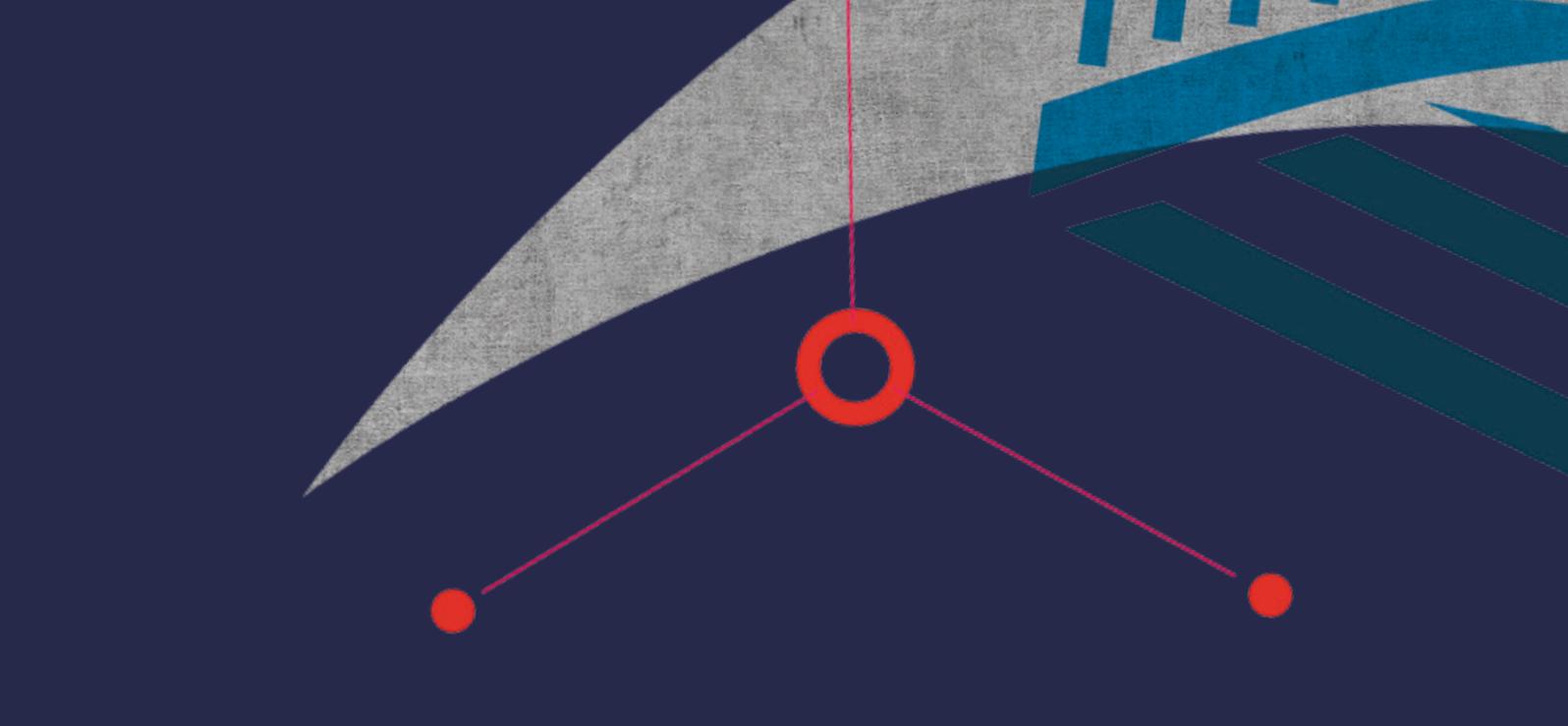




# SHARED AMBITIONS

Gosport's Cultural Strategy  
2023



## FOREWORD

Gosport has just celebrated 100 years of becoming a Borough and, with a new administration leading the Borough Council, this seems just the right time to be thinking of enhancing our local cultural activities.

Gosport has been named an Arts Council England 'Priority Place' and a 'Levelling up for Culture' place which demonstrates the real need for enhanced cultural provision in the Borough and demonstrates what we already know - that Gosport is a place that deserves investment. We have developed new partnerships with Arts Council England, funders and cultural providers, and a great deal has been achieved in terms of building on Gosport's heritage as a source of cultural inspiration.

