

Appendix 1: Specification.

Cultural Consultancy for the Arts in Somerset

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CPV Code	Description
72224000-1	Project Management Consultancy Services
73200000-4	Research and Development Consultancy Services
79419000-4	Evaluation Consultancy Services

1. Introduction

This project sets out to create and develop a cultural strategy for the county of Somerset, with the ambition that the new Somerset Unitary Authority, coming into being on 1 April 2023, adopts the strategy. This project seeks to unite the existing five local authorities in Somerset and to present an exciting vision for the role of culture within our county and the communities the council serves.

The vision for Somerset, as discussed by the Cultural Leads from each authority, is to raise the profile of Somerset as a cultural destination. The cultural strategy will encourage the council to work in new ways by taking a strategic approach to how the arts and culture can support existing economic, social and environmental strategies in place as we transition towards one unitary authority.

Somerset's Cultural Strategy will be developed to align with the new Somerset Council's priorities and correlate with the Arts Council's 'Let's Create' Strategy, outcomes and principles. The priorities of the new unitary authority are likely to be decided once members are appointed in May 2022, following local elections. These priorities will inform the long-term ambitions for culture in Somerset, areas of development and strategic ambitions.

2. The extent of the study area

The project and creation of a cultural strategy for Somerset is being developed by the five Local Authorities in Somerset; Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset West & Taunton Council, and led by South Somerset District Council. The Cultural Strategy will be a critical advocate for the arts and culture across Somerset.

3. Aims

- Produce a 5-year cultural strategy for the new unitary authority Somerset Council that voices the priorities of the community, rationalises existing council strategies, promotes the cultural identity of Somerset and ensures arts and culture is embedded at the heart of the new Somerset Council's strategic plans.

- Raise awareness and promote the role culture can play in enriching our communities and improving the quality of life, health and wellbeing and local economy for Somerset residents, visitors and local businesses.
- Establish and realise Somerset's potential as a cultural destination, serving to protect, capitalise and unlock potential opportunities for Somerset's creative sector that unifies place-based priorities of all five authorities.

4. Scope

For this proposal, all five Somerset authorities have collectively agreed a set of outcomes and long-term ambitions for culture within Somerset.

We will use the Cultural Strategy to:

- Connect council services with culture:
 - Align the strategic position of culture with other council strategies such as environment and tourism, exploring ways the new authority can build on existing valued relationships, networks and cultural forums to generate investment into the area and demonstrate a countywide commitment to culture and the role it can play within the context of Somerset.
 - Ascertain and gather data on Somerset's population, current levels of cultural activity across the county and place-based priorities of each authority to better serve our residents and areas with no or minimal cultural engagement within the county.
 - Collation and recognition of arts, culture and heritage organisations and assets both independent of and/or managed and supported by each local authority, to protect, capitalise and unlock potential opportunities for Somerset's creative sector.
 - Apply arts, heritage and culture to celebrate the environment and inspire community action to tackle the climate and ecological emergency. The cultural strategy will be a tool to raise local and national awareness of environmental challenges and what residents, organisations and council services can do to help.
 - Invest in a countywide cultural provision that underpins the priorities of the county, to reduce high rates of children growing up in poverty, number of young people self-harming, poor social mobility, older people living in poor health, low productivity, poor public transport, and major economic reorientation to focus on clean environment; utilising the arts to address these issues.
- Culture at the heart of communities:
 - Create, support and promote a countywide arts, heritage and cultural offer that is relevant and open to all, with opportunities for more people to regularly engage, attend and participate in creative activities.
 - Increase the number of young people accessing the creative arts, heritage and culture in the county, and provide greater support for access in an educational setting.
 - Improve the quality of life for Somerset residents, utilising arts and culture to celebrate and connect communities with their heritage, bring people together and directly benefit people and areas with limited access to the arts.
 - Support people of all ages to develop their skills and potential, and improve employability prospects through engagement with arts and culture; with a focus on young people to gain employment skills for the industries of the future, implement support to find creative pathways and fulfilling careers.

