams and updated on the Volunteer Futures project. She advised the name would be changing to 'Find Your Future and Volunteer'. The project will run until 2024.

- The Project comprises 19 different projects across the country to consider how volunteering can help with the post Covid recovery for cultural services.
- The PCC volunteer project is seeking to work with over 500 volunteers across cultural services both internally and externally such as sports, youth, heritage, conservation and art.
- There is a steering group of a number of organisations with representatives from across the city.
- The project is working with people with learning disabilities, children and people whose first language is not English.
- There is funding to hold events and celebrations for volunteers - one such event to be held is 'Wilder Days' in Paulsgrove.
- The project will be creating two volunteer hubs in the north and south of the city where volunteers can meet, find out information about volunteering opportunities. The first one is in Cosham Community Centre with the south hub yet to be confirmed.
- One impact described was in relation to the creation of a social group for adults with learning disabilities over the age of 25 in Cosham Community Centre.
- The project has helped individuals to paid work. There is a real team effort, with representatives from museums, parks, community centres and educational establishments.
- There has been support for the translation into different languages of corporate documents and the project documents.
- The project has worked with Duke of Edinburgh students, has been trialling and working on a 6-week introduction to the library services and will support Carers Week in June.

A number of reports and weblinks were received during and after the meeting:

- Library Fines and Reservation Fees [CLS Library Fines and Reservation Fees 2018 final.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#).
- Universal Library offers: Health and Wellbeing [Universal Library Offers Health and Wellbeing.pdf \(portsmouth.gov.uk\)](#)
- Library and Archive Service (Appendix S)
- Volunteer Futures (Appendix T)

Integrated Impact Assessment

An integrated impact assessment would be carried out when the Cabinet makes its decisions based on the recommendations set out in this report.

Appendices

- Appendix A - Minutes of EDCL Scrutiny Meeting 20 January 2020
- Appendix B - Audience Agency Report
- Appendix C - Southsea Library Presentation 25 February 2020
- Appendix D - Minutes of EDCL Scrutiny Meeting 25 February 2020
- Appendix E - Access to Culture & Leisure Briefing Paper
- Appendix F - Addendum to appendix E
- Appendix G - Cost of Living Briefing Paper
- Appendix H - Report by Portsmouth Film Society

Appendix I - Visit Portsmouth, Tourism & Visitor Economy Strategy 2023 - 28
Appendix J - Museums Strategy 2022 - 26
Appendix K - Portsmouth Museums Consultation Report
Appendix L - Museums Strategy Consultation Paper
Appendix M - Portsmouth Museums, Additional information
Appendix N - Generate Report 2022
Appendix O - Pupil Premium Pilot Project
Appendix P - Better Lives Through Culture Report
Appendix Q - Community Centres Report
Appendix R - Cost of Living - Response to Strategy Team 2022
Appendix S - Library & Archive Service Presentation
Appendix T - Volunteer Futures Summary Report

Budget and policy implications of the recommendations

The following table highlights the budgetary and policy implications of the recommendations being presented by the panel:

	Recommendation	Action By	Budget & Policy Framework	Resource Implications
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

Meeting Date	Witnesses
20 January 2020	Stephen Baily, Director of Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services
	Adrienne Pye, Audience Agency
	Dan Cowley, Audience Agency
25 February 2020	Lindy Elliott, Library & Archive Services Manager
12 January 2023	Paul Tilley, University of Portsmouth (Ravelin Centre)
	Hermione Garner, Andrew Simpson Sailing Centre
	Rob Cunningham, BH Live
	David Moorman, Strategic Development Manager, Sports & Leisure PCC
	David Evans, Seafront Manager PCC, on behalf of the Sports Council
	Mark Woolnough, PCC recreation
30 January 2023	Susanna Collier, Groundlings Theatre
	Andy Grays, Guildhall Trust
	Paul Woolf, Kings Theatre
	Angela Parks, New Theatre Royal
	Aysegul Epengin, Portsmouth Film Society
	James & Terri Ralls, Victorious Events
9 February 2023	Claire Looney, Commissioning & Partnership Manager, Seafront Services
	Lydia Mellor, Events Manager, Seafront Services
	Sarah Lindley, Operational Manager, Community Centres
	Ross Fairbrother, D-Day Story
	Matthew Sheldon, National Museum for the Royal Navy and on behalf of Mary Rose Trust
	Joanne Bushnell, Portsmouth Cultural Education
	Jane Singh, Visit Portsmouth Tourism & Marketing Manager
13 March 2023	David Percival, Libraries and Archive Services Manager
	Catherine Burland, Volunteer Futures