

CULTURE MATTERS – 15 APRIL 2008
“CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION”- SHORT TERM OPPORTUNITIES

This document is a list of short term opportunities, arising from the Cultural Consortium Executive Groups’ analysis of the outputs from the 15 April event.

Priority 1 – Improve opportunity and achievement in education, skills and lifelong learning.

Short-term opportunities:

- Seek an Education Champion, and develop a network of Young Achievers to inspire peers.
- Extend and improve access to facilities to learn and study. e.g. open for longer, shared.
- Develop a coherent network of Information, Advice and Guidance sources for learning activities. Consider extending Portsmouth Learning Net to other education providers.
- Embed Learning City values and ideas in theme in festivals (eg music, arts, food, Portsmouth Festivities).
- Develop a “good employer” scheme for learning (similar to the one for Healthy Workplace¹).
- Implement the Read a Million Words scheme. Use the Dickens 2012 and Conan Doyle initiatives as a means to stimulate literacy, and a love of learning.

Priority 2 – Make Portsmouth an accessible city, with sustainable and integrated transport

Short-term opportunities:

- Transport improvements enable progress in many aspects of all other priorities. Increase cooperation between transport suppliers.
- Investigate alternative transport solutions (eg trams, land trains, new ferry routes to adjacent areas).
- Upgrade the Hard Interchange² to modern international standards as a gateway to the city, and incorporate bike hire.
- Improve late night transport provision in frequency, time, and safety. Encourage more people to use buses and consider free for those under 16³. Develop integrated ticketing (even if only partial, say between First Bus and Stagecoach). Improve look of the southern end of the M275⁴.
- Experiment with “Traffic free” days⁵ once a month.

¹ This is a locally developed scheme, not imposed by government.

² Probably one a few interchanges in the UK in connecting two ferries, rail, and bus.

³ Seek advice from Greater London Authority.

⁴ Repaint the CCTV camera. Remove Xmas lights stands after the Xmas period.

⁵ Look at the success of “The Lady Who Stops Traffic” in Marlow, Berks, 2007 (Channel 4, Mar 08).

- Investigate solutions to residential parking problems (eg provide alternatives to commercial vehicles parking in residential areas, and use spare space such as empty garages and commercial premises parking (eg at weekends)).

Priority 3 – Develop Portsmouth as a city of innovation and enterprise, with a strong economy and employment opportunities for all.

Short-term opportunities

- Recruit ambassadors for Portsmouth to promote enterprise in the city.
- Make job centres more attractive and welcoming, and develop work trials.
- Improving the waterfront and transport links to it will go a long way to improving the city’s image.⁶
- Hold competitions for public art and lighting in key public spaces and gateways to make visible that “we’re going places”.
- Train, motivate and inform public-facing staff to spread good news about the city.
- Continue to develop credit unions and start training people on managing finances.
- Develop innovative social enterprises⁷.

Priority 4 – Make Portsmouth a city where everyone feels safe and is safe.

Short-term opportunities

- Stamp out violence in Guildhall Square area. Put out more chairs and tables in Guildhall Square, have busking, street theatre; make it more exciting, signal it is a safe space, day and night, and “ours”.
- Change attitudes and behaviour of the media towards reporting good news.
- Experiment with closing roads on certain days (eg Sundays) and make it open space.
- Learn from other cities (eg Peterborough’s experience in coping with an increasingly diverse society; and consider cities abroad).

⁶ See PCC’s Seafront Strategy (not yet published).

⁷ eg a “cycletel” (hotel for cyclists). Businesses for those with mental health difficulties. Business converting chip fat from the 400 city eateries into Bio Diesel.

Priority 5 – Make Portsmouth an attractive and sustainable city

Short-term opportunities

- Improve signage to make it exciting with high quality design and a variety of materials, and use innovative lighting to give selected buildings and structures a lift. Enhance the entrance gateways to the City.
- Reduce the adverse visual impact of containers (eg waste, recycling) in public areas.
- Institute the City Design Think-Tank.
- Develop Urban Visioning Centres⁸ where people can come together to discuss, debate and design the city.
- Use the city's Visitor Information Services to obtain impressions and improvement ideas from visitors.
- Increase protection for personal items, on bicycles, against theft.

