



COUNTRYSIDE  
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# Foundations for assessing social outcomes linked to enhanced Pride of Place in Gloucester

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October 2023



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



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## 1. Introduction

*'Culture is fundamental to urban processes'. (Neumann 1992)*

The University of Gloucestershire (UoG) was commissioned by the Arts Council England, Gloucester City Council, and Reef Group in January 2023 to coordinate the first stage of developing a methodology towards measuring Gloucester's pride of place. In addition, the development company Kier provided important in-kind support, and the project worked closely with selected key local stakeholders including the Gloucester Culture Trust and Voices Gloucester.

This report describes the process and activities which were undertaken by UoG, working with a range of local organisations in Gloucester, to develop an initial pride of place assessment framework. If taken forward, the City Council and its partners will be able to more fully develop the framework to measure the social outcomes of cultural regeneration activities pursued in the city. Because the framework is based on the idea of co-producing local social outcome indicators, it should also be fully transferable as a foundational method in other locations.

It is to be noted that although this project is concerned with measuring impacts, the project did not seek to explore techniques for collecting numerical/statistical data or intelligence, rather the core focus was upon the wider consideration of social outcomes and indicators, including the less tangible dimensions such as pride of place and how these can be identified as outcomes associated with circumstances and actions. There is significant work, both academic and practice based, concerned with quantifiable *outputs* driven by data collection and intelligence insights. The aspiration with this project is to consider how to gauge *social outcomes*, and begin to frame a wider conversation concerning pride, place relationships, and the holistic impact of cultural activities, over time, within and for a place and its communities.

## 2. Background

In 2022, staff at UoG's business school surveyed over 500 local residents and those who regularly visit or work in the city. On-line and face-to-face surveys were completed, and four focus groups were carried out with local cultural and community organisations that specifically targeted younger participants and 'overlooked' minority groups. On the whole feedback was positive, as this trio of images (figure 1 below) from the report reveals.

Figure 1: Positive responses from the UoG Pride of Place Survey, 2022.



Other feedback also revealed anxiety over the cost of living, perceived a deterioration in the state of the city (including perceptions of crime and safety that contrast with official crime figures) and inadequate performance as a 'green' city, as these images from the survey report show:

Figure 2: Negative responses from the UoG Pride of Place Survey, 2022.



This report is part of a process which builds on the survey to enhance pride of place in Gloucester as a way to foster positive social outcomes linked to cultural investment in the city.

### 3. Snapshot of the scientific literature

#### 3.1 Culture in the city

Cultural activities and investments have long been associated with a range of wider societal benefits in cities. These include improving place-image (Refki et al., 2020), fostering inclusivity (McCall, 2010) and enhancing democratic engagement (European Commission & Hammonds, 2023). Consequently, cultural organisations are regarded '*as a vehicle for broad social change*' (Vermeulen & Maas, 2021). When such organisations receive public funds, they are expected to measure the impacts of their activities.

In articulating impacts, an inherent complication lies in the multi-faceted understanding of what culture represents, as a term with varied, broad, vague or complex meanings, including:

*'...the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but modes of life...'* (UNESCO, 1982)

Such breadth (which in the UNESCO source extends into human rights, values and beliefs) seems daunting when considering how to capture the effects of cultural investments and developments. For example, in their systematic review of methods used to assess cultural impacts, Partal and Dunphy (2016) note that

*'...culture and cultural impact were infrequently defined, leading to the [...] difficulty in measuring impact of a concept that has not been clearly explicated'.*

These authors specifically highlight how impact assessments conflate cultural, social or environmental outcomes; and distinguish between assessments of the impacts of proposed developments on established cultures from the idea that there are cultural impacts flowing from (publicly) funded arts and heritage activities.

In acknowledging such critiques, it is important to clarify that the meaning of culture in this report is taken from the Gloucester Culture Strategy, in short namely: the arts and heritage. The Strategy describes culture as:

*'...activities such as the visual arts, music, performing arts, crafts, creative writing, literature and poetry, the wider creative industries and the arts–science interface. Also, the provision of facilities and services such as theatres, museums and galleries, cinemas, community halls and archives. As well as exploring and animating the city's heritage and historic environment, public art and telling Gloucester's collective story.'* (Gloucester Culture Trust & Gloucester City Council, 2021)

This definition is narrower than the broad sweep offered by UNESCO, and emphasises artistic events and activities, and the cultural infrastructure/assets linked to their provision and enjoyment.

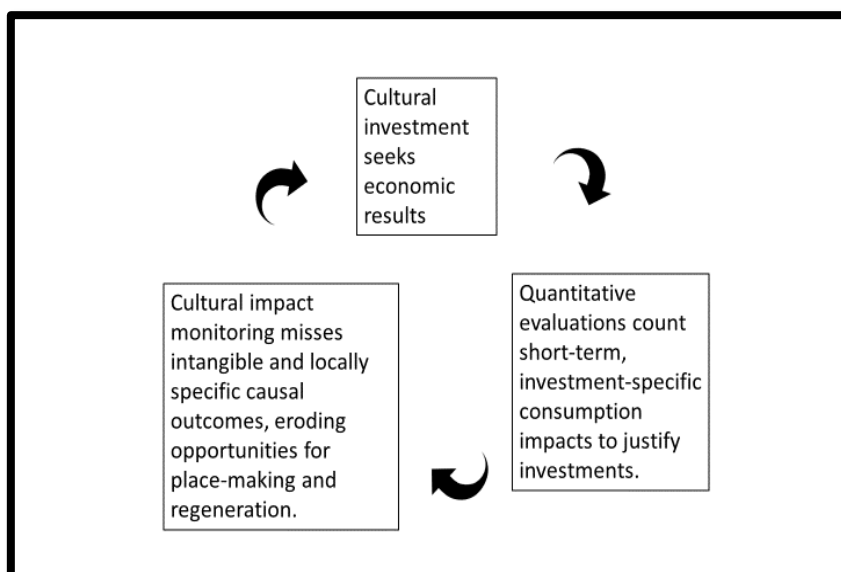
### 3.2 Persistence of critical scholarly messages

Internet searches were carried out to identify scientific literature which has examined assessments of the impacts and effects of culture-based urban regeneration. Searches of Google, Google Scholar, Web of Science and Scopus were undertaken using the term 'culture-led regeneration'. Searches were also conducted using the term 'cultural impact assessment' (although scholarship in this field is directed toward assessing the impact of development on indigenous communities and cultures (see Partal & Dunphy, 2016)). Our co-sponsors, Arts Council England, suggested a range of additional sources connected to assessing cultural impacts in cities, which were commissioned research projects rather than academic articles. The search was not exhaustive but identified around 35 sources which were reviewed. These titles offer what appears to be a persistent set of critiques in scholarship. Headline messages include:

- There is a weak causal link between cultural investment and the wider place-based outcomes of the initiatives being funded;
- Cultural project-based monitoring and evaluation is usually tied to the period of project implementation and longitudinal studies are lacking;
- Cultural investment remains a tool principally for economic development despite complexity in regional competitiveness, changes to the use of city centres since COVID-19, and the wide range of cultural actors whose voices need to be considered.

One of the most important outcomes which these critiques indicate is a bland homogenisation of places following cultural investment that inadequately celebrates local contexts, supports diversity of cultural governance and realises potentials for place-making (Falanga & Nunes, 2021). Such headline messages seem to create a cycle of self-perpetuation, as suggested in figure 3, below. If assessments of impact attempt to justify investment through quantitative measures, it is unlikely that locally specific causal outcomes will be traced. This is not to suggest that cultural investment is not positive, but that its longer-term outcomes in places may never be fully captured.

Figure 3: Lost opportunities for capturing cultural investment outcomes (origination by the authors).



### 3.3 Cultural impact assessments

The impacts of cultural activities and investments are, of course, already widely assessed. Indeed, section 4, below outlines how local stakeholders strive to measure the effects of their various activities. Yet the criteria for what exactly is being measured may be imposed by funders of instrumental considerations such as the justification of public expenditure, leading to path-dependent assessments of cultural value (Jones & Warren, 2016), as an unforeseen outcome of funder-imposed impact assessment criteria. A consideration raised in the literature is that funders may even compete in the ways that (for example) public and private funders seek to support cultural industries (Comunian & Mould, 2014).

The table offers a few examples of methods and associated critiques from the literature:

Table 1: Critical overview of assessments of cultural impacts (adapted from Vermeulen and Maas (2021))

Assessment method	Critique
Cost-benefit analyses	Measures balance between cost of a cultural intervention and its financial returns. Lacks non-financial insights.
Contingent valuation method (willingness to pay)	Measures perceptions of impact by members of the community; more difficult to assess actual impacts on people.
Sustainability indicators	Measures direct sustainability outputs in relation to the intervention and its success (e.g. conserving artefacts, event participation, material use, sustainability outcomes of procurement).
Cultural policy milestones	Based on deep-seated belief in the perceived benefits of the arts on the part of policymakers.

