

Culture

Beyond the world of work

Culture is the umbrella definition for positive activity beyond the world of work - for the arts, sport and all forms of leisure - and for a significant number of people, the leisure, arts, sports and tourism industries represent their work and careers as well. Culture makes a significant impact on all our lives from the natural environment around us to our improving mental and physical health.

Recognising this, Guildford Borough Council has undertaken a major consultation exercise with the people and organisations within the borough to produce a Cultural Strategy for Guildford for 2003-7.



Your ideas for improving arts, sport and leisure

- More accessible venues for theatre, concerts and art exhibitions and better community support for the arts.
- Protection of heritage sites such as Guildford Castle and the High Street.
- More positive activities for teenagers as alternatives to town centre pubs and clubs, more youth clubs and activities, gigs on weekend nights and affordable discos and informal meeting places for young people.
- More affordable hotel accommodation.

There were mixed views over such issues as whether sports and arts initiatives should be community-based rather than high quality and the extent to which Guildford should be promoted as a tourist attraction.

Your wish list:

- Lifelong learning and leisure activities open to all, with improved library services, internet cafés, adult education courses open to under 16s, evening community use of school buildings, better public transport and better links between health and sports.
- Measures to enable people on low incomes or with disabilities to take part in leisure activities.
- More local play areas for young people.
- Improved recreational access to the borough's waterways and lakes.
- More concessions to be made available for all leisure facilities including Spectrum and the Lido.
- Revival of senior level football.

The action plan

Guildford Borough Council's (GBC) Cultural Strategy for Guildford sets out a plan of action for the period 2003-2007 and this forms the central core of the Community Plan's cultural agenda, covering all aspects of leisure from arts to sport, children's play to literature and from gardening to tourism. It includes sports facilities, parks and countryside, museums, galleries and theatres.

Some issues raised during the public participation are the responsibility of different partners within the Community Plan and to enable progress to be made - for example over youth activities which involve both Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) - a Cultural Working Group is currently being formed with representatives from all the partner organisations.

Other issues such as public opposition to the proliferation of nightclubs and pubs are more difficult to resolve as planning powers are limited.

The desire for a return of senior football is beyond the resources of the Community Partnership without the support of major commercial sponsorship.

The Cultural Strategy

The Cultural Strategy identifies seven themes which enable the Community Plan partners to see how they can best work together to deliver improvements. These are **CITIZENSHIP**: encouraging public involvement, business sponsorship and volunteering; **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**: encouraging external funding, achieving cultural benefits from commercial development, helping local cultural industries develop, expanding career opportunities, promoting Guildford as a quality tourist centre and promoting local artists and athletes; **ENVIRONMENT**: supporting environmental policies, providing quality public open space, enhancing the river valley, protecting the borough's heritage and archaeology and encouraging public art and the Percent for Art scheme; **HEALTHY LIVING**: working with health professionals, Sport for All, Sport England's Active Schools, Active Sports and Active Communities programmes to encourage people, including those with special needs, to take part in sport and active leisure; **LIFELONG LEARNING**: utilising resources such as the museum, the Guildford Philharmonic and schools, increasing their accessibility and exploring the potential for a new or improved museum or gallery and the need for more theatre space and visual arts facilities; **SOCIAL INCLUSION**: integrating the whole community through concessionary pricing, grant aid and more public transport and **YOUNG PEOPLE**: encouraging clubs to open junior sections, funding children's play, skateboarding and BMX facilities and supporting affordable pricing to enable young people to take part in cultural activities.

Current action

- Promoting the Active Card to increase participation, particularly amongst the young and disadvantaged.
- Redevelopment plans for the Guildford Civic site are being advanced.
- GBC's Public Art Strategy uses lighting, such as under the bridge by The Electric Theatre as a means of reducing crime.
- FISH (Fun in the Summer Holiday) which offers activities to over 200 young people with particular emphasis on the disadvantaged is to be expanded in 2004.
- Supporting Guilfest, Women's, Music, Book and Summer Festivals.
- Surrey County Arts provides rehearsal space for bands and 100,000 arts lessons in Guildford each year. It also supports 17 music ensembles.
- Development officers for arts, sport and play, work to ensure wide access for all.
- The Tourism Strategy and Tourism Marketing Plan have been developed in partnership with the local tourism industry and the Guildford Business Forum.
- Conservation Areas are being reviewed. GBC provides repair grants for owners of listed buildings and a specialist advice service on the borough's built heritage.
- GBC helps local organisations apply for grants, for example from the Arts, Community Fund and Sports Boards of the National Lottery.
- Funding and enabling the CHIPS (Children's Holiday Playschemes) summer activities for 4-11 year olds.
- A working group is looking at the displays and operation of Guildford Museum, investigating options for enhancement and new initiatives.

Future action and development

- Improving concessions.
- Promoting the use of schools and other public buildings for cultural activities.
- Providing more information on leisure activities and facilities.
- Continuing to provide help for those on low incomes, young people and those with disabilities to take part in leisure activities.
- Continuing to encourage sponsorship.
- Improving the environment.
- Assessing the need for new sports and arts facilities.
- Encouraging better transport provision to cultural attractions and facilities.
- Providing a strategy for children's and young people's formal play facilities, skateboarding and BMX provision within the borough.
- Introducing Infotxt (mobile phone texting facility) to inform residents of events, offers, concessions and other opportunities.
- Seeking workshop space for artists.