The Borough Council has recently demonstrated its own commitment to investing in Culture by purchasing the historic former Criterion cinema in Forton Road. The Council has ambitious plans to bring the building back into life as a multi-purpose cinema, theatre and live music venue - something Gosport has never had. This exciting project will be the centre-piece of Gosport's Cultural Strategy in the coming years. The Council looks forward to working with our partners to make it a reality.

As well as coming at the right time, this strategy has the right focus. It rightly puts local people at the heart of its objectives. Residents of the

Borough have been extensively consulted on the way ahead and the strategy is firmly focused on the issues facing the area.

It is realistic too, recognising that culture is not just nice to have. It is vital to education, community cohesion and, of course, economic wellbeing - especially in a local economy where tourism plays a key role.

This strategy is bold and ambitious but its goals can be achieved if we all work together to make it happen. Alongside projects led by organisations and individuals already working to deliver the strategy, Gosport Borough Council is committed to leading the way with a series of bold initiatives such as that for redeveloping The Criterion. You can read more about the Council's priorities in an appendix to this document.

The new Council administration strongly values arts, heritage & culture. We recognise the important role it plays in driving regeneration, helping to make Gosport a great place to live, work, socialise and visit.

I look forward to the Council and its partners delivering on the policies set out in this document, placing culture at the centre of our plans to improve Gosport in the years ahead.

**Councillor Peter Chegwyn**  
**Leader, Gosport Borough Council**

## VISION

By 2032 Gosport will be a borough where the positive impact of community-led culture can be seen, with our shared ambitions for arts and heritage propelling regeneration and making Gosport a better place to live, work and visit.

## PRINCIPLES

We will apply the following principles in delivering the themes of this strategy:



**Communication and co-ordination** – improving links between groups, communities, sectors, and regional partners.



**Interaction and immersion** – finding ways to make Gosport's story as engaging as possible.



**Quality** – putting Gosport on the map by growing a reputation for high quality and community-led cultural experiences.



**Inclusivity** – finding ways for previously under-represented groups to play a fuller part.



**Responsibility** – responding to the global climate emergency by creating a stage for action and enabling responsible cultural consumption.

# PRIORITIES

We will focus our shared ambitions across five priority areas....



# Priority 1

**Culture on our doorstep:** We will make arts and culture easier to access, and a valued part of people's lives.

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## We aim to:

1. Offer more events in local settings
2. Find ways to reduce the barriers to participation
3. Make it easier to know what's happening
4. Promote the personal benefits of culture

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## Key activities:

Seasonal festivals, outdoor arts and performances, neighbourhood hubs, online events platform, Gosport Culture Card.

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No matter where you live in Gosport, you should be able to see and experience arts, culture and heritage on your doorstep. By embracing the great outdoors and our one-of-a-kind heritage sites, and thinking creatively about our commercial and community spaces, we can make it easier to have great cultural experiences in every neighbourhood.

What happens in each of these places should be exciting to the people who live, work and study there. Everyone should have a chance to add their thoughts about what the programme should include, and help develop new and interesting ideas. We should also work to change anything that makes it harder for people to join in.

But it's no good for great things to be happening if no one knows about them. Getting the word out there, in whatever ways work, is important for making sure that no one misses out on the wonderful ways that culture and creativity can make our lives better.

There are a number of projects that are already underway or are in planning stages to deliver against this priority.

## The Criterion

The Criterion was run as both a cinema and theatre until 1968, and later became a bingo hall prior to its closure in 2020. Gosport Borough Council has completed the purchase of the building with the intention of turning it into a multi-purpose film, theatre and live music venue. The council hopes that the building will provide a dedicated arts centre for the borough, and restore the historic venue to its former glory.

# Priority 1 cont.

## Year-round cultural events programme

There is strong ambition for a borough-wide cultural programme of events and experiences which can be enjoyed year-round.

Gosport Borough Council's investment in this area has already begun a range of events and activities across the borough throughout summer 2023. This includes Arts in the Parks – 6 cultural experiences and events take place in parks across the borough in August and September 2023, and Heritage Open Days – an annual family festival celebrating local history and culture in September 2023. The year will be rounded off with a month of festive fun throughout December 2023, starting with the Christmas light switch-on.