Trying to devise and measure impact criteria for cultural regeneration remains a priority within urban strategies. This is an enduring link to assertions by Florida (2003) that culture enhances regional economic competitiveness. The idea of culture as a driver of economic growth in general was rapidly embraced by national and local governments striving to enhance their position in a globalising and

urban cultural economy (Miles & Paddison, 2005), and culture-led regeneration remains a key strategy for realising urban entrepreneurship today.

Yet systematic analyses, have consistently indicated that the economic and social outcomes of culture-led urban revival is hard to specify causally. For example, following detailed explorations (e.g. in two special issues of the journal of European Urban and Regional Studies in 1999 and 2013) it was suggested that local and regional policies to support urban cultural districts are unequally implemented (Nuccio & Ponzini, 2017). The primacy of the economic functions of culture in cities means that the trickle down of social impacts are presumed and taken for granted (Campbell et al., 2016) rather than assessed and, crucially, that the regional distinctiveness of historical cities continues to be eroded, creating homogenised and generic public spaces (Falanga & Nunes, 2021), an assertion which is highly relevant to attempts to enhance pride of place in Gloucester.

Furthermore, the profile of culture as a driver for urban renaissance highlights flagship initiatives in large post-industrial cities – famously Bilbao, Barcelona as well as Glasgow and Liverpool (Miles & Paddison, 2008). A deliberate focus on smaller cities is lacking although these are places where the *'re-weaving of the social fabric'* (Porter & Shaw, 2009) in the execution of cultural development is especially important. Smaller cities and towns can, however, lack cultural capacities (Marsh et al., 2022), a situation that may have been compounded by public sector budget cuts for non-statutory services. This scalar gap is gradually being filled through municipal networks such as the Key Cities Network, which includes Gloucester, as well as analyses of multi-scale and regional/rural case studies (Local Government Association & Callouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2019), although intangible pride of place remains associated with quite general outcome assertions. The Arts Council and National Heritage Lottery Fund have also supported the generation of broader, socially focused cultural grants in smaller cities.

Another message from the literature is that while short-term measurements of impact only partially capture outcomes of culture-led regeneration (Ennis & Douglass, 2011), the commitment of residents is required through inclusive participation (Ferilli et al., 2017). This resonates strongly with the objectives of Gloucester's Culture and Heritage strategies, reflecting the concept of 'place as a network' (Carreta et al., 2018) linked to specifics of local distinctiveness. Such developments in favour of bottom-up approaches to cultural regeneration are important. Yet even recent studies suggest that, in practice, ensuring that appropriate participatory methods are used and stakeholders are suitably empowered and supported is a time-consuming challenge (Falanga & Nunes, 2021). It is quite tricky to disaggregate the impacts of cultural investment from other forms of regeneration investment – such as housing renovation or employment and transport infrastructural development. In cases where cultural investments are linked to major landmark investments, it is harder to be certain about the effects of cultural investment and what is linked to affiliated investments.

### 3.4 Cause, impact, outcomes

*'Culture-led regeneration has received much interest, and buy-in, in past decades. The evidence of its success is fairly limited.* (Ennis & Douglass, 2011)

Despite such critical engagements by social scientists, there is also evidence that methodologies are emerging (sometimes via practice innovations) that indicate and validate the social value of cultural investment. An example is described by Zhou et al. (2017) where complex mathematical techniques can help predict the socio-economic impact of cultural investment in different urban neighbourhoods, reinforcing the almost universal benefit such investment in poorer districts of London.



Another technique, Social Return On Investment (SROI) (Ariza-Montes et al., 2021; Maier et al., 2015; SROI Network, 2012), which has inspired and helped guide this project, is useful in two respects for Gloucester, namely in requiring the co-agreement by local stakeholders of what social outcomes matter in any evaluation, and the ability to quantify intangible social outcomes through the use of a financial proxy (such as costing improvements in personal and mental health via the participation in cultural activities and networks).

Both these examples, among others, emphasise the need for longitudinal data and fine-grained local contextual knowledge.

In closing this section, it is emphasised that the literature indicates and acknowledges the multiple benefits of culture as an important driver of positive urban change. What unifies many studies in our selection is the limited empirical proof, and/or the lack of clear guidance for those trying to assess social impact (Vermeulen & Maas, 2021). We concur strongly that new conceptual frameworks are needed to help inclusively and collectively agree what is to be assessed in Gloucester before the task of systematically gathering additional data. This document aims to start that discussion in the city.

## 4. Approach

### 4.1 Introduction

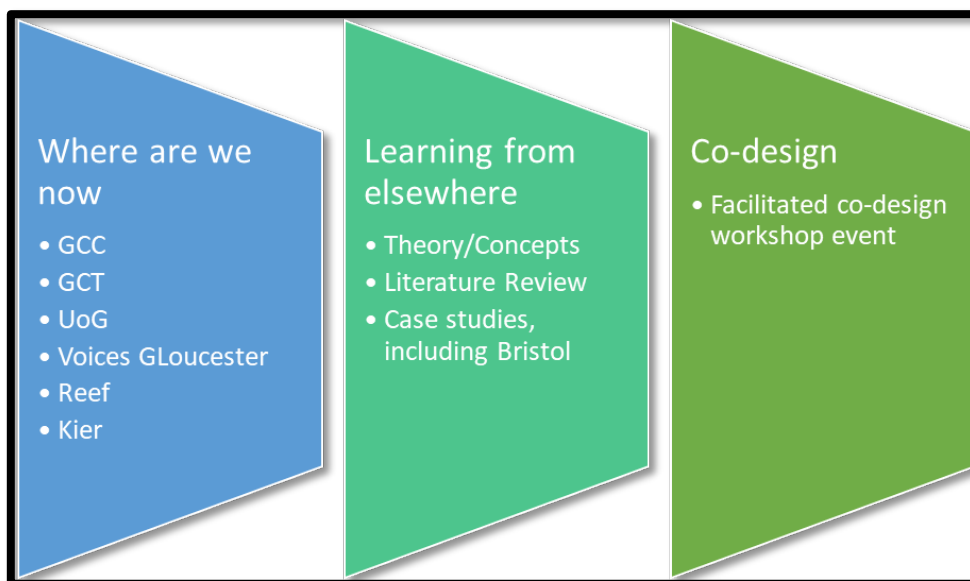
UoG was asked to coordinate and lead the first stage of developing a methodology towards measuring Gloucester's Pride of Place. More specifically we were asked to:

1. Bring together interested parties to form a steering group to support the development of the project and identify objectives for phase 1 (phase 1)
2. Devise a timeline, delivery and programme of activity over the first 5-month phase.
3. Identify with partners and funders potential investment for the next stage of delivery.
4. Define a proposition for phase 2 including project management, resourcing & implementation.

### 4.2 Gloucester Workshops (Phase 1-3)

Following initial discussions with project funders and supporters, a process of three workshops were set in train, which are captured in figure 4, below:

Figure 4: Pride of place project sequential workshops



*Workshop 1 (February 2023) Theme: Where we are now*

The first workshop brought together 19 selected stakeholders who either (i) already apply some form of evaluative method to gauge the impact of their activities in relation to culture; or (ii) are required to keep records of their impact by funders. Participants included the City Council, Arts Council England, Reef, Kier, arts and heritage organisations and representatives of UoG. UoG colleagues included those involved in outreach and PR work linked to the redevelopment of the former Debenhams store into a new arts, library and teaching space in the city centre, and those who led the pride of place survey. The workshop highlighted a diversity of (principally quantitative) impact metrics being applied in the city that were focused upon categories such as attendance, ticket sales, immediate experience measurement etc.

*Workshop 2 (March 2023) Theme: Learning from elsewhere*

The second workshop, attended by 15 people, largely focused on existing impact assessment practice from other places. A range of case study summaries were presented from other cities in the UK including those who have applied for or been awarded European or UK City of Culture status, including Hull, Coventry and Southampton. In addition, a representative of Bristol City Council described in detail the metrics used to assess the impact of the allocation of post-COVID recovery funds for public arts events in specific city neighbourhoods. Art practitioners reported on public arts projects in Cheltenham and Reef outlined existing social value methods, which have been introduced in relation to government guidance for developers. This latter was a platform to introduce the broad principles of Social Return On Investment (SROI), which helped to structure the third workshop.