- Connect residents and the community with existing cultural activities, by mapping current cultural provision, venues and organisations offering opportunities for engagement within Somerset; to make culture more visible in the area, generate a widespread knowledge of existing opportunities and to improve access to activities.
- Co-create and design programmes with our communities that responds to their needs and ambitions, and celebrates the cultural diversity and heritage of Somerset; prioritising the views of residents who identify as disabled or of Mixed, Black or Asian ethnicity, and/or are from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.
- Raise the profile of Somerset as a Cultural Destination:
 - Change and improve place-based perceptions of residents and visitors and raise the profile of Somerset as a cultural destination.
 - Develop the arts offer in Somerset, establishing support for arts organisations across the county, emerging artists, professional creatives and creative art students, to sustain a high quality, diverse cultural offering.
 - Protect, connect and invest in arts organisations, cultural and heritage venues located within Somerset, and establish links with other regional, national and international organisations and authorities.
 - Promote and support Somerset's artists and practitioners, to establish a creative network from which to grow and develop new innovative types of creative practice, that sustains engagement after the live event for residents and visitors to the area, and makes Somerset a better more vibrant place to live.

5. The approach to developing the needs assessment/Strategy

A. Research, Consultation & Consolidation

Review of available social and economic data, current analytics, population data, countywide offer, existing council cultural strategies and the new Somerset council's priorities following local elections in May. Consultation period with residents, councillors, council staff, leaders of local arts organisations, charitable social services and educational settings, stakeholders, community groups and members of the public. Consolidate arts organisations, existing and new Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations (NPO's) delivering activity within Somerset, and the Octagon Theatre's Project Board to understand the level and future of culture and the creative arts in the region. Data collected to underpin, shape and create the vision and objectives for Somerset's Cultural Strategy.

B. Strategic Document

Research period ends and 5-year arts & cultural strategy document is produced and shared with partners. A fundraising and philanthropy strategy to be developed alongside the cultural strategy will identify sources of funding and future investment for the council.

The Cultural Strategy will set strategic priorities for the unitary council to adopt, that will enhance opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with local cultural activities, embed an approach to address social issues and place-based priorities of the local authorities and support efforts to attract increased cultural investment into the county.

C. Publication and Promotion

On design and publication of the Cultural Strategy for Somerset, partners will present to the current council(s), share with stakeholders and promote online to members of the public. A public launch event, workshops and information evenings for members and stakeholders on the development, approaches and outcomes of the strategy and what this means for Somerset over the next 5-years.

D. Presentation

New authority comes into being. The Cultural Strategy will be presented to elected members, where members will decide whether to adopt the strategy.

6. Key deliverables

July 2022 – October 2022: Research, Consultation & Consolidation

- Somerset's population and demographic data will be provided, to include Census 2021 data & Public Health Covid-19 Recovery reports, to be reviewed by consultants to identify key contextual issues affecting residents and areas where culture can impact.
- Research into other regional, national and international authorities and cultural strategies to understand and evidence the impact of culture in other geographical areas, methods of engagement and strategic priorities, to inform the development of a strategy for Somerset.
- Discussions with local government and national funding bodies e.g. Arts Council England to explore areas of need and development.
- Discussions & exploration of how a cultural approach can be embedded throughout the council's services with a joined-up approach and council-wide appreciation of the role culture can play to enhance service delivery.
- Review of the Cultural and Universal Services Workstream findings.
- Consider the appointments and subsequent priorities of the new Somerset Council's elected members.
- Review development plans for High Street regeneration across the county and plans to redevelop the Octagon Theatre and other cultural venues in the county, to understand the future for culture in the county and potential opportunities such projects present.
- Consultation with council members and senior council officers, to understand their hopes and ambitions for the new unitary authority and its position on culture.
- Consultations with social, health and educational services, charitable and non-profit organisations, cultural organisations and multiple community-led groups from rural and urban areas within the county, to identify areas of concern, shared agendas and the potential to utilise culture as a tool.
- Attend steering group meetings to hear from elected councillors and directors for the new unitary authority, in addition to leaders of local arts organisations, charitable social services and educational settings, with the aim of creating a wider understanding of how culture can deliver on different agendas.
- Review findings from open public survey distributed online to understand individual experiences, perceptions, interests, priorities and areas of need.

