



THE STAR OF THE EAST

CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR GREAT YARMOUTH



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Great Yarmouth
Borough Council

Introduction

During 1999 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) published draft guidance with a view to local authorities producing their own Cultural Strategies.

Within Norfolk, a countywide cultural strategy 'Norfolk Live' was produced as a joint initiative involving all Norfolk local authorities. 'Norfolk Live' provides a framework with aims and priorities for the development of cultural activities across the county informing local plans.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council published an issues paper in early 2002 which was circulated to over 350 local and regional organisations and groups as well as to local schools. The results of that consultation were reported to the Council's Executive Committee which agreed to the preparation of this, the Council's first Cultural Strategy document. This strategy compliments the aspirations of the Boroughwide 2020 vision and assists the borough in achieving the identified goals.

This Cultural Strategy document has been prepared taking into account the comments received from the consultation papers by individuals, Councillors and the Council's Executive.



Great Yarmouth
Borough Council

This strategy will compliment and contribute to the development of a comprehensive boroughwide leisure strategy.

If you would like to discuss the strategy contents or require further information or additional copies please contact.

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The council has made a commitment to provide equal access to services for all members of the community, business and visitors to the borough and will not knowingly discriminate against anyone on grounds of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, faith or age.



3. Developing Sport and Physical Activity

- ◆ Ensure the full provision of sports facilities throughout the Borough
- ◆ Encourage and promote sport and physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle
- ◆ Continue to support and aid the development of the Norfolk Sports Alliance

4. Developing a Quality Environment

- ◆ Ensure the improvement and retention of the historic core of Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and surrounding villages
- ◆ Improve environmental quality
- ◆ Emphasise both the visible and hidden historic townscape
- ◆ Offer grants towards the repair and refurbishment of historic buildings and structures
- ◆ *Town Centre*: develop a 'cultural quarter' in the King Street area for employment and arts development
- ◆ *South Quay*: promote this area as part of Great Yarmouth's historic waterfront and enhance links with nearby museums
- ◆ *Blackfriars Road*: develop and promote the Tower Curing Works Museum
- ◆ Link these 3 areas by means of innovative transport, signage and promotional activity

5. Developing Cultural - related Employment Opportunities

- ◆ Encourage and support the creation and sustainable development of small arts and cultural sector businesses and activity
- ◆ Continue to promote the town's entertainment sector
- ◆ Encourage the development of skills and small businesses in the cultural industries sector

Monitoring Progress

The Council will monitor the progress in the implementation of this strategy. It will also establish measurements of activity within the cultural services sector and identify appropriate success indicators.

A case for a Cultural Strategy for Great Yarmouth

This strategy aims to bring together most, if not all, of the elements that might be considered to make up Great Yarmouth's Cultural heritage as well as its contemporary cultural scene. By Great Yarmouth the Council refers to the important northern and southern parishes as well as the town of Gorleston. Great Yarmouth's distinctive culture – a history of independence and to some extent, by geography, its isolation and strong links with Europe give it the potential to develop and widen its cultural assets. It is quite unique.

This strategy must, therefore, press for a continuing high profile commitment to both the natural and historic environment encompassing the Broads, the river systems, coast and coastal habitats as well as the historic built environment that has been long neglected. The strategy must link with these important strands towards the regeneration of an arts and leisure sector to develop what is best for Great Yarmouth.

The strategy in itself does not seek to lead regeneration but to underpin it. It should also bolster current initiatives aimed at social, economic and environmental regeneration. These initiatives, in turn, will enhance positive developments in the area of arts, sport and cultural development which are currently underway ie. Arts Council Regeneration Trailblazer Scheme 'Arts Generate'; Department for Health Local Exercise Action Pilot (LEAP); Home Office 'Positive Futures' sport & activity programme for young people; Active England Community Sports Project and the 'Norfolk Ambition' Community Strategy for Norfolk.

Linked to regeneration, this strategy aims to reinforce the cultural heritage, cultural presence and cultural future of the Borough building on the areas rich cultural achievements both past, present and future.



The Borough - Context



Great Yarmouth comprises of an urban area which includes Gorleston with links to the large villages of Bradwell and Caister. It has rural parishes both to the south and north of the built up area. With a population of just over 90,000 it is the third largest centre within the County after Norwich and Kings Lynn. The Borough covers a land area of some 17,000 hectares. It has some of the best and most versatile agricultural land in the east of England; it is located on the edge of the Broads National Park and has a buoyant Port and tourism industry.



Within Great Yarmouth there are equally stark differences in parts of the urban area unemployment and social deprivation levels are high. This compares with the relatively prosperous rural area. Many consider the town's urban environment to be poor and lacking in character; however, against this there are many gems the Town Wall and Towers for example. The first fruits of regeneration initiatives are beginning to show through. Examples include the refurbishment of South Quay and the opening of a Nelson Memorabilia Museum, close by.