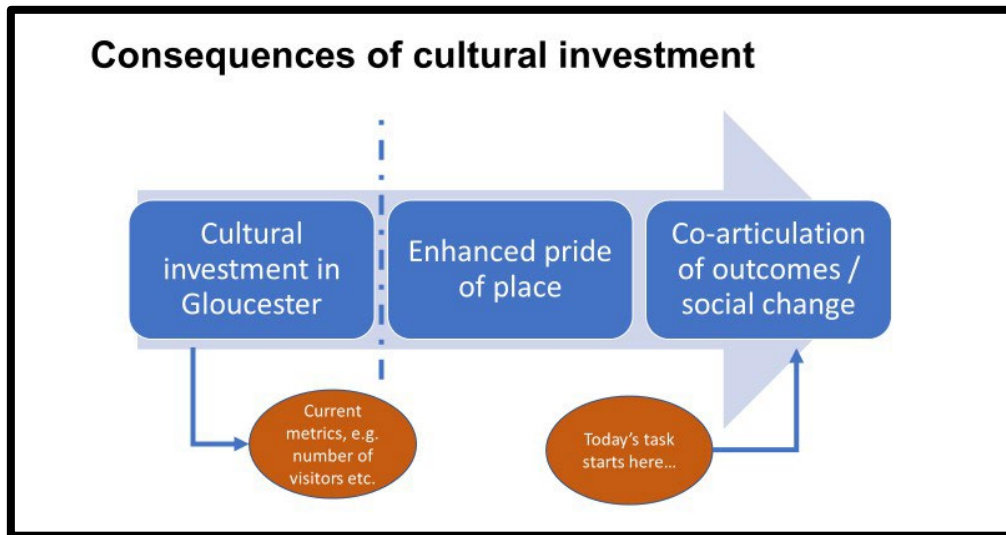
*Workshop 3 (June 2023) Theme: co-design*

This third event took a different format; workshops 1 and 2 were focused upon information sharing and associated discussion/reflection. In contrast, workshop 3 was designed as a co-creation event. Twenty-four people, representing a number of key Gloucester city stakeholders, attended to cover the following three steps to consider:

1. How cultural investment in Gloucester is something that affects people's lives and can enhance their pride of place.

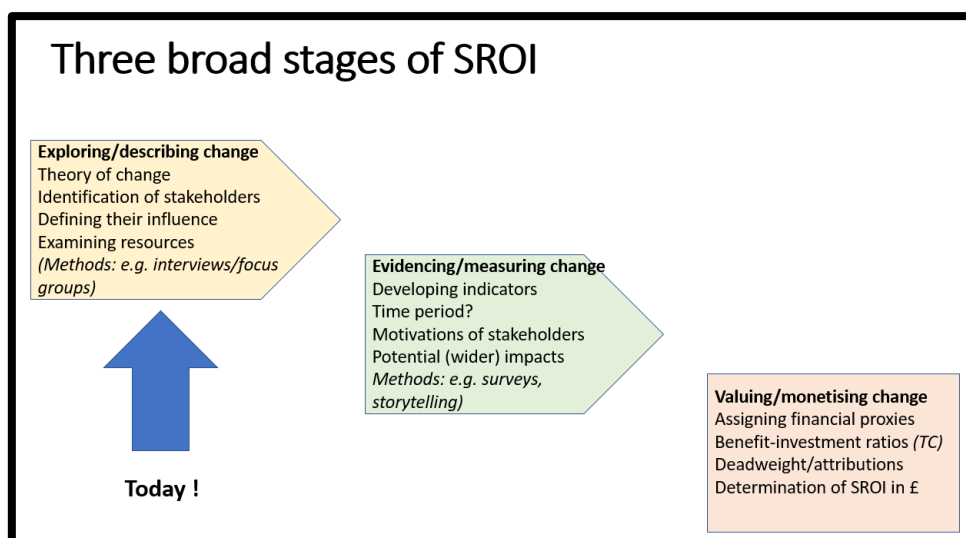
2. How pride of place and cultural investment interface *and* can be enabled/delivered/realised.
3. Engage in foundational discussions about how those attributes could be measured in future.

Figure 5: Representation of the context of the third pride of place workshop



To achieve this, inspiration was drawn from the early stages of the SROI methodology (see fig. 6 and table 3, below). Executing a full SROI process usually follows a complex multi-stage structure. In simplifying a description of SROI to stakeholders at the third workshop, we consolidated these into three key stages. The third workshop applied only the earliest stage of our consolidated SROI, namely a 'theory of change', set out in figure 6.

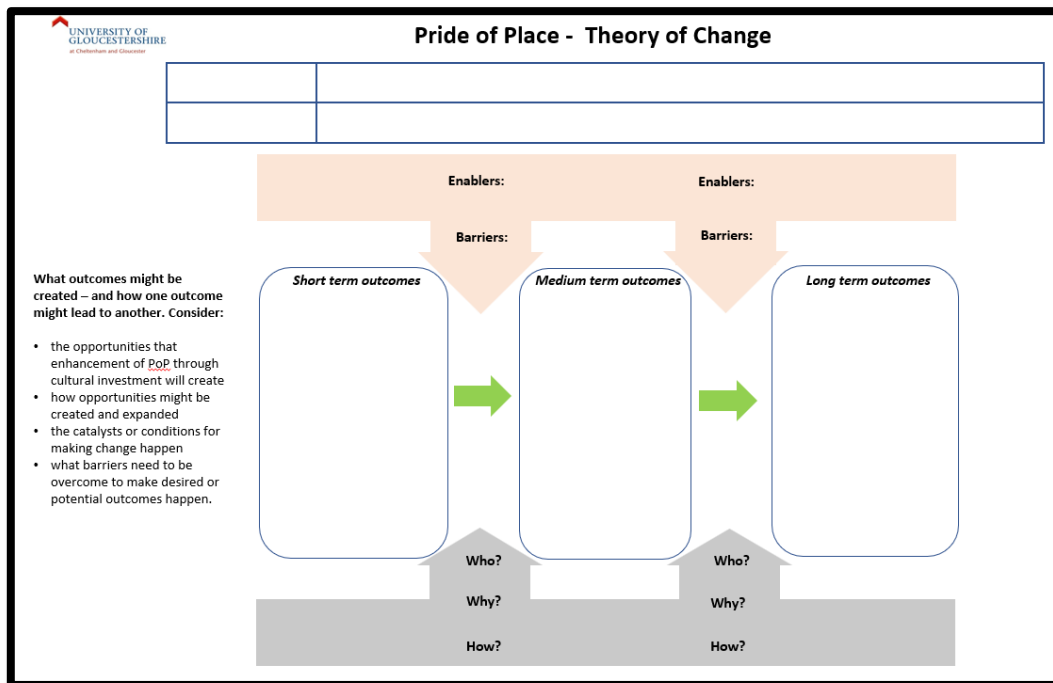
Figure 6: Consolidation and simplification of SROI stages for the third workshop



This simplification helped to instigate a participatory discussion with and between a range of Gloucester's cultural stakeholders in order to suggest, discuss and propose some shared outcomes associated with cultural investment. The stakeholder group for this workshop specifically included members of Gloucester's City Centre Commission. This cross-sectoral network was established in 2022

to oversee the implementation of the city’s economic and regeneration plans. Group discussions led to the completion of a theory to change proforma (figure 7) which highlighted future social ambitions for the city linked to cultural investment and discussed how these might be achieved over time.

Figure 7: Pride of place theory of change proforma used in the third workshop



These proforma were used to inform a framework directed towards achieving social change which emerges from enhanced pride of place through cultural investment in Gloucester (Section 6, below).

## 5. Insights from other cities

In this section and building on the experience of assessment diversity highlighted in the workshops, additional exemplars are provided from other cities. Initially, the Key Cities network is introduced, and some examples of how cultural investments have been handled via cultural strategies is summarised. Then, drawing on Hull and Coventry, we briefly examine how intangible and legacy considerations were built into successful proposals for City of Culture status.

### 5.1 The Key Cities network and their cultural strategies

In addition to the literature review, the project team draw on experiences in other cities to better understand approaches to conceptualising and evaluating culture and the arts within local authority policies/strategies within the Key Cities network (<https://keycities.uk/>) was explored. This group of 27 cities has great diversity but share a status as non-Core Cities (<https://www.corecities.com/>); that is to say, the Key Cities are a range of sizes but are predominantly medium-sized places of note rather than large city scale by typology. This increases their relevance and comparability to Gloucester.