- Review of current levels of cultural investment and provision within the county to understand the geographical spread of activity, and areas of high and limited engagement.

November 2022 - December 2022: Strategic Document

Create and work on an evidence-based strategic document covering a 5-year period from April 2023 – March 2028, with data collected from the research and consultation period used to underpin and facilitate a strategic approach. The strategy will outline and recommend a vision, priority outcomes, and principles for implementation for the new unitary authority to decide on whether to adopt.

- Named Cultural Officers from each authority will work alongside Strategic Cultural Consultants who will provide strategic advice, guidance and input in writing the 5-year cultural strategy.
- The draft strategy will be shared with existing Chief Executives, directors and relevant members of staff as appointed within the new Somerset Council, to ensure the strategy meets the place-based priorities and strategic ambitions of the authority.
- Consult the project steering group (referenced above), to ensure the strategy supports the shared priorities of the community and council.
- Develop a fundraising and philanthropy strategy alongside the writing of the 5-year cultural strategy, to identify sources of funding and future investment for the council.
 - Work with national and regional funding bodies and Council Members and Directors to design a fundraising strategy that will evidence sources of future potential investment to the county and the value this will have.

January 2023 - March 2023: Publication and Promotion of Somerset's Cultural Strategy

- Design and publish the 5-year Cultural Strategy for Somerset and share with council members, council staff and directors, steering group representatives, arts and cultural organisations, residents and the wider community.
 - Design the cultural strategy ensuring the strategy is accessible online with an interactive digital copy and available in print, to be distributed by each authority.
 - Share the completed document with council directors and members, to set out how the new unitary authority and its services can benefit from the implementation of a cultural strategy to serve the county.
 - Follow up consultation with community groups, charities and art organisations to discuss the strategy, and begin conversations towards building a strong cultural sector to meet the place-based priorities of the county.

- Discuss the cultural strategy with Somerset-based NPO's, arts organisations and artists working within the county to circulate and make known the direction and strategic decisions the strategy suggests for culture in Somerset; and the subsequent need for organisations to realign themselves to the new authority as informed by the cultural strategy if adopted when the new authority comes into being.
- Launch Event, workshops and information evenings to introduce stakeholders to the concepts and potential impact of the cultural strategy.
 - Accessible in-person and online, open to public access
 - Community members will be able to hear from appointed strategic cultural consultants, Chief Executives and cultural leads from each authority, on the development, approaches and outcomes of the strategy and what this means for Somerset over the next 5-years.
 - To build a countywide understanding of how the arts and culture can address social issues of a priority for the county and respond to challenges such as rurality, Covid-19 and high street regeneration.

April 2023:

New authority comes into being. The Cultural Strategy will be presented by named Cultural Leads to elected members, where members will decide whether to adopt the strategy.

7. Available information and related documents

<https://newsomersetcouncil.org.uk/>

<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/>

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/>

<https://www.mendip.gov.uk/>

<https://www.sedgemoor.gov.uk/>

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/>

<https://www.octagon-theatre.co.uk/news/the-octagon-theatre-investing-in-a-flagship-venue-for-the-arts-and-entertainment-in-somerset>

<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/>

8. Anticipated Contract Period

It is planned that the initial contract term will commence on 18th July 2022 and will end 31st March 2023.

9. Indicative Budget

The indicative budget for the contract is £36,000.00

Terms and Conditions

Please see 02 SSDC202205KH – DN614362 - RFQ App 2 - Terms and Conditions