

Salisbury Cultural Strategy 2023

counterculture



Salisbury Place Partnership



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1. Foreword

Salisbury is a city of vibrant complexity, rich in built heritage and the natural environment and progressive in its approach to the arts and creativity. The people of Salisbury are active participants and creators of culture, with a deep commitment to this bustling creative city.

Salisbury city centre is thriving in comparison to many comparable small cities and towns in the UK and has recently won awards for its recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic. It's home to the producing organisation Wiltshire Creative which includes Salisbury Playhouse the region's only producing theatre, an international arts festival, and dynamic multi-art form arts centre. Significant heritage attractions Salisbury Cathedral and Salisbury museum, and a range of active arts and heritage organisations including, Fisherton Mill, Wessex Archaeology, ArtCare, and the Young Gallery, and remarkable heritage stories within the fabric of the city through its historic collections and built environment.

The creative ecology is represented by a diverse range of people and organisations, from the large number of volunteers who provide valuable support to the sector, to the many artists and creatives; both professional and amateur; who choose to live, work, exhibit and sell their work in Salisbury.

It's an ambitious place. The city's cathedral and museum attract significant international visitors and locals not only for their important heritage offer but also for their contemporary approach to curation and working with artists. The district hospital is a national exemplar in its approach to arts and health. The Young Gallery uses its art collection and local community collaborations to provide free access to local art. Volunteer led artists groups such as Salisbury Arts Scene provide a regular

opportunity for artists and makers to network, exhibit, promote and sell their artwork direct to the public via outdoor arts events in the Market Square. Wiltshire Creative and the Cultural Pillar of the Salisbury Place Partnership provide an important strategic approach to culture in the city and mean that Salisbury is ideally placed to build from a place of strength.

Culture's huge contribution to the local and visitor economy, to improving residents' health and wellbeing, and to fostering community is well documented and evidenced by reports such as the Cultural Cities Enquiry 2019, which asserts that "smart investment through cultural activities can bring enormous benefits to our cities and their people. It recognises that cities can use culture to drive inclusive change that can also impact surrounding regional economies and helps build stronger communities".

The people of Salisbury have great pride in their cultural and creative assets. However, they also recognise that more could be done to celebrate and communicate its creative opportunities; to break down barriers to participation, and for artists and creatives to play a leading role in shaping the future of the city. There are some notable gaps in provision, such as the closed music venue City Hall, and limited opportunities for teenagers and young adults to develop pathways into culture. It is also true that its built environment needs capital investment to maintain its world class reputation, including the need for a creative approach to wayfinding and enhancement of the public realm. While the city attracts many visitors, it could do more to attract longer term stays by developing its accommodation and night-time offer.

Commissioned by Salisbury Place Partnership, developed by Counterculture Partnership LLP and informed by extensive public and stakeholder feedback, this strategy provides a vision and working framework for the cultural life of Salisbury over the next 10 years. It highlights specific actions aligned with priorities of Salisbury City Council, Wiltshire Council, Arts Council England, other national funding bodies, and the people of Salisbury.

Much work has been done over recent years to understand the unique nature of Salisbury, its cultural and environmental assets, challenges, and opportunities for the future. In developing this strategy we've combined recent public and stakeholder consultation and research with the wealth of data and expertise provided by the Cultural Vision Strategy 2019-2029; the 'Traditional – Original' brand positioning piece and the Strategic Place Plan 2022- 2025, among others. We're very grateful to the many residents, groups, organisations and businesses who contributed to the development of a unique vision and direction for culture in Salisbury.

From our research and in-depth consultation four key themes have been identified as priority areas of activity for this Cultural Strategy:

- World Class Creativity
- Resilience and Sustainability
- Engaging and Inspiring Everybody
- Future Facing Conservation

Taken together, these provide a cohesive framework for delivering a cultural strategy that will grow Salisbury's offer for visitors and residents, through:

- New programmes of work and improved cultural spaces
- Increased access to culture and creativity at all levels and development of the local creative workforce
- Better communication about all the city has to offer through Experience Salisbury
- Improved wayfinding, public art and interpretation of the city's heritage

There is now a real opportunity to maximise Salisbury's cultural assets and, over the next ten years, for culture and creativity to play a leading role in the prosperity of the city and its environs.