We looked at the Key Cities (in February 2023) with the intention of, at a very basic level, determining the role of culture in city forward planning. This was done by focusing upon their cultural strategies. In addition, we were specifically interested in the presence of pride of place within this documentation and how it manifested itself. Cultural strategies are not necessarily available for all key city contexts;

those that are variable in approach, scope and also duration, typically ranging from 5 to 15 years. Table 2, below, provides an overview:

Table 2: Strategic cultural approaches in the Key Cities Network

Key City/cities	Cultural document
Bath & Northeast Somerset	Cultural Strategy 2011-2026
Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole	Cultural strategy in development via a BCP Cultural Compact
Blackpool	Older joint strategy between Blackpool, Wyre, Fylde and Lancashire Steps to develop a new cultural strategy initiated in Sept 2022
Carlisle	Strategic framework for Carlisle document (unclear timeframe)
Colchester	Cultural strategy 2021-2031
Coventry	Cultural strategy 2017-2027 Supplementary refresh document covering 2022-2025
Doncaster	Draft culture strategy 2022-2030
Exeter	Cultural strategy 2019-2024
Gloucester	Update to Culture Vision and Strategy 2021-2026
Hull	Cultural strategy 2016-2026
Kirklees	Developing a strategy during 2023
Lancaster	Initiated strategy development in 2022
Lincoln	Culture gets a mention in the strategic plan for 2025
Medway	Cultural strategy 2020-2030
Newport	Cultural strategy covered 2017-2022
Norwich	No strategy evident
Plymouth	Culture plan 2021-2030
Portsmouth	Culture included in the 'Imagine Portsmouth 2040 city vision'
Preston	Cultural strategy 2021-2032
Reading	Culture and heritage strategy 2015-2030 (refresh meetings 2021-22)
Salford	'Suprema Lex' strategy for culture, creativity and place 2020
Southampton	Culture strategy 2008-2026, updating with draft strategy 2021-2031
Southend	Culture strategy for 2012-2020 is being updated within the Association of South Essex Local Authorities
Sunderland	Culture strategy 2014
Wolverhampton	No cultural strategy
Wrexham	No current cultural strategy but will be prepared ahead of the 2029 City of Culture application

## 5.2 How does pride of place feature in the Key Cities strategic culture documents?

In addition to the varying status and formats of documentation, the approach also varies in purpose, scope and orientation. The extent to which strategies are focused upon assets/spaces, and events/initiatives is variable, as is the scope of culture and the extent to which this is arts focused or broader (e.g. including sport). The presence of pride is equally variable, with its inclusion concerned with pride in relation to an asset (property/organisation), or dimension of history most common. From

the specific perspective of pride of place, a word-search ('pride') was undertaken. Colchester, Lincoln, Bradford and Portsmouth provide insightful experiences which are presented as vignettes below.

### 5.2.1 Colchester

Pride appeared twice in the Colchester search:

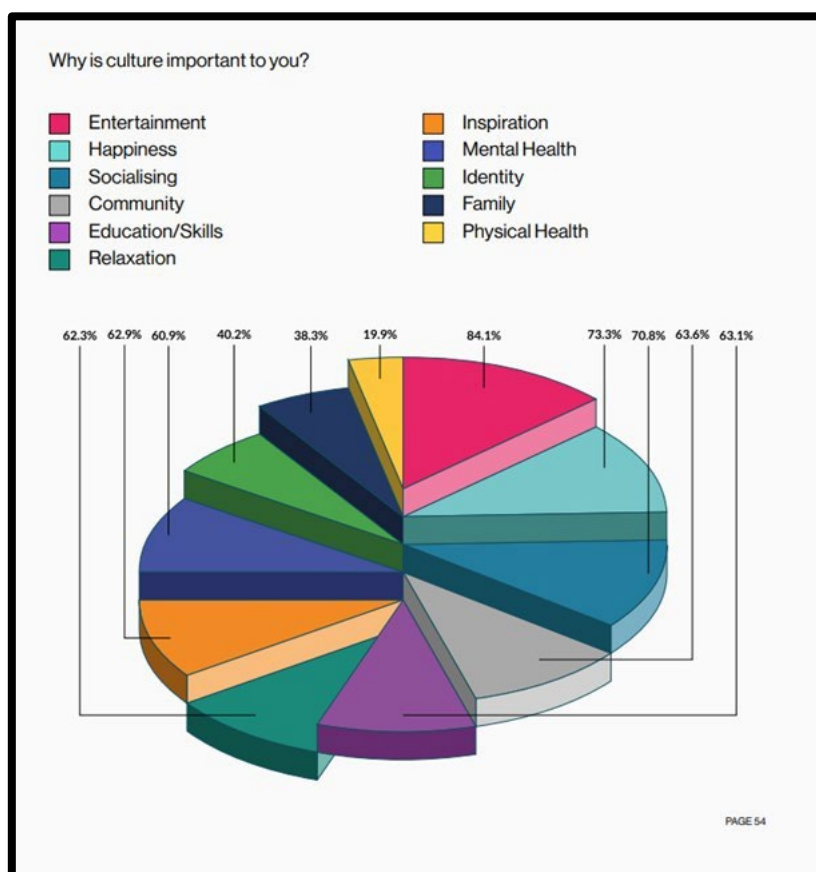
- *“The people of Colchester have great **pride** in their cultural assets and creative industries. However, they also recognise that more could be done to celebrate the borough and its communities through culture. People told us that they would like to see more recognition of local history, and more outdoor activities which make use of important spaces such as Castle Park to host screenings, performances and events.” Pg.6*
- *“While funding remains tight the Council recognises the importance to residents of cultural and creative grassroots organisations and events which support and develop local talent, reach diverse audiences and celebrate communities. The importance of and **pride** in the town’s military history also came through strongly in the consultation and again is recognised by the Council. More creative and cultural use could be made of existing public space to encourage participation, increase access and promote wellbeing, including public art installations and animation in and outside of existing cultural venues and within new civic, commercial, and residential developments”. Pg.30*

The cultural strategy outlines four themes which resulted from *“the research and in-depth consultation as priority areas of activity for this Cultural Strategy:*

- *Building a stronger, more cohesive and collaborative cultural sector;*
- *Ensuring culture in Colchester is relevant and accessible to residents;*
- *Nurturing creative talent across Colchester;*
- *Supporting the innovation, growth and resilience of the sector”*

The proposal to evaluate the impacts of the culture strategy are derived from an associated Action Plan designed to around attaining the four key themes. Hoped-for outcomes are diverse in their nature and pride is not explicitly mentioned. The emphasis of the evaluation is substantially on tangible, measurable economic and personal development criteria, although consideration of holistic outcome impacts were including in consultation survey. This included subjective inquiries about the importance of culture, as shown in fig 8, below:

Figure 8: Why is culture important for you? (Colchester City Council Cultural Strategy 2021-31)



### 5.2.2 Lincoln

In the absence of a discoverable cultural strategy, there is a ‘city vision 2025 strategic plan’ was reviewed. Pride is not explicitly but culture merits 10 references, in diverse contexts (e.g. culture of innovation/tolerance etc., or facilities orientated). It is also significant, in the apparent absence of a strategy, that culture is a significant dimension to the local authority strategy for place. A key example of this is the High Street Heritage Action Zone within which a cultural programme is central.

### 5.2.3 Bradford

In Bradford, the culture plan reveals three references to pride within a single paragraph:

- *“Ambition: Bradford will know itself better We will share the District’s history and the diversity of our cultural heritage with **pride**. Our culture will speak honestly and openly, won’t tolerate racism or discrimination and will have difficult conversations when needed – giving confidence to our communities, celebrating difference, bringing people together, boosting **pride** and promoting mental and physical wellbeing. Knowing our story and taking **pride** in our place in the world is critical to our sense of self and mental wellbeing ‘Culture is noticing and admiring difference” Pg. 29*

The plan goes on to set out ambitions that include (by 2031) a broad list which are more, and less directly focused on culture. They include familiar instrumental outcomes for which culture is regarded as a form of leverage, such as ‘people living better and happier lives, having better mental health, skills and jobs’, enhancing the area’s reputation as a destination for cultural activity and associating a thriving cultural and creative sector with economic development. Reflecting these ambitions, the

evaluative approach offers (ten) ambitious and quantified targets to measure progress. These include learning opportunities for school pupils, repurposing built heritage assets through capital investment, adopting Sustainable Development Goals and engaging with residents of the most deprived wards.

#### 5.2.4 Portsmouth

The Portsmouth Culture Plan mentions pride five times, some of which implicate specific external partners:

- *“The Parks Service also engage a number of Friends groups across the city each with a working interest in a particular greenspace. These groups enable the service to engage with local communities for involvement in the care of Portsmouth’s green spaces and engage a sense of **pride** and ownership in the city” Pg. 10*
- *“...the Council is working in line with Sport England’s strategy which identifies that local sports and physical activity groups operate as community hubs, reducing social isolation and raising **pride** and belonging in an area, increasing social cohesion across different groups” Pg.13.*
- *“The Parks Service will continue to involve the community on a consultative and voluntary basis (for example via Friends groups) to increase the sense of ownership and **pride** in the city’s green assets”. Pg.22*
- *“The government’s Tourism Recovery Plan points out that domestic tourism has a wider impact through supporting health and wellbeing, connecting communities with local culture, heritage and the natural environment and inspiring civic **pride**.” Pg.27*
- *“Mitigation 1: Partnership working Councils need to invest in cultural services to improve the wellbeing of residents, increase the sense of community **pride** and belonging together with the confidence of the residents of the city.” Pg.30*

The plan’s objectives are delineated into six visions with links to health, economic development and environmental targets, viz: a healthy and happy city, a city rich in culture and creativity, a green city, a city with a thriving economy, a city of life-long learning and a city with easy travel. The plans’ evaluation, nevertheless, particularly underscores quantitative key performance indicators (e.g. events, visitors, digital downloads).

