

What is the point of a cultural strategy?



**Elise Hurcombe - Update on the
Cultural Strategy
Development**

*Wonder Pavilion: Glenfrone Primary School. Artist Morag
Myerscough ©Max McClure*







Bristol's Cultural
Sector Reached

10.9m
People

Through Live & Digital
Experiences in 2024

#BristolCulture

Bristol International Balloon Fiesta © Paul Box

Including

£122.4m

In Social Value:
Health & Wellbeing,
Community Building,
Education, Employment,
& Environment.

#BristolCulture

Paraorchestra at Bristol Beacon © EljayBriss

Why do we need a Cultural Strategy?

Our current strategy is 8 years old, we need a **new 10 year strategy and action plan** to make the most of our city's opportunities, challenges, and growth through social, economic and health outcomes.

- Key deliverable of the **Corporate Strategy** and **Economic Strategy**
- Sustain the culture and creative economy ecology that supports our citizens health and wellbeing, grow connected, inclusive neighborhoods
- Help tell our city's diverse stories and identity and contribute significantly to our city's economy and build a sustainable investment model.
- Catalysing new types of partnership, engaging diverse communities into civic conversations and leveraging additional public and private investment.
- We have started some engagement with the Cultural Sector and have a full engagement plan that is being finalised, including citizens assembly as part of a WECA Culture West programme



Bristol strategy assumptions

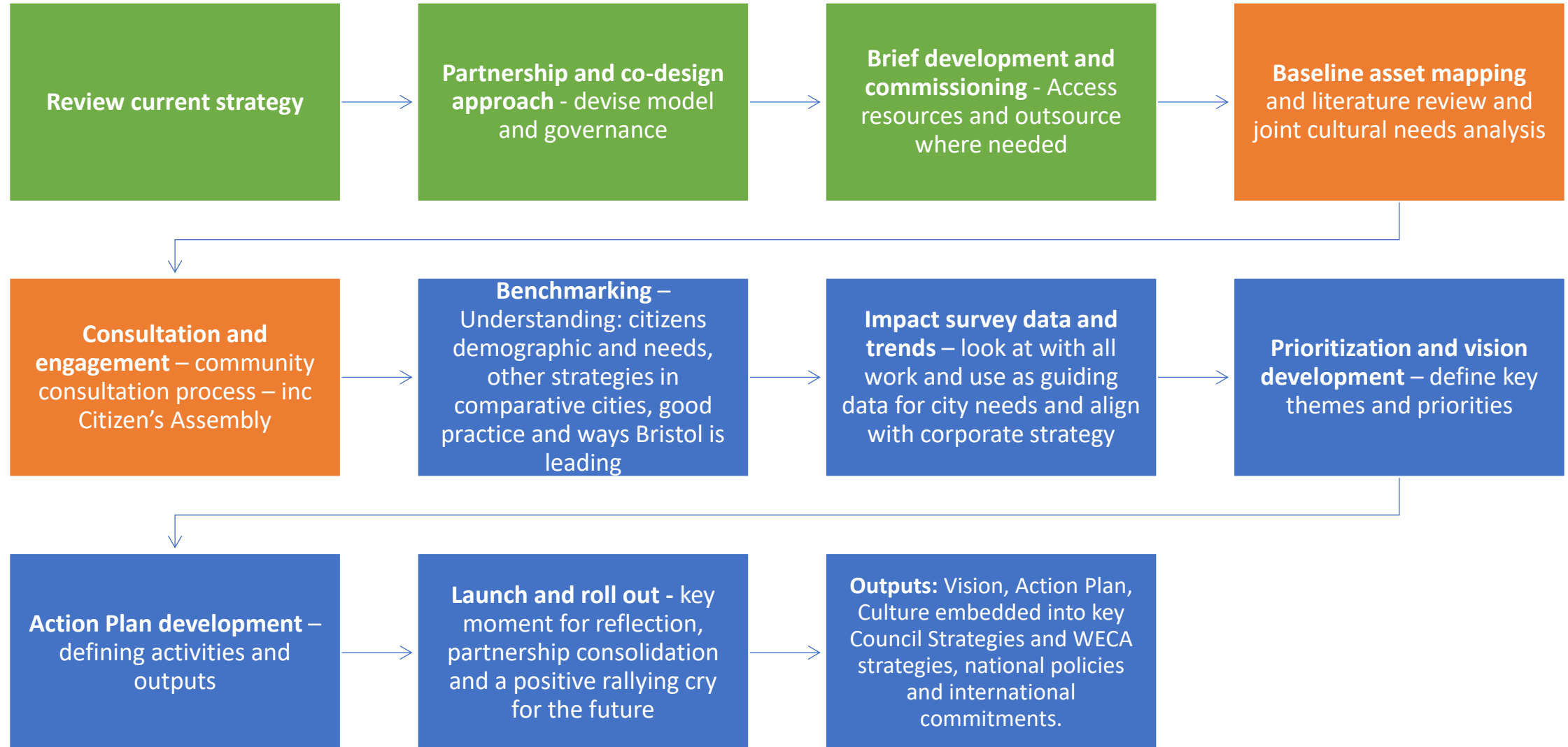
What We're Counting On

- Leaders in Bristol and nearby areas continue to support culture.
- National and regional leaders see the value of culture and keep investing in it.
- Different sectors (like health, education, transport and planning) keep working together.
- Funding from a mix of sources continues or grows.
- Communities want to get involved and help shape cultural life.
- Cultural organisations have the time, people, and tools to do good work.
- The cultural sector can survive and grow with the investment it needs.
- We have ways to measure what's working and what needs to change.