2. Vision & Goals

**Goal 1.
World Class
Creativity**



**Goal 2.
Resilience &
Sustainability**



**A vibrant city
celebrating the
independent,
unique, and
unexpected, moving
forward with people
and culture at its heart.**



**VISION
Salisbury:
world class
creativity rooted
in tradition**

**Goal 4.
Future Facing
Conservation**



**Goal 3.
Engaging
& Inspiring
Everybody**

3. World Class Creativity

“From its very beginning the city has been shaped by the skill and attention to detail by its craftsmen and women. In its turn the city now inspires a new generation of creative people” (Salisbury Brand Positioning)

We are renowned for our heritage organisations, which include a cathedral that houses cutting edge contemporary art and our museum where people can enjoy internationally significant artefacts and artworks. Wiltshire Creative is a producing organisation that encompasses the Playhouse, the Arts Centre and renowned international arts festival – these strengths combine to stage ambitious, large-scale productions such as *The Tempest*. The city also has a vibrant independent arts scene and impressive creative retail offer. This strategy will address current gaps in music production and performance and the cultural offer for young adults.

We will ensure that culture is fully embedded into local investment and city planning, creating a holistic, creative and people centred approach to placemaking. The unique cultural and historic identity of our city will be evident from creative wayfinding and bold programming. We will showcase Salisbury’s artistic excellence, creative talent and build a sense of the city as a cultural hub, buzzing with possibility. We are proud of the variety of places in Salisbury that offer world class creativity including our hospital and community college.

We recognise the important contribution culture can make to the local economy and its communities. We are committed to nurturing its creative talent, by working in partnership and creating the right environment for creativity and entrepreneurship to thrive, providing clear routes to skilled employment, and creative workspaces attracting and retaining creative talent in the city.

Aims

1. Develop a cultural quarter delivering a significant increase in footfall with a positive impact on the visitor economy, especially night-time economy and overnight stays.
2. Establish a clear set of priorities for the development and improvement of cultural spaces in the city including the library, and Young Gallery and developing the City Hall as a venue.
3. Take a collaborative approach to events programming and marketing to extend the visitor day and articulate the breadth and depth of the wider city offer to target markets.
4. Encourage collaborative working between the city’s cultural organisations and its artistic and creative community, to explore one off ambitious large-scale events or programmes of national and international interest.

5. Signal that Salisbury is a creative city with a visually interesting approach to wayfinding. Make it easy to get around for the visitor, recognising that the signage, orientation, and interpretation needs of people unfamiliar with a place are different to those of the local community.
6. Develop clear plans for art in the public realm.
7. Seek to support programming in areas where there are currently gaps – including contemporary music and cultural offer for young adults.
8. Work in partnership to support career progression, volunteering, and talent development pathways.



4. Resilience & Sustainability

“Salisbury looks to the future. Our tradition of original thinking will shape our city for tomorrow“ (Brand Positioning Statement)

We manage growth responsibly and work in partnership to share and distribute resources and achieve ambitious goals collectively. Our intersectoral Place Partnership and Cultural Pillar ensures we work across the city to identify new funding streams, audiences, and customers. We will be open to new partnerships and working across services to drive innovation and projects.

We recognise that culture and heritage attract people to live, work and visit the city and is critical to Salisbury’s tourism, retail and hospitality sectors. We want to ensure that current challenges in these sectors, such as low % of overnight stays or a lack of profile for all that Salisbury has to offer, can be tackled through a robust cultural strategy.

We stay ahead of the curve on trends and new technologies to extend our reach and impact, maximise efficiencies, and generate income for creative activity. We will invest in the cultural workforce of the future by creating opportunities to learn, develop, connect and grow.

Aims

1. Develop a sustainable business plan with appropriate revenue funding.
2. Create capacity to lead and deliver the cultural strategy.
3. Work in partnership and across sectors to identify and leverage investment.
4. Provide creative employment opportunities, apprenticeships, and training schemes.
5. Effectively resource marketing and standardise how we collect and share audience/ visitor data.