#### 5.3 Summary points from the Key Cities network cultural strategies review

From the rapid analysis of Key Cities cultural strategies, we have drawn out three key points which hold resonance in Gloucester:

1. Cultural strategies, in common with most municipal strategies are time limited. Typically, the strategies run over a 5-to-15-year cycle. Consequently, outcomes, outputs, objectives, and evaluations are largely contained/constrained by this timeframe, especially the requirement to have deliverable and measurable outcomes. Initially, impacts may occur rapidly, but some outcome objectives could take a *generation*, especially where these relate to place-making, economic and social changes. Longitudinal assessments and genuinely long-term planning should be embraced.
2. There is a degree of commonality in evaluation approaches, with an [understandable] focus upon tangible and measurable outcomes. However, examples exist where this is not the case and broader ideas of well-being and social impact are present. Even here though, the longer term social and place implications and outcomes are less evident. New techniques for



experimental, iterative and inclusive evaluations (e.g. Living Labs, or adaptations of Climathons) should be researched.

3. Significant diversity exists within cultural strategy purpose, role, objectives, and scope. Clear differences are evident in focus and evaluation. The extent to which pride of place and broader considerations of impact/outcomes is also variable. This diversity, while a clear reflection of the difference between places, also reveals a lack of guidance on how to create a cultural strategy. The Local Government Association (LGA), which provides useful guidance document on the creation of a cultural strategy<sup>1</sup>, notable for its emphasis upon economics and cultural assets. Community considerations are presented through the [important] lens of engagement and consultation, and [understandable] caution is expressed with regards culture led regeneration. While beyond the scope of this report, serious consideration should be given to the provision of further multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral guidance which explores to a greater level of detail the social implications of change over the genuinely long term (generational). Pride of place should be a helpful and central dimension to this.

## 5.4 Cities of Culture

The UK Cities of Culture is a scheme developed by the government and maintained by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Its aim is to *‘encourage the use of culture and creativity as a catalyst for regeneration, to promote the development of new partnerships, and to encourage ambition, innovation and inspiration in cultural and creative activity’* (DCMS, 2021). It follows on from Glasgow (1990) and Liverpool (2008) being designated as ‘EU Capitals of Culture’. The purpose of the City of Culture is to transcend regeneration and culture with an internal/local and external/visitor audience. The forward to the guidance, by Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (2021) notes:

*We know that culture makes a vital contribution to our lives and where we live. But it can also provide a powerful stimulus to recovery and renewal. Culture is a catalyst for attracting investment and new and returning tourists, bringing people together, and defining and reaffirming a sense of place and local pride.*

A value of the Cities of Culture is linked to the large cities targeted and broad scope and ambition (economically and socially) at which the scheme operates. Its time-limited evaluation approaches complement how cultural strategies typically are curated and implemented over a 5–10-year period. The first UK City of Culture was Derry/Londonderry, which held the title in 2013. In this report, our attention focused particularly on the subsequent two holders, Hull (2017) and Coventry (2021).

### 5.4.1 Hull – lasting effect

Hull was the UK City of Culture in 2017, and its evaluation offers useful insights very logical structure linked to SMART objectives. These begin with a vision consisting of three aims as shown in figure X. Of particular interest is Aim 2, which seeks to develop (new and existing) audiences for Hull and East Riding’s cultural offer locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Activities are identified that promise to help stakeholders achieve aims including a public engagement programme. Steps to capture outputs expected to emerge from cultural activities, for instance, marketing, communications

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[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/12.24%20Cultural%20strategy%20in%20a%20box\\_04\\_2\\_2.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/12.24%20Cultural%20strategy%20in%20a%20box_04_2_2.pdf)

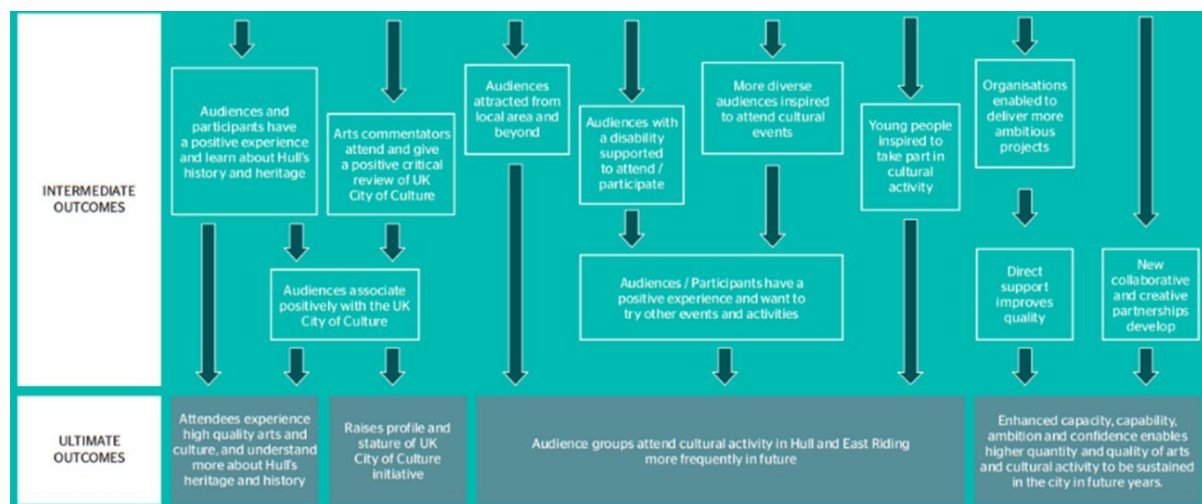
and digital activities, audience development activity and a learning and participation programme are highlighted. It is notable that the same outputs are expected from more than one activity (cf. Audience Development Activity which is expected from both the 365-day cultural programme and the public engagement programme).

Figure 9: Hull's City of Culture aims and outputs



The bid's methodology also discusses possible longer-term outputs that could emerge from planned activities. For instance, diverse audiences who are inspired to attend cultural events following audience development activity and marketing linked to the public engagement programme and the 365-day cultural programme. Such outcomes are expected to emerge over time, to have a positive impact on audience and motivate audiences to try other/further events and activities. In particular, it was hoped that the audience groups would attend cultural activities in Hull and East Riding more frequently in future (figure 9). This reflects a shift from justifying relatively short-term investment to measuring long-term changes, and is notable from the perspective of a *legacy emphasis* within the project planning and aspirations:

Figure 10: Outcomes associated with Hull City of Culture status



Interrogation of the impact and legacy of Hull as City of Culture should be considered in the light that only five years have passed since the award was made. Impact is being explored via a study first undertaken in 2019 and revisited in 2021. This noted that:

*The changes catalysed and created through UK City of Culture have been in many ways profound, **but somewhat fragile** [our emphasis], and requires further development and consolidation if they are to be embedded.*

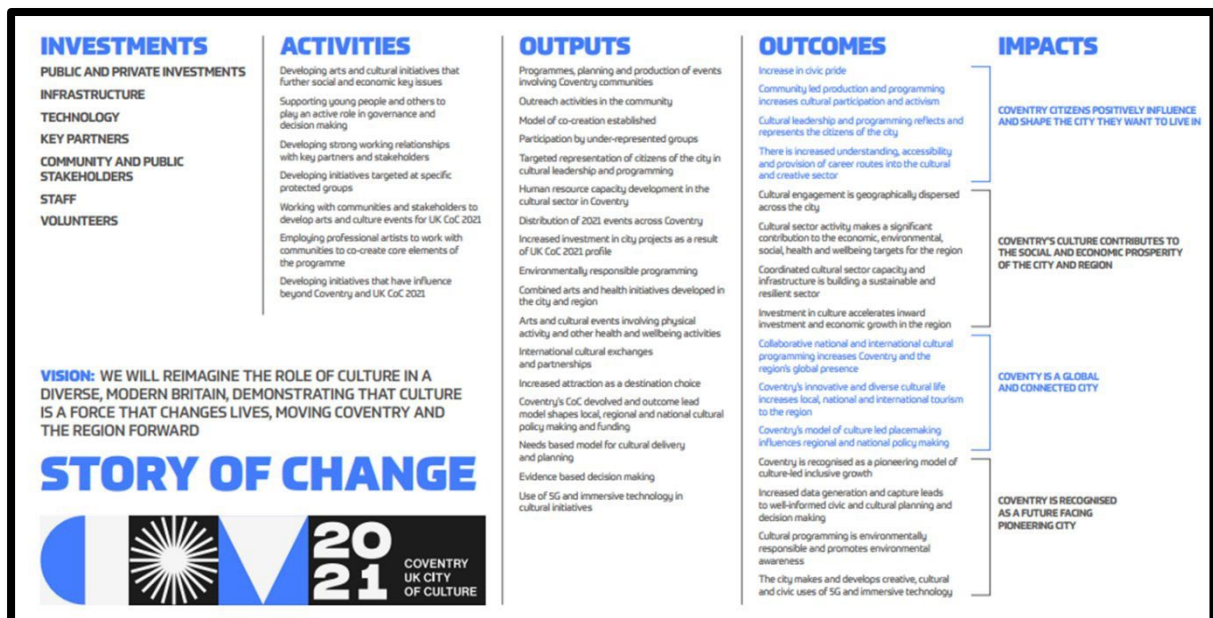
This highlights the need consider change beyond the duration of the City of Culture year alone, but rather to be seen as a stepping off point from which a sustained effort may continue with a long- term view. This is something Hull’s City of Culture stakeholders are mindful of, where assessments of the year’s immediate success were considered alongside the need for a continued process of evaluation to ensure long term and sustained change. Suitable governance arrangements to maximise resilience and long-term delivery of ongoing change are therefore needed and critical.