## Gosport Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

Through funding, support and sharing of expertise, Historic England hopes to breathe life into old places, restoring heritage buildings, enhancing conservation areas and celebrating the local character.

Gosport has many ongoing cultural projects as part of this programme, all of which can be found by visiting [www.gosporthaz.org.uk](http://www.gosporthaz.org.uk)

This list is not exhaustive. Alongside these ambitions, there are several individuals and organisations whose projects directly contribute to the delivery of our shared cultural strategy.

**Are you thinking about running a project across the borough, that you'd like to chat with us about?**

Get in touch at [economicdevelopment@gosport.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@gosport.gov.uk)



## Priority 2

# Connected communities: We will support groups and communities to do bigger and better things, together.

### We aim to:

1. Nurture a local cultural network
2. Support community ownership of culture
3. Help grow and sustain communities
4. Advocate proudly for Gosport

### Key activities:

Gosport Heritage Open Days, Marine Festival, Gosport cultural network.

There is a tangible community spirit in Gosport. For a century, communities in the borough have been actively making things happen. Now, by working more closely together we can find new ways to sustain and grow our cultural icons for the next 100 years.

Making sure people across the town have a way to find each other, talk to each other and work with each other will be important. As opportunities emerge we want to be unified and able to move quickly, responding with collaboration rather than competition.

We will help more people get involved in the areas that interest them most, and we will provide the resources, know-how and opportunity for groups to improve and sustain what they do. We will also be proud cheerleaders for Gosport, helping potential partners, funders and visitors to understand why they should be excited to be a part of what is happening here.



## Priority 3

# Children and young people: We will help transform the lives of young people and their families through arts and culture.

### We aim to:

1. Give every child and young person the chance to participate
2. Embed arts and culture at the heart of education
3. Open doors to careers in creative and cultural industries
4. Give young people a say in shaping arts and culture

### Key activities:

Young Ambassadors programme, cultural education partnership, creative careers fair.

We are all too aware of the challenges facing our children and young people in Gosport. Research has shown that the arts can help young people progress their learning, develop valuable skills, grow their confidence and make long-lasting friendships and connections. We want to give every young person this head start in life.

Together, we will take responsibility for making sure every young person has the chance to participate in valuable arts and cultural experiences. We will build on the existing partnerships between educational and cultural leaders to support schools, families, and the community to create these opportunities.

For those young people who find their calling in the creative industries, we will build the steppingstones needed to get them into creative careers. We will also find ways for young people to help shape their town, whether that be by welcoming them into our planning processes and helping them connect with their heritage, or giving them spaces to express their creativity and ideas.



## Priority 4

### **Fresh content with a heritage context:** We will offer outstanding experiences framed by Gosport's rich heritage.

#### **We aim to:**

- 1. Find contemporary connections with our heritage**
- 2. Use the natural and built heritage as a setting for the arts**
- 3. Welcome experiences and artists from further afield**
- 4. Embrace digital as a platform for promotion, engagement and expression**

#### **Key activities:**

Outdoor arts and performance programme in heritage settings, immersive apps and trails.

Gosport is a town whose heritage stretches around the world through the navy and air force, into the oceans with sailors and divers, and into homes and offices across the country through manufacturing and industry. But its story is not yet finished, and we have the privilege of adding our own chapters to the tale.

We want to tell Gosport's story in a way that can be heard far and wide. We will challenge ourselves to think differently about how we engage with communities more broadly and deliver performance in heritage sites. This will include experimenting with digital tools, storytelling and community-outreach, plus designing engaging participation opportunities and fostering co-creation.

We will be ambitious for our historic buildings, investing to improve their ability to inspire and host new creative work. We will explore ways to open up more outdoor and heritage spaces for performing arts, welcoming artists from across the borough and further afield to help us appreciate these sites in a new way.



# Priority 5

## **Enterprising creative culture:** We will support innovation and creativity in our people and sectors.

### **We aim to:**

- 1. Make creative careers more viable in Gosport**
- 2. Encourage new creative businesses to grow**
- 3. Enable innovation through conversations and collaborations**
- 4. Help cultural and creative businesses adapt to changing times**

### **Key activities:**

Skills and training programmes, incubation opportunities.