As a cultural and entertainment centre Great Yarmouth has a lot to offer: the "End of the Pier shows", amusements and night entertainment. It is slowly developing areas of wider cultural activity through the SeaChange Trust bringing events to the town such as Orange Opera and the Britten Sinfonia. Not to be forgotten is the Pleasure Beach, a centre of which most visitors and local people have fond memories. Also there is the Hippodrome offering circus events in a historic setting but in a modern context.



Sport also is an important part of the Borough's Culture. The local football teams the "Bloaters" (Great Yarmouth Town) and the "Greens" (Gorleston) have a strong following. The annual Bowls Tournament is a popular National event. The Borough is also home to many past World and Olympic champions in roller skating, martial arts, swimming and athletics.



◆ The Wellington Pier

Key Areas of Activity

By nature this strategy covers a wide range of activities. In many cases there are partnerships in existence helping to develop the Borough's cultural life. Key active organisations include Borough Council, County Council, Arts Council England East, Norfolk Sports Alliance, Great Yarmouth & District Society of Artists, Photographic Society, Guild of Artists & Craftsmen, Creative Partnerships and Great Yarmouth Sports Partnership. Each will feature in specific areas of activity.

1. Developing A Local Strategy Meeting Local Needs

- ◆ Promote and encourage key partnerships and developments that will deliver the strategy
- ◆ Establish a 'Cultural Forum' to champion the Strategy's implementation and to forge links with the county Cultural Forum Board.
- ◆ Continue to develop partnerships with key cultural sector groups and individuals
- ◆ In conjunction with the Community Empowerment Framework to commence work with local community and ethnic groups so that the strategy can meet their needs
- ◆ Ensure that the strategy is implemented throughout the Borough
- ◆ Support innovation and talent
- ◆ Provide periodic progress reports to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) on the implementation of the strategy

2. Developing of the Visual and Performing Arts

- ◆ Encouraging arts and cultural activity throughout the borough
- ◆ Support the Norfolk Arts Partnership led initiative(s)
- ◆ Meet the needs of the arts, cultural and heritage sectors
- ◆ Promote Great Yarmouth Borough as a diverse area suitable for tourism, entertainment and location for film and TV.

New Sites for Cultural Activity

Activity	Area	Projects
Arts, Museums, townscape regeneration - a new Cultural Quarter	King Street / South Quay / Blackfriars Road Great Yarmouth	Nelson Museum expansion, Middlegate Gardens
Arts - led Urban Regeneration	Town Centre and St. George's Park, Great Yarmouth	Murals, Sculpture Trails, innovative visual art
Sport and outdoor recreation	Racecourse River Bure, Great Yarmouth East Norfolk 6th Form College, Gorleston and Lynn Grove High School, Bradwell Kings Church Project, Gorleston Cliff Park High School, Gorleston	Grandstand development Yacht Station Upgrade Sports Hall(s) Community Activity Hall Fitness Studio
Historic Heritage	Yarmouth Town Centre Blackfriars Road, Great Yarmouth Market Row Great Yarmouth	Market Row Town Wall Repairs and development of heritage walks Time & Tide Museum NW Tower Market Place SeaChange Gallery
Arts	Yarmouth seafront	Developing a theme for Seafront Regeneration in conjunction with the InteGREAT Project
Arts	Gorleston Town Centre Seafront	St Andrews Chapter House Bandstand Development
Historic Heritage	Lower Gorleston	Lifeboat sheds Pavilion Area
Historic Heritage	Burgh Castle Roman Fort	New Interpretation / Information Facility

What is Great Yarmouth's Culture?

Great Yarmouth is famous as a holiday resort - today it is still within the top 5 of UK holiday destinations but how many people outside of the town know that it is a port, is on the edge of the Norfolk Broads and has a rich built, archaeological and landscape heritage?

The Borough's geographic setting has helped it to maintain the 2.6 million staying visitors 2.7 million day-trippers per year, mainly over the summer season but now becoming an all-year round activity. Tourism and entertainment has been part of Yarmouth's culture for over one hundred years, since before the advent of rail travel.

It is the gateway to the Broads for sea-going visitors and it is the pivotal link between the northern and southern Broads system.

It has a rich heritage - Caister Roman Fort, Town Wall, Burgh Castle, the Town Hall to name the most well known. A great deal of the Borough's heritage is also held in archives which reflect the culture and customs of times past.

Sports provision - athletics, football, bowls are well represented. The Wellesley and other recreation grounds plus indoor facilities Marina Leisure Centre and Phoenix Indoor Pool, provide for residents' needs. As from September 2004, Cliff Park High School will promote it's Specialist Sports College Status to provide provision to the local community. A racecourse, the Caister stadium and the Broads also provide for wider recreational needs.