More information of the Hull City of Culture impact and evaluation can be found here: [https://citiesofculture.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Cultural-Transformation-Conference\\_Nov2019\\_April2021\\_compressed\\_file.pdf](https://citiesofculture.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Cultural-Transformation-Conference_Nov2019_April2021_compressed_file.pdf)

### 5.4.2 Coventry – grounded in investment priorities

Coventry’s City of Culture proposal contrasts with Hull’s, not least by initiating cultural objectives in line with and flowing from investment priorities, as shown in figure 10, below:

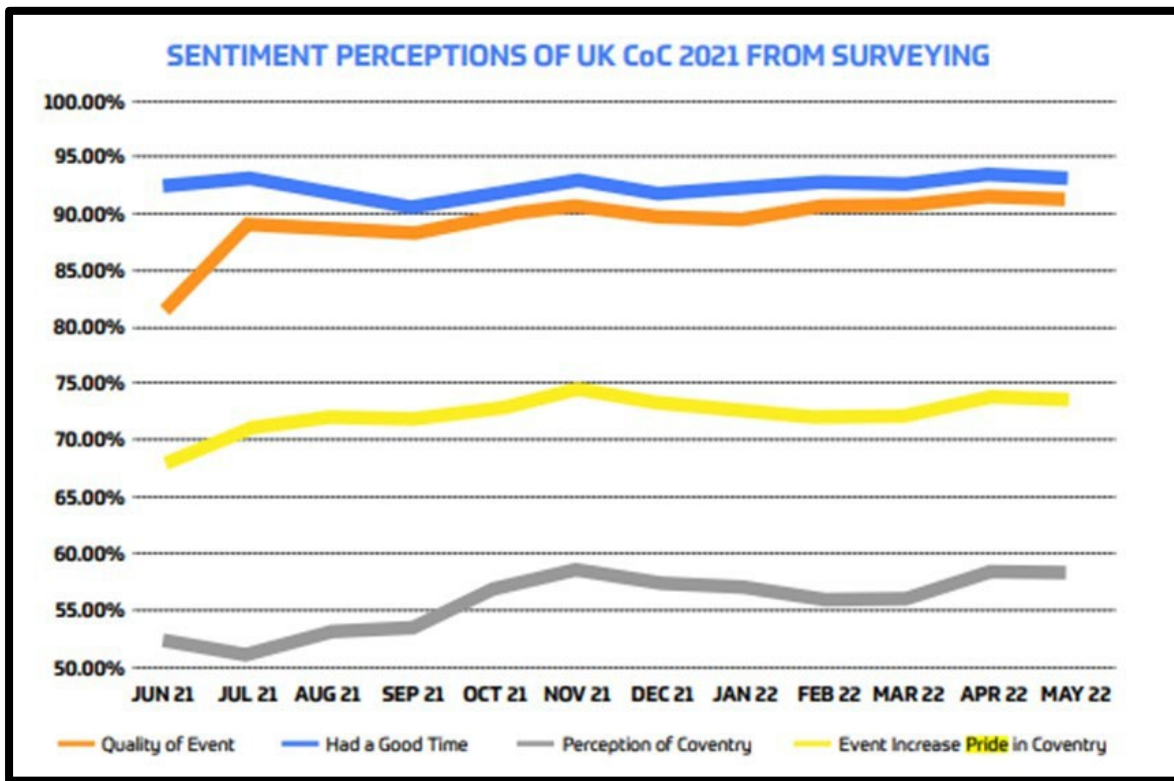
Figure 11: The Coventry City of Culture Story of Change



Coventry’s application drew from baseline data relating to visitor and tourism offers, and cultural infrastructure. This data emerged from an assessment that included heritage assets and green spaces and included statistics regarding health, educational opportunities, depression rates, childhood obesity rates and inequalities. Most data were publicly available but were bolstered by a survey of residents to assess residents’ subjective perceptions of their city.

Using SMART objectives (cf. Hull), Coventry’s bid included considerations of data integrity to ensure impartiality and accuracy? The affordability of data collection and analysis methods were considered, drawing on a range of qualitative and quantitative results to ensure both breadth and depth of data capture (figure 11).

Figure 12: Qualitative assessments of sentiment perceptions from Coventry City of Culture

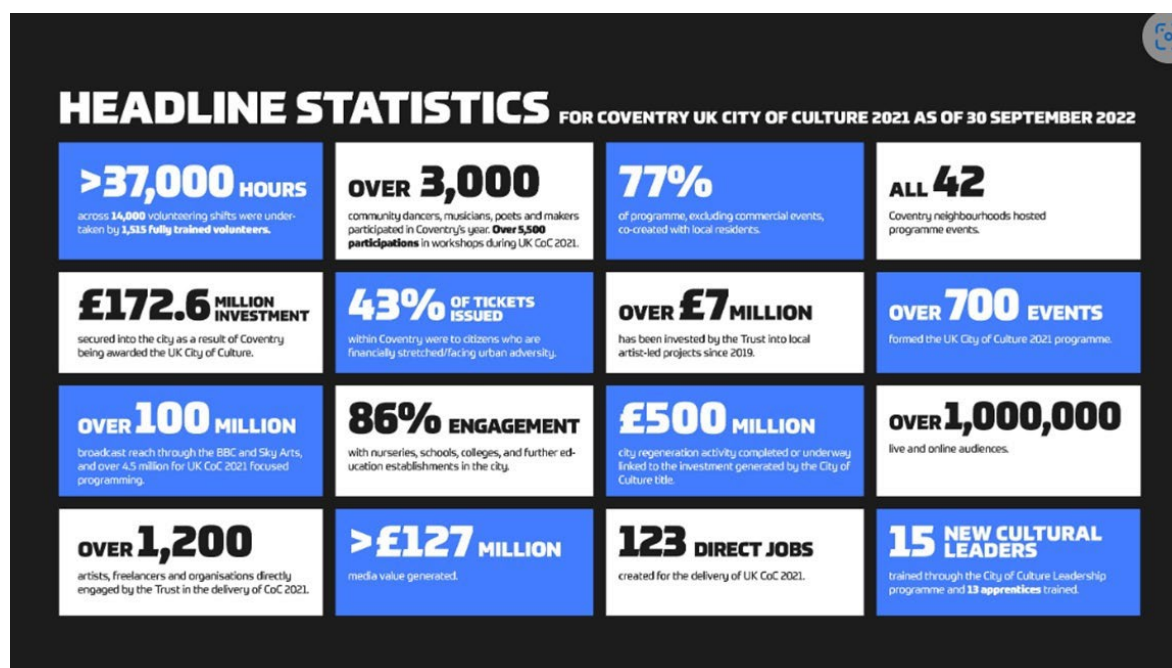


Extensive post event surveying took place as the year progressed, achieved via extensive surveying. However, surveys only included 4 questions, namely relating to civic pride, perception of Coventry, quality of event and perceptions of ‘a good time’, resulting in quantitative assessments such as:

*“...within the first six months of the UK CoC 2021, there was a general rise in sentiment from attending events which peaked in November 2021, following a small decline during the earlier months of 2022 where there were slightly fewer events, the sentiment scores rose again. Sentiment has remained relatively stable throughout the UK CoC 2021 year, only by +/- 4% once the peak was established in November 2021”.*

Coventry also portrayed its success via an infographic as shown in figure 12. This similarly highlights quantitative data.

Figure 13: 'Headline' statistics graphic, Coventry City of Culture



Coventry's evaluation methodology was guided by seven *Social Value UK*<sup>2</sup> key principles:

1. involve stakeholders;
2. understand change;
3. only include what is material;
4. don't overclaim;
5. value what matters;
6. be transparent;
7. verify the result and be responsive.

Coventry considered three methods as ways of measuring impact, namely: social impact assessment, social return on investment and theory-based practice and evaluation. The social impact measurement approach was the assessment of social change for the targeted population attributed to the activities of an organisation during a specific period of time. In other words, intervention impact is measured in changes in behaviour.

The Future Trends series<sup>3</sup> researched different aspects of Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 and connected initiatives. One of the evaluation documents is entitled 'Future Trends: Social Value Creation and Measurement, which assesses how to measure social value methods currently undertaken. It claims social impact measurements, like economic impact measures, "is a relatively blunt, black-box approach, where correlation is likely to be conflated with causation, and variables may be confounded." It goes on to suggest that Theory of Change has a "propensity to eliminate context-specificity and also to 'squeeze' both politics and learning out of evaluation practices." Social Return on Investment is critiqued because "different valuation methods (e.g., contingent valuation versus subjective wellbeing valuation) yield very different estimates".