5. Engaging & Inspiring Everybody

“Salisbury is home to original thinkers, imaginative makers and independently minded people“ (Brand positioning statement)

Culture and creativity have the power to inspire. They can lift us from the every day, bring joy, challenge our perceptions, feed innovation, provide entertainment and build connection. They are core elements of being human. In Salisbury we have a rich history of creation and artistic excellence, delivering contemporary large scale inclusive projects and making creativity happen in everyday places. Research has shown us we have an already highly engaged and creative resident community, who are open to more cultural engagement.

A flourishing cultural and heritage sector makes for a buoyant retail and hospitality sector, which in turn means residents enjoy living in a well-served city with a rich and varied cultural life. It is important that our cultural offer is relevant and accessible to everybody; through a joined-up approach with organisations, groups and providers.

Our NHS Trust is seen as a leader in arts and health practice and is an active arts producer in the city. Wiltshire Creative has an excellent participatory programme and the library runs popular arts and community programmes. We have a variety of organisations including Wessex Archaeology leading joint projects across the city to support wellbeing.

By making the most of our rich natural environment and working in partnership to address social issues around isolation, physical and mental health, we will create a city which builds on its leadership in arts and health, a sector which is gaining increasing value in today’s society.

Aims

1. Work collaboratively across the city and with community groups and third sector organisations to positively impact educational attainment, well-being, and positive social values.
2. Improve marketing and communications about Salisbury’s cultural offer.
3. High quality programmes which reflect the needs and aspirations of local audiences and community groups – especially addressing current gaps in provision, for example for creating new opportunities for young adults or meeting the needs of the proportionally high % of older residents.
4. Work collaboratively to set KPIs and monitor delivery and impact to support programme development and advocacy.
5. Increase the reach and diversity of cultural production in Salisbury.



6. Future Facing Conservation

**“Our Past and present are filled with creativity and originality. We will harness our creative energy to secure our future.”
(Brand Positioning Statement)**

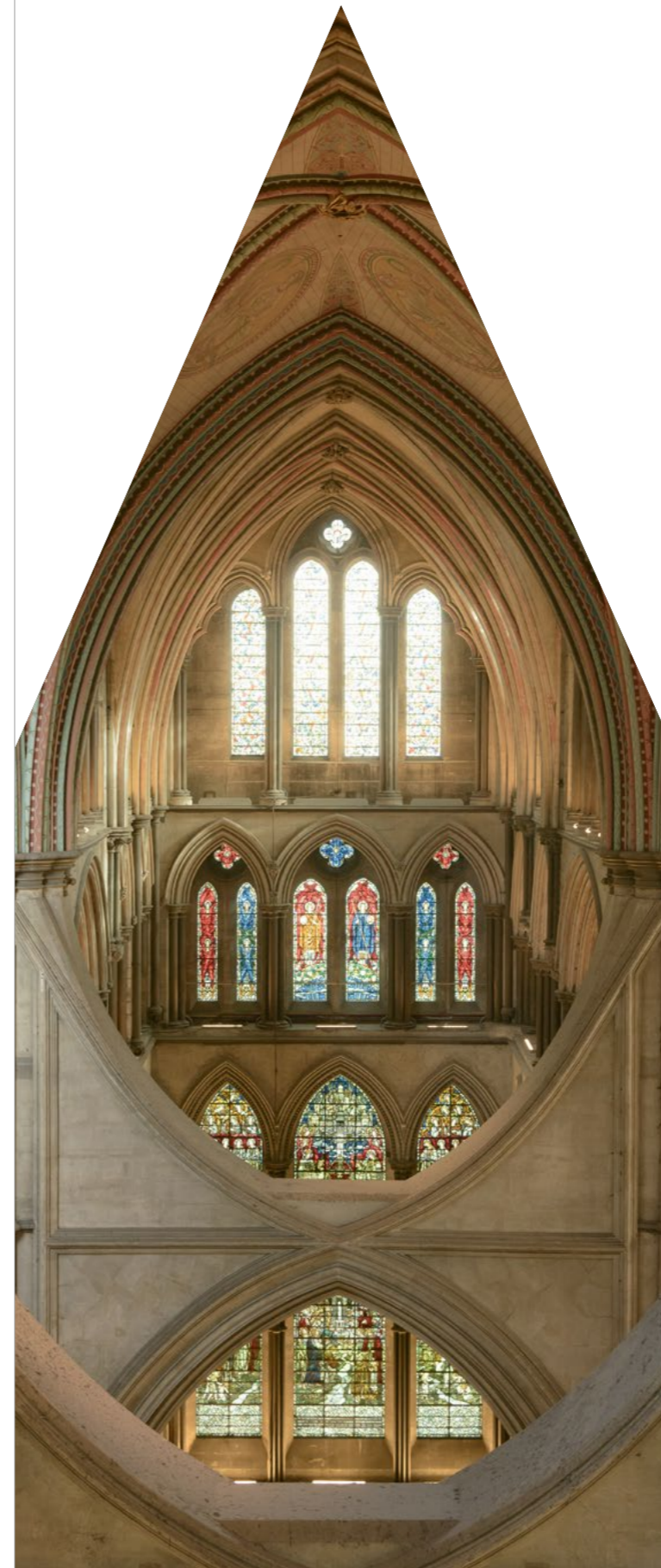
Our medieval city is steeped in history, and we care for globally significant artefacts. We are leaders in our approach to preserving our buildings, stories and the skills of artisans and heritage industries. We recognise culture as a valuable means of capturing the present for future generations.