Historical links are provided by several museums - the Tolhouse, Elizabethan House, Row III Houses together with the recently opened and soon to be expanded Nelson Museum located on South Quay. The Time & Tide Museum of Great Yarmouth Life opened in July 2004 providing a major museum of regional significance.

Local Societies promote the arts through amateur operatics, theatre and drama. Photographic societies and arts and craft guilds are well represented, exhibitions are regularly held at the Yarmouth Galleries situated above Yarmouth library. Many individuals also make voluntary, amateur and professional contributions to the visual and dramatic arts, the town's history, creative writing, for example. Caister High School has designated Specialist Arts College Status.

The tourism industry sustains its own identity providing for the needs of holidaymakers and local people - the Britannia and Wellington Piers, the Hippodrome, St. Georges Theatre and the Gorleston Pavilion provide a wide range of entertainment across a broad spectrum. Great Yarmouth's Market Place reflects the town's history as a centre for commerce, trade and cultural activity.



Components of Culture

A selection of some areas of local Cultural Activity

Culture in its widest sense can include a range of activities and places:-



Sports events, facilities and development : Racecourse
Wellesley 'All Weather' Athletics Track, Golf Courses at Gorleston, Caister and Fritton
Marina Leisure Centre
Phoenix Pool
GYBC Sports Development Service



Performing and visual arts and crafts: Hippodrome
St Georges Theatre
Gorleston Pavilion Theatre
Seachange-Arts Development Agency
Yarmouth Galleries



Tourism, festivals and attractions: Seafront, Maritime Festival, Pop Beach, Film Festival, In Bloom, St. Andrew's Festival of Music & the Arts, Britannia and Wellington Piers.



Buildings, architecture, landscape and archaeology: Nelson and Tolhouse Museums, Town Wall, Burgh Castle, Caister Roman Fort.



Museums, artefacts, archives and design: Nelson Museum Row
Houses, Elizabethan House,
Caister Castle and Motor Museum
Time & Tide: Museum of Yarmouth Life
Norfolk Achieve Centre (record office)



Children's play areas and Multi Use Games Areas: Various locations throughout the borough.



Libraries, Literature and Writing: Local libraries
Active Reading and book groups.

Parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats and Countryside recreation, Zoological Gardens: The Broads
Winterton Dunes
Thrigby Wildlife Gardens

Media, film and broadcasting: SeaChange
Radio Norfolk Studios
Screen East
Local TV companies



3) Time & Tide: Museum of Great Yarmouth Life

This new museum of regional standard tells the history of the borough through to the present day.

4) Sport

Production of the Playing Pitch Strategy focusing on football, cricket, rugby and hockey provision plus outdoor multi use games areas.

Ongoing development of GYBC Sports Development Service to provide an annual Youth Holiday Activity Programme and Out-of-School activities.

Production of a Sports & Physical Activity Directory.

Great Yarmouth Sports Partnership established and has successfully secured external funding for community sport & physical activities within the borough ie. 'Positive Futures' programme for young people; Local Exercise Action Pilot (LEAP); and the Active England project.

Active involvement with the countywide Norfolk Sport Alliance which provides quality sports coaching opportunities to young people plus participation in the annual Norfolk Youth Games event.

5) Maritime Festival

Every year for the past 5 years, the Borough Council has held a Maritime Festival to celebrate the area's long association with the Sea and its connections with Europe and Scandinavia.

Linked to the festival is the Nelson Museum and the new Time & Tide: Museum of Great Yarmouth Life telling the story of Great Yarmouth over the centuries. The festival also links the Borough's maritime history with that of the broadland waterways the Borough being the principal gateway to the broadland river systems.

Events include displays, exhibitions, dancing and musical entertainment.



Great Yarmouth Cultural Initiatives -

Recent Milestones - Achievements To Date



1) Regeneration Trailblazer 'Arts Generate'

SeaChange is an independent Arts organisation which provides Great Yarmouth Borough Council with independent arts advice. It delivers a range of arts related projects in the Borough.

In March 2002, the SeaChange Trust was granted 'Regeneration Trailblazer' status by Arts Council East. The award of this status is part of the 'Arts Generate' initiative supporting regional projects that will be regionally distinctive, have a high impact and provide a focal point for a regeneration strategy which has the aim of 'making a difference'.

For Great Yarmouth, Regeneration Trailblazer status means that the project has to deliver 3 key objectives:-

- 1 commission high profile public art
- 2 stimulate small and medium sized enterprises and creative industry
- 3 attract large scale touring productions to the town
- 4 address social issues through artists working with community groups

To achieve this, SeaChange has been working with others to develop a Public Art strategy; develop a Cultural Tourism partnership; establish a group of local artists; provide training and professional development; develop partnership projects with community groups and organisations engaging local people with professional artists.