<sup>2</sup> <https://socialvalueuk.org/resources/the-principles-of-social-value-and-why-they-are-important/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/partnerships/place-based-research/impact-value/ahrc-uk-cities-of-culture-project/futuretrendsseries/>

Ultimately, the Coventry experience reflects much of the literature in that it doesn't fully capture what benefits stakeholders/beneficiaries place on interventions, compared to the quantity of impacts on specific groups, sectors or priority functions of urban cultural enhancement.

## 5.5 Discussion

Coventry's experience raises the question of what is meant by value for money? The city received some unflattering press coverage, for example this recent assessment in *The Spectator*:

*"The organisation received around £20 million in grants and donations, including £3 million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, £6 million from Arts Council England and roughly £7 million from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. In return, the trust itself generated just £600,000 in ticket sales from the 700 or so events it organised. A paltry figure that perhaps speaks to the lack of any wider public enthusiasm for its year-long cultural jamboree. ... Official monitoring reports detailing the benefits that flow from city of culture status have identified things such as an increase in tourism, civic pride and business activity. It is much more difficult to pinpoint tangible and lasting benefits guaranteed to continue long after the arts circus has left town."* (Iqbal, 2023).

Alternative and positive views were aired at the time, but a question remains about the purpose of cultural investment, which is associated with broadly economic functions, compared to its potential for long term and transformational change? Both Hull and Coventry were concerned with and focused upon long term societal impacts to some extent, and both are notable for broad aspirations concerning place making which reach beyond economic impacts towards social change. But these are exactly the aspects of the impact/legacy that are hard to identify.

## 6. Towards a framework for assessing the outcomes of enhanced pride of place

### 6.1 Inspiration from SROI

Having reviewed the scholarship, existing impact assessment practices and case studies from other cities, and engaged with stakeholders in workshops, we set ourselves the question: *what are the outcomes (changes) that could flow from enhancing pride of place as a result of cultural investment?*

This question acknowledges that enhancing pride of place is a major motivation behind cultural investment in the city. Yet it also highlights that results of such an enhancement might be hard to measure and assessments may rest at least partially on subjective considerations about how people feel about the city, about themselves and their position within their community.

An established methodology for measuring the nature of social change as a result of specific interventions is Social Return on Investment (SROI). As noted in section 4, SROI follows a multi-stage approach starting with the consensual agreement among stakeholder of which changes are aimed for through an investment. Indeed, SROI was a key facet of the Coventry CoC assessment methodology. Although this report makes use of only one stage of SROI, table 3 sets out all six stages.

Table 3: The six stages of the SROI methodology (Adapted from Social Value UK, 2012)

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
Establishing scope and identifying stakeholders	Mapping outcomes (aka: theory of change)	Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value	Establishing impacts (and eliminating impacts due to other factors/would have happened anyway)	Calculating the SROI	Reporting, using, embedding

Originating in the USA and adapted in the UK by the New Economics Foundation thinktank, SROI is derived from social cost-benefit analysis that seeks to capture the broader concept of value. It is increasingly used in the public sector to measure and value change. A key attribute of the technique is that it can assign of a monetary value to social outcomes via the application of financial proxies. An ultimate output of SROI is the generation of a multiplier. For example, if investment supports an intervention such as a drug rehabilitation programme, SROI can calculate how much value the initial cost of investment generates by, say, reducing the future reliance of the programme’s clients on medical support, in gaining training and paid employment and on avoiding crime.

SROI has been critiqued for the complexity of its analysis approach (Arvidson et al., 2010), and that it is time-consuming and expensive to operationalise (Maier et al., 2015). However, a key benefit of SROI, in addition to its ambition to gauge social change, *‘is that the only impacts considered and valued should be those recognised by the stakeholders’* (Ariza-Montes et al., 2021). This is a departure from the understanding that funders or other major stakeholders in an intervention substantially influence its evaluation assessment criteria and an important inspiration in the development of the framework in this project (cf. workshop 3). The privileging of stakeholder values indicates the need to understand how enhanced pride of place emerges from cultural investment in Gloucester. Enhanced pride of place, in turn, can lead to social change in the city, as suggested in figure 13 below:

Figure 14: Prototype conceptualisation of iterative outcomes of enhanced pride of place (Origination: Keech 2023)

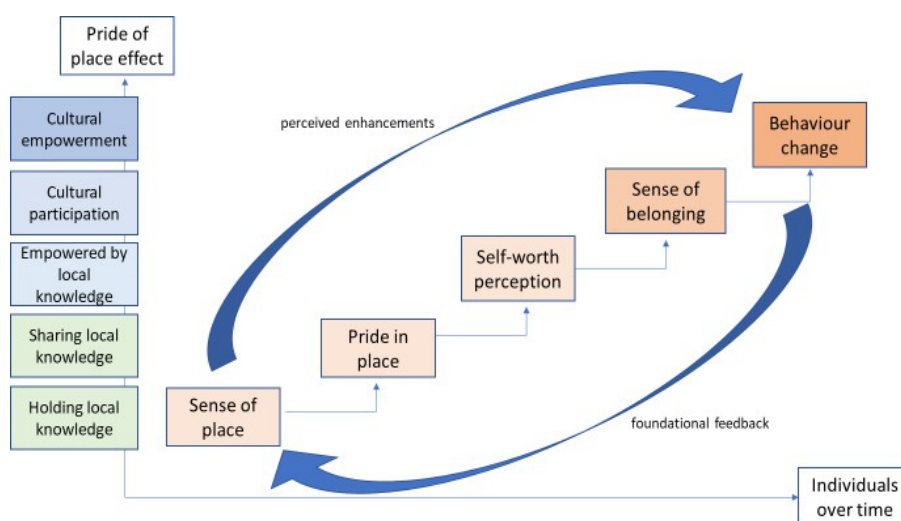


Figure 13 suggests that intangible, but plausible outcomes can emerge from cultural investment, and which gradually expand pride of place from a being an anchor of local knowledge to being a way of augmenting citizenship.

## 6.2 Adapting a pathway of change

As described above, SROI involves the articulation the outcome measures by local stakeholders in its early stages. In this project, the third workshop was designed around an adapted *Pathway of Change* as a first step in articulating and discussing what future social changes and outcomes are desirable in four cultural constituencies, in Gloucester:

- Local citizens
- Visitors
- Cultural organisations/networks
- Cultural industries/businesses

In the subsequent analysis, the overlaps between cultural industries and networks were consolidated into a single category. Ultimately, the synthesis of responses from the third workshop has led to the development of a framework which represents the first stage framework for measuring pride of place in Gloucester *and its associated outcomes*.

Table 4 below sets out the framework over short, medium and long terms. It also highlights (where identified) barriers and enablers to achieving these outcomes. This is illustrative only, but acts as an exemplar of a possible first step in Gloucester:



Table 4: *Pride of Place Pathway of Change – The Outcomes of enhanced Pride of Place through cultural investment in Gloucester*

Impact Pathway	Short term outcomes	Medium term outcomes	Longer term outcomes	Challenges/barriers	Enablers/catalysts
Citizens including residents and artists	<p>Increased opportunities to share pride and opportunities to reinterpret the city's story</p> <p>Increased creative participation</p> <p>Improved inclusivity through being seen and being heard</p> <p>Increase in spaces for cultural activities</p> <p>Increased empathy across groups and communities</p> <p>Improved awareness and knowledge of cultural offer and assets</p>	<p>Improved community confidence</p> <p>Improved social connectivity</p> <p>Increased collaboration across groups, sectors and interests</p> <p>More shared experiences, moments and memories</p> <p>Increase in local cultural and historical education</p> <p>Greater inspiration and enjoyment of the arts</p> <p>Improved sense of personal and community safety</p> <p>Increased emotional connection to place</p>	<p><b>Improved understanding, celebration and appreciation of diversity, history and heritage</b></p> <p><b>Improved mental health and wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>Improved social and community cohesion</b></p> <p><b>Increased sense of trust and belonging</b></p> <p><b>Reduced anti-social behaviour</b></p> <p><b>Improved social connectivity</b></p> <p><b>Improved regeneration through communication, collaboration and investment</b></p> <p><b>Reduced feelings of unease linked to criminal legacy and increased feelings of pride in the richness of the city's story.</b></p>	<p>Primary strategic emphasis on the importance of the city centre</p> <p>Some reticence / mistrust of officialdom</p> <p>Place-based self-perceptions (sometimes inaccurate)</p>	<p>Improved messaging about the city – which may rest on diverse ways of gathering and disseminating (possible contrast to co-ordinated visitor messaging)</p> <p>Enhance policy consultation by proactively drawing on local voices (e.g. using strength-based community development techniques)</p>
Cultural organisations, industries and networks	<p>Increased opportunities for funding, levelling up and reaching out to new audiences (e.g. through Place Partnership programme)</p> <p>Building new partnerships and collaborations</p> <p>Increased provision for LGBT+ community and other groups who have expressed under involvement</p> <p>Increased exposure to and enjoyment of culture and the arts</p>	<p>Increased opportunities for self-funded and paying activities</p> <p>Reaching out to larger and more diverse (socially and geographically) audiences</p> <p>Increased demonstration of cultural ambition and quality and distinctiveness of offer</p> <p>Evolution of new and mutually supportive partnerships and networks</p>	<p><b>Increased partnerships and collaboration</b></p> <p><b>Reduced competition between cultural organisations</b></p> <p><b>Increased cultural activities and events</b></p> <p><b>Increase in creative industries</b></p> <p><b>Increased ability to celebrate new and existing cultural assets and offer</b></p> <p><b>More diverse recruitment and local demographics</b></p> <p><b>Potential opportunity for UNESCO status in city centre</b></p>	<p>Persistence of silo-working</p>	<p>Coordinated communication</p> <p>Funding for umbrella groups</p> <p>Gloucester History Festival and similar events but: who will take these on?</p>