Research has shown us that the residents of Salisbury care about biodiversity and want better environmental initiatives and we work together to programme across environmental themes and minimise our impact. We are a ‘city in the countryside’ and advocate and promote the green spaces and special biodiversity within our city and on our doorstep.

We are spoilt for high quality heritage organisations including Salisbury Museum, Salisbury Cathedral, Wessex Archaeology and Stonehenge and we work closely with English Heritage. The city council also acts as custodian of the Guildhall and other heritage areas of Salisbury. These organisations will address the priority to consider how we interpret the history and heritage of our city for residents and visitors.

Aims

1. To ensure environmental sustainability is embedded in all capital development while recognising the unique challenges involved when working in a heritage context.
2. To be a leader in conservation and interpretation of heritage
3. To champion environmental responsibility
4. To provide workspace and employment opportunities for artisans and take a ‘living museum’ approach



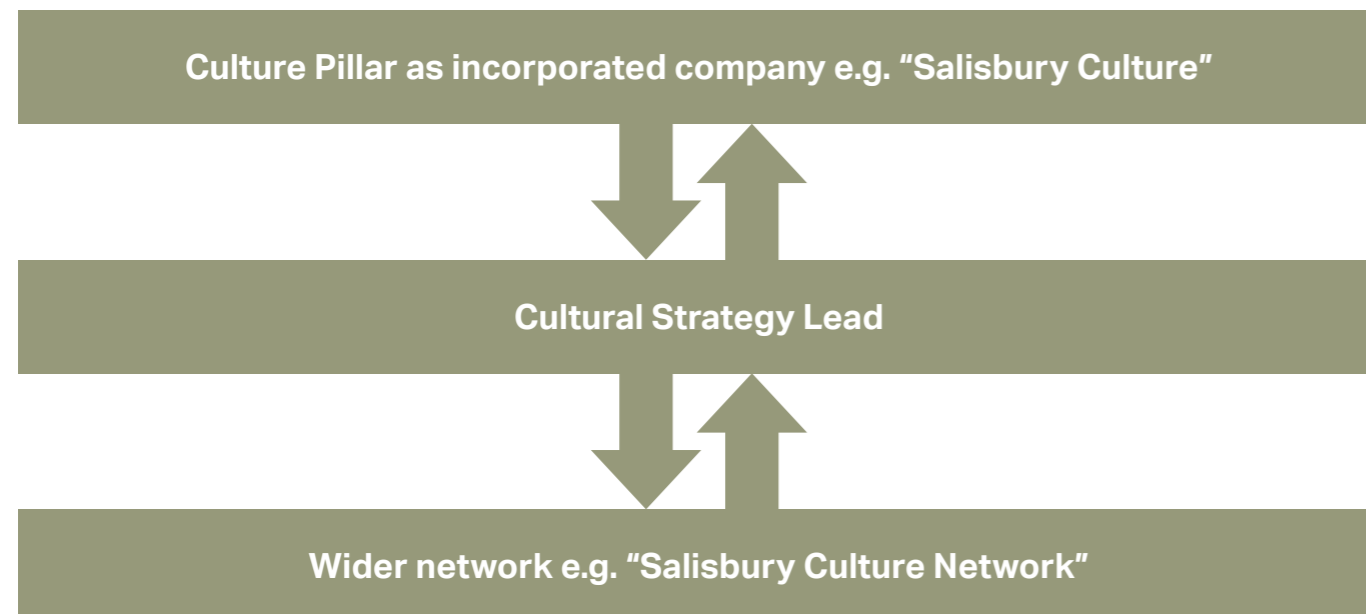
7. Governance

A key challenge for Salisbury is that the Cultural Strategy requires time and energy for leadership and dedicated fundraising beyond the existing capacity and operating budgets of the various cultural and creative business providers in the city. A certain amount is and can be achieved by individual organisations working in partnership with each other where possible, but organisations with limited budgets and capacity will inevitably need to focus fundraising on their own organisational priorities.

ACE research into the experience of the 'Cultural Compacts' that it funded in 2019 was that two key success factors were **Breadth and Diversity of Membership** and **Strong Leadership**. (*Culture Compacts emerged as a key recommendation of the Cultural Cities Enquiry in 2019. The Enquiry looked at how culture might be better resourced and how its benefits could be shared more equally*). About 1/3 of funded compacts were formally constituted by 2020.

Given that more funding could be unlocked for the city with some dedicated strategic development capacity, Counterculture recommends that the Place Partnership consider incorporating the Cultural Pillar as a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee and appointing a Cultural Strategy Lead. To build interim capacity the current Cultural Strategy Officer could support this process.