Priority 6 - Deliver affordable, quality housing where people want to live.

Short-term opportunities

- Mobilise the city's architects and designers, and the population, to create good design strategies across the city, and to work with and assist developers in improving their houses.
- Identify individuals in housing areas to be champions, and seek an overall housing design champion.
- Hold 'Proud of our Area' events (like the Paulsgrove Festival or the Love Albert Road day).
- Hold roadshows to market ideas and consult residents.
- Improve the quality of building work, of all scales, by increasing the validation of builders. Offer the public support and skills to be better informed as clients of building work.
- Link the buy-to-let market to local needs and eliminate any remaining slum landlords.

⁸ London, Paris, Bologna, Southampton all have variations on this concept.

Priority 7 – Encourage and enable healthy choices for all and provide appropriate access to health care and support.

Short-term opportunities

- Have specialists work with supermarkets to review and advise people's shopping lists towards a healthier list.
- Sports organisations and other professionals (eg the Football Club) to offer healthy eating advice and give educational support for health.
- Seek out 'Lifestyle Champions'.
- Continue to innovate and build on the success of innovations such as the St. Mary's treatment centre.
- Use "Building schools for the future" to address health, community, and social issues.

Priority 8 – Enhance Portsmouth's reputation as a city of culture, energy and passion, offering access to all arts, sports and leisure

Short-term opportunities

- Seek arts, sports and leisure champions and engage young people.
- Encourage buskers and street performances (eg theatre) in key public spaces. Use empty spaces and shops for exhibitions.
- Make innovative use of local media - sell good stories eg to The News.
- When continental food fairs come to Gunwharf, expand this into the arts, music, culture of those countries, and use more venues.
- Improve civic leadership and coordination in this priority, and bring together the many different interest groups and skills in the community.
- Liaise with Liverpool and European cities to learn from their approaches to culture.
- Develop a more innovative approach to street markets (eg the German Christmas Market).
- Revitalise culture and leisure in the North of the city.
- Continue to explore World Heritage Site status.
- Build on the Up for Sport, the city's festivals, and other events, to start creating more cultural partnerships.
- Develop the ground floor of the Civic Offices as a café and cultural space, a shop window for the city, an ideas space, and a modern meeting place.

Priority 9 – Celebrate the many diverse and different communities within Portsmouth and work together to create an inclusive city for everyone

Short-term opportunities

- Continue to improve links between faiths, communities and ethnic groups (interculturalism), building on the success of Portsmouth Race Equality Network Organisation and the Interfaith Forum.
- Strengthen the City of Festivals initiative as a means of celebrating communities.
- Seek out Community Champions - key people who make a difference in and between communities. Have a culture 'card' entitling all residents to a number (eg 6) free events/admissions per year.
- Build on the city's growing national reputation for citizen involvement and participation to extend it to all areas of the city; its design, development and public services.
- Broaden the range of ways people can influence decision-making with the use of technology so that everyone feels like they have their say.

Priority 10 – Protect and support our more vulnerable residents by shaping public services to meet their needs

Short-term opportunities

- Improve coordination amongst service providers to make it easier to use these services. Provide services where and when they are needed, expand the scope and number of mobile services. Extend the hours that services and facilities are available.
- Entertainment providers (eg cinemas) provide satellite and tailored services (eg different timings and formats) for, for example, older people.
- Use local open space and green clubs to involve the wider community.
- Exploit the Neighbourhood Watch scheme to look out for the welfare of vulnerable residents.
- Develop a mobility and safety strategy for the elderly.
- Provide support and advice to those less able to access digital media and computers. Use the "IT" bus to bring computers to people who do not have one at home.