		<p>Increase in financial and philanthropic investment in culture and the arts</p> <p>Increase in emotional support for mental health through culture and the arts</p> <p>Increased engagement with social issues</p> <p>Increased confidence in self and place</p> <p>Increased level of friendships</p> <p>Enhanced skills</p>	<p><b>Prevalence of positive stories about pride of place</b></p> <p><b>Increased resilience of cultural programmes and initiatives</b></p> <p><b>Improvements in individual and collective leadership, empowerment and confidence</b></p> <p><b>Improved personal and mental wellbeing</b></p> <p><b>Reduced isolation</b></p> <p><b>Increased sense of trust and belonging</b></p> <p><b>Increased personal and community resilience and growth</b></p> <p><b>Improved sense of personal and community safety</b></p>		
Visitors and Investors	<p>Increased footfall for local businesses and cultural organisations</p> <p>Increased visibility and awareness in the cultural offer</p> <p>Increased opportunities for investors and businesses</p> <p>Increase in (local) street food</p> <p>Visitors' exploration of the wider city, its neighbourhoods and character</p>	<p>Improved sense of safety</p> <p>More cohesive strategies around cultural investment</p> <p>Improved infrastructure to support green tourism</p> <p>More attractive place to live</p> <p>Change in perception about some areas of the city</p> <p>Increase in feeling proud of the city and community</p> <p>Increased awareness of Gloucester nationally and internationally</p>	<p><b>Increased business growth and investment, including tourism infrastructure</b></p> <p><b>Improved staff development</b></p> <p><b>Increased national and global visibility and reputation</b></p> <p><b>Positive return on investment</b></p> <p><b>Improved quality of life</b></p> <p><b>Celebration of spaces and places</b></p> <p><b>Increase in visitor numbers</b></p> <p><b>Increased authenticity for locals and visitors</b></p>	<p>Skills development and training for certain sectors</p> <p>Organisational stress</p>	<p>Funding</p> <p>Political support</p> <p>Communication</p> <p>Story telling</p> <p>Show casing different ways of thinking</p>

			<b>Improved quality of offer in retail hospitality sectors</b>  <b>Reduced feelings of shame and increased feelings of pride</b>		
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Further research is required to refine the outcomes, to clarify measurability and to ensure they are sufficiently SMART for the purposes of ongoing monitoring and evaluation of PoP in the future. The preliminary work contained here represents the first step on that journey, but at this stage the work is designed to be illustrative, rather than definitive.

## 7. Discussion and next steps

This report outlines a short, time-limited project commissioned by key cultural investors in Gloucester. The brief was to initiate the beginnings of an evaluation methodology which could help assess pride of place in Gloucester. We have taken this one small step further by indicating that social outcomes which emerge from enhanced pride of place could be articulated, striven for and measured using outcome measures collectively agreed by local stakeholders.

An important inspiration for this has come from the early stages of SROI, namely the Theory of Change. This involves considering broad outcome objectives for Gloucester which are related to cultural investment. As such, the outcome objectives are linked to cultural life in the city – a very strong sentiment emerging from the project was the richness of cultural assets, experiences and voices already at hand in the city, although too many remain hidden.

But essentially, the outcomes flowing from enhanced pride of place have the potential to help people become more active and connected citizens with a stronger voice in the cultural life of the place. The framework set out in table 3 has resulted from our workshops. Its exact contents are contingent, of course, on the limitations of the project and who was invited to participate. The main thing to remember is that the approach of co-articulating desired outcomes is the foundation upon which pride of place can be assessed, and that this is carried out over time.

With regard to a proposition for phase 2 including project management, resourcing and implementation, it is suggested that the following ideas could be considered, for action in Gloucester or to inform external discussions:

### **Gloucester:**

1. GCC and ACE should consider this report in the light of the current Expression of Interest submission for a Place Partnership (PP) grant. Implementing social change objectives could become an integral part of programming and, ideally, this could happen synergistically with the execution of the programme, for example through the proposed neighbourhood cultural hubs.
2. The City Centre Commission should, while the Place Partnership process runs its course, consider whether the pursuit of a more detailed outcomes process, perhaps directed toward one or more of the three specific cultural arenas highlighted in table 3 should be pursued. This could include repeating PoP surveys every 3-5 years. For reference, the initial PoP survey described in section of this report cost £8,000.
3. While subsequent KPIs can be linked to particular outcomes, it is vital to ensure that they are directed to examining social change, not only in quantifying (e.g.) uses, quantity of events, participatory profiles of audiences etc.
4. Gloucester could use its position within the Key Cities Network, and as a recipient of levelling up funds for cultural investment to champion outcome-based assessments of cultural investment, especially in the light of the recent KCN report which links the absence of cultural participation to deprivation (De Graaf, 2023).

### **Beyond Gloucester:**

5. Cultural Compacts, and more broadly approaches to governance of place, are a necessary prerequisite to the development and implementation of strategy to ensure resilience, longevity, and inclusivity. Broader routes towards vibrancy and vitality than inward investment and industrial specialisation can be explored as Gloucester considers priorities for its new economic strategy.

6. Evaluation and impact assessment (and guidance concerning this) should reflect short, medium, and genuinely long-term implications of strategies with clear expressions of generational change aspirations.
7. Guidance should be funded and developed (e.g. by local government networks) for the creation of cultural strategies which are holistic and provides a balanced focus upon economics, assets, and social outcomes. In many places, this is already happening. The LGA's *Cultural Strategy in a Box* (Local Government Association, 2020) is helpful in guiding the systematic development of cross-sectoral, and multi-stakeholder strategies. We emphasise the need to combine assessments of targeted and time-limited (including by strategy cycles) cultural investment with an ambition to embrace culture as a vehicle for social change. This applies no less to smaller cities and towns which may not even have a cultural strategy.
8. Similarly, sharing of best practice in approaches (inclusive Cultural Compacts) should be facilitated and enabled to support further progress. Several consultancy reports and academic assessments offer advice, for example, on procedures to energise cultural activity through creative 'meanwhile' use of vacant commercial town centre properties. In Gloucester, many such spaces are owned by the City Council and local experiences of temporary and permanent change of use would prove useful in the region. For example, economic leverage and asset-based assessments dominate cultural regeneration narratives, although well-being is growing in profile. Locally specific social change potentials remain marginal in discourse and practical execution in planning and town centre renewal. Research could help to better understand the limitations of current methods of planning, implementation, and evaluation of place based cultural initiatives.

## 8. Further reading

The following five documents were identified during the literature review as being of particular value for further reading, providing excellent insights into policy, strategy, approach, and evaluation with regards cultural its interface with placemaking / urban change:

1. Culture and Place in Britain; This report reviews cultural policy and data in urban areas, focused upon membership of the Key Cities network: <https://keycities.uk/2023/02/06/culture-and-place-in-britain/>. Notable in this report is the promotion of Cultural Compacts. More on this can also be found here: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/review-cultural-compacts-initiative>. As noted here, "*These Compacts are partnerships designed to support the local cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development, with a special emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector itself and the local authority.*". This is considered to be an important consideration moving forward; governance of place in the cultural domain, mindful resilience and longevity, requires an effective and inclusive approach.
2. Cultural Cities Enquiry; a report by the Core Cities group concerning culture and growth: <https://www.corecities.com/cultural-cities-enquiry>
3. AHRC Cities of Culture Network; focused upon a summit held in 2021: "*The Summit was designed to bring together local, regional and national cultural leaders to consider the post-pandemic road ahead for cultural mega-events and culture more generally in the context of Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 (UKCC21)*": <https://www.coventry.ac.uk/the-university/city-of-culture/university-partnership/ahrc-policy-summit/>

4. Great Place Programme Report; an evaluation of the Arts Council and Heritage Fund project which explored approaches to enable cultural and community groups to work together with an emphasis upon heritage: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/great-place-programme-evaluation-final-report>
5. Future Trends Series; *'The Future Trends series, published as part of the Warwick UK Cities of Culture Project and commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council , discusses ways of thinking about the value of culture: the importance of research in understanding the place of culture in everyday lives, its impact on local people, society, economy and wellbeing and prosperity at large; and how this research-informed approach connects with the needs of policy making.'*: <https://warwick.ac.uk/research/partnerships/place-based-research/impact-value/ahrc-uk-cities-of-culture-project/futuretrendsseries/>

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