Culture strategy in a box – brilliant resource

Progress with the development of the strategy?



Why do we need to engage with citizens?

We deliver on our Many communities' priority in our corporate strategy
Intentional ways of working with citizens is critical to the success of a Cultural Strategy and enables:

Inclusion: Reflects the city's diverse voices and lived experiences.

Ownership: Builds trust and community-led creativity.

Alignment: Supports corporate goals like equity, wellbeing, and sustainability.

Insight: Provides real-world data to shape effective, responsive plans.

Partnerships: Connects communities with wider networks and investment.

What we are hearing through the development of the cultural strategy

The **sector** are calling for **strategic action and leadership** to enable sustainable investment models with a focus on infrastructure, collaboration, led by community needs and supported politically and city-wide.

The **citizens** are calling for **radical inclusion** and insist culture is a tool for social change, is core to our city brand and vital part of our ecosystem from everyday creativity to economic growth. *Bristol Urban forum

The **regional authority** are calling for **clear vision, collaboration and investment** so we can support regional growth through culture.

The **city-wide partners** are calling for **partnership working** between private and public that is mutually beneficial, with clear opportunities to invest together.

Engagement plan

Marketing and communications plan has been drafted in collaboration with the Marketing and Comms team

A series of creative commissions will be launched in November to support the development of the Culture Strategy. These commissions will contribute to the wider engagement process, helping to ensure that a broad range of voices and perspectives inform the final strategy. The commissions are designed to spark conversations about what culture means in Bristol today and

Culture Conversations are now available on the One City YouTube channel: [Bristol One City – YouTube](#)

We will launch a **public survey**, young people's survey and sector survey to ask people what they think we need in the city and what we are good at now

We are working with **Investment Consultants** who are exploring alternatives models for cultural investment

Citizens Assembly conclusions and recommendations in partnership with WECA

Develop a **council subsite** to host information, resources, engagement plan and outcome of engagement and commissions – (most cost-effective way)

Strategy Timeline



Development Area	Development Milestone	Timeframe
Engagement	Commission opportunities launch on BCC webpage	November 2025
	Strategy Subsite & Survey launch	February 2026
	City-wide engagement via live surveys (12 weeks)	March – June 2026
	Creative Commissions Delivery (8-week delivery)	March - June 2026
Research & Development	Desktop research & initial Strategy Structure developed	November 2025
	Align with research and findings from Citizens Assembly	December 2025
	Refinement of research for key focus areas	January 2026 onwards
	Engagement Analysis & Theme Development	July 2026
Strategy Development	First draft of strategy	September 2026
	Decision pathway	November/December 2026

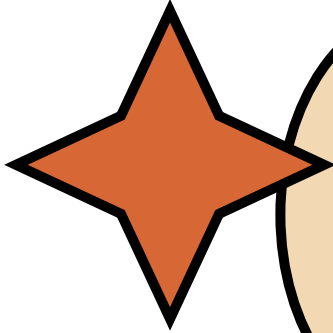
Getting the most from the budget and resources we have

- Using the Think Kit as a tool to see other strategies and the scale that suit your situation
- We are repurposing the cultural investment programme money to save the council money – scalable to fit potential changing budget
- Best value way to meet corporate needs - In-house delivery vs external
- Citizen voice is heard
- Citizens designed the strategy with us

Thank you

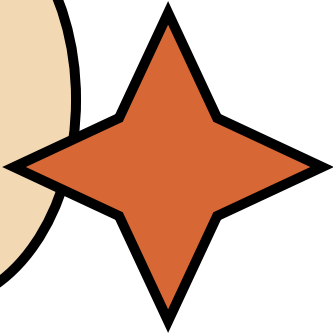
Share your ideas –
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WHAT DO WE NEED?

THE KEY THEMES SO FAR:



Funding and Resources!

Stable & consistent
funding &
resources directed
by community
needs

Collaboration and Networking

Greater collaboration
within the sector,
clear collaboration
pathways and
Cultural partnerships

Community and Local Engagement

Community Led
cultural activities,
Inclusive, accessible
spaces and youth
investment

Cultural Infrastructure and Stability

Long term stability;
stable leases, less
reliance on short term
funding models,
investment in cultural
infrastructure and
diversification of
workforce

Strategic Planning and Leadership

A Clear strategy and
action plans,
Resourced
leadership, Political
and city-wide
commitment