2) Nelson Museum

The Nelson Memorabilia Museum on South Quay opened in 2002. It compliments the refurbishment of Yarmouth's historic South Quay as well as the Elizabethan House Museum, The Row Houses and Tolhouse Museums

Why does Great Yarmouth need a Cultural Strategy?

At first glance, the reaction of many people would be that the Borough "doesn't need it!" However, many funding initiatives require applicants to demonstrate how their project links with local, regional and occasionally national policies whether those policies be economic, environmental or social. The purpose of the Cultural Strategy is to provide a framework that individuals and groups can identify with and use with confidence.

The strategy itself will, it is envisaged, be a lever to draw more funds into the Great Yarmouth area. The strategy is important in that it identifies all the various individuals and organisations working towards the cultural regeneration of the town and Borough. This will not only add value to the delivery of economic investment, social development and attacking the roots of social deprivation but enhancing, also, the environmental qualities of Great Yarmouth which, for many years have been underplayed and neglected. It will also promote culture and cultural development in the Borough.

Above all, it is hoped that the strategy will bring people together, encourage joint projects and allow individuals and organisations to see their role in relation to the work of others.

The strategy series to promote equality of opportunity and to reflect the diversity of the town community, business and visitors to the borough.



The Strategy's Key Aims - Goals

Image

- ✓ To develop Quality of Experience and promotion of excellence in the Borough
- ✓ To maximise the impact and image of the Borough's cultural sector and "bring alive" what it should be celebrating
- ✓ To work with the Seafront, Town Centre, Heritage, Sport and Community Partnerships to present, over time, a "fresh image" of the borough as a vibrant, viable, cultural area.
- ✓ To assist and add value to the implementation of the InteGREAT scheme bringing regeneration to the seafront, town centre and heritage areas.
- ✓ To develop new public areas, both visible and discreet to enhance the town centre, seafront and local communities.

Developing Local Identity

- ✓ To attract major arts events for the enjoyment of residents.
- ✓ To develop a local cultural industries sector that can be self-sustaining, creative and make a significant contribution to the local economy through the ArtsGenerate Programme.
- ✓ To add value to the work of local societies through event promotion and, where possible, financial assistance.

Bringing People Together

- ✓ To bring together the Borough's many groups and societies through a 'Cultural Forum'.
- ✓ To develop linkages with children, young people, education and new technologies.

Bringing out the best in Great Yarmouth and the Borough

- ✓ To highlight and publicise our new and existing museums and heritage attractions.
- ✓ To attract new cultural activity through the arts, sport and music.
- ✓ To draw out areas of our cultural heritage that have been underplayed: the Hippodrome, the historic Port, the Rows and Town Wall.
- ✓ To celebrate the traditions of the town and the seaside resorts Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, Caister, Hemsby, Hopton and Winterton.
- ✓ To highlight and promote the diversity of cultural taste from opera to karaoke.
- ✓ To promote and develop performance venues and club facilities.
- ✓ To encourage and celebrate cultural diversity to reflect the evolving population of the borough.

Specific Proposals

Education

Proposal: To develop new skills and promote life-long learning opportunities in the cultural industries sector ranging from fashion, to food and to music. Encourage the use of education and learning to promote interest in the town's culture and cultural development

Entertainment and the Performing Arts

Proposal: To develop Great Yarmouth's entertainment industry so that it maintains and services its position as one of the top five UK holiday destinations.

Proposal: To ensure Great Yarmouth achieve the regeneration of the Seafront to continue to provide exciting and vibrant holiday attractions ranging from 'end of the pier entertainment', amusements, casinos to family entertainment both indoor and outdoor.

Proposal: To develop the performing arts sector to enhance the facilities and opportunities offered in both Great Yarmouth, Gorleston and surrounding settlements

Proposal: To work with partners such as Creative Arts East to promote and develop arts-led productions throughout the rural areas of the Borough

Proposal: To develop Arts Digest with the SeaChange to cover other areas of cultural activity.

Sport

Proposal: To work with the Great Yarmouth Sports Partnership and Norfolk Sport to develop, co-ordinate and build a sustainable sporting infrastructure to provide opportunities for community sports development initiatives.

Historic Environment

Proposal: To highlight important archaeological and historic features in the Borough to reflect community identity and to raise awareness of these features as important parts of Great Yarmouth's history and heritage.

SeaChange and the Arts

Proposal: To develop and co-ordinate through SeaChange and in liaison with Arts Council England East a robust arts and self-sustaining cultural sector of the local economy.