Gosport is already known for its innovation, from marine technology and state-of-the-art design to manufacturing, defense and Extended Reality (XR). Working with partners, we will find ways to encourage more work like this, and to share what we learn along the way.

We will support more local people to earn their living in the cultural sector, and help reduce the challenges facing new creative businesses. From start-ups taking their first steps, to mid-career and established creatives and cultural businesses we will help them think commercially and navigate change in a way that helps them succeed.

We also recognise the unique contribution that our arts and cultural programmes can have in attracting new people to live and work in Gosport. A visible and vibrant cultural offering contributes to making Gosport a better place to be.



# MONITORING AND EVALAUTION

## Measures of success will include:

- Changes in numbers of people taking part
- Changes in the range of people taking part
- Levels of satisfaction and enjoyment
- More positive attitudes towards the cultural life of Gosport
- Increased awareness and recognition of Gosport's facilities and heritage

## Quantitative and qualitative measures to determine success of activities will broadly include:

- Visits – numbers of participants and their characteristics e.g., spatial spread across the borough
- Number of activities, events and attendees
- Diversity of activities and events
- Usage by target group e.g., children and young people and the level of activities / events provided for them
- Number of heritage / culturally related activities and attendees
- Satisfaction levels among users
- Enjoyment, inspiration and creativity
- Development of personal skills and capabilities
- Attitudes and values

## Collecting this data will involve a range of methods, including:

- Activity-based research
- Focus groups and interviews
- Surveys – on-site, postal, online, telephone

## Socio-economic metrics

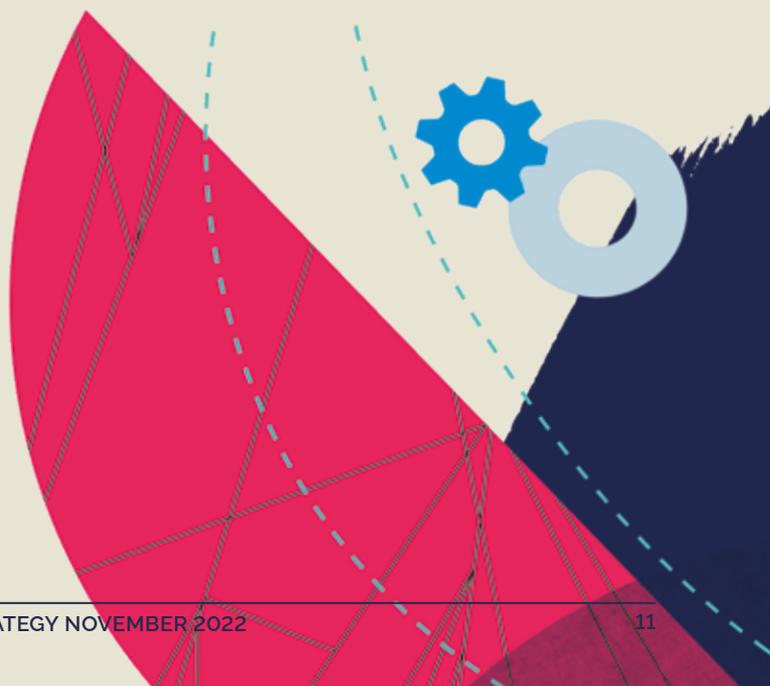
The periodic strategic review will share and draw on indicators referenced by the wider regeneration work in Gosport Borough. In particular, by identifying performance indicators which can be influenced by the cultural strategy.

This will include:

- Levels of engagement and participation, as measured through the Active Lives survey
- Visitor profiles and geographic spread measured through Audience Finder and postcode data
- Levelling Up priorities around employment and productivity, skills and training, and improvement in well-being and pride of place

## Delivery

Successful delivery of this strategy will be a community-wide effort. It will be driven by Gosport Borough Council, Hampshire Cultural Trust, through their work as an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, working closely with organisations, groups, and individuals across the Borough.



[gosport.gov.uk](http://gosport.gov.uk)