It is highly recommended that the membership of the Cultural Pillar is reviewed, and that Wiltshire College, Salisbury Library, Young Gallery, Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust, English Heritage and Experience Salisbury are included, and that diversity of lived experience is prioritised. A formal network of creative, cultural and community organisations could play a key role in supporting the local ecology.



8. Priorities

This strategy is accompanied by a 3 year plan with a series of actions that deliver the four Goals and Strategic Aims. Its immediate priorities have been identified as:

	Priority	When?	Action	Lead
Goal 1, Aim 1	1	Year 1	To re-open City Hall for music performances and comedy	Wiltshire Council
Goal 1, Aim 1	2	Year 1	Build on, and implement the cultural quarter masterplan and ensure it works in partnership with other cultural venues, the hospitality sector, and attractions in the city.	Cultural Strategy Lead, Salisbury City Council, Wiltshire Council
Goal 1, Aim 1	3	Year 1	Develop an investment plan with key partners including local authorities and Arts Council England which could include funding for resourcing the cultural strategy and supporting the delivery of the masterplan.	Cultural Strategy Officer / Culture Pillar
Goal1, Aim 2	4	Year 1	Develop a coherent strategy for the delivery of visual arts in Salisbury that links together future plans and developments at Salisbury Museum, The Young Gallery, Wiltshire Creative, Salisbury Cathedral and other venues.	Cultural Strategy Lead
Goal 1, Aim 5	5	Year 1	Seek investment to implement actions from the Central Area Framework to improve wayfinding.	Place Partnership
Goal 2, Aim 2	6	Year 1	Seek investment for a role to deliver the Cultural Strategy and implement recommendations. Ideally funded by Place Partnership in Years 1 and 2 with a view to the role fundraising for their salary beyond this. Potential to match this investment with public funding.	Culture Pillar / Cultural Strategy Officer
Goal 3, Aim 1	7	Year 1	Work collaboratively with Salisbury Culture Education Network to engage young adults. For instance, by including Wiltshire College in local festival and events programming.	Wiltshire College, BID & Culture Pillar, Salisbury City Council
Goal 4, Aim 2	8	Year 1	Develop an interpretation plan for the city that will help visitors and residents understand the city's heritage.	Cultural Strategy Lead, Salisbury Cathedral & Salisbury Museum
Multiple	9	Year 1	Resource Experience Salisbury to act as the primary communications platform and pro-active channel for the City's cultural offer and provide comprehensive listings.	Place Partnership / Experience Salisbury

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