

# LET'S CREATE

## ACE NPO 2022- 2023

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Let's give ourselves the space to listen, explore, test, measure & learn.

*As a result we will have a plan that puts people and communities at the heart of the world-class collections and experiences.*

### OVERVIEW

The Covid-19 pandemic has driven a global crisis which is having a profound impact on health, the economy and the fundamental ways in which society operates. The implications of Covid-19 are being felt across Bristol, and will be for some time to come. However the pandemic has also shone a light on significant inequalities in our communities, these were highlighted during the summer of 2020 when the Black Lives Matter movement responded to the murder of George Floyd, and Bristol gained global attention for the toppling of Edward Colston's statue. This has been further emphasised during 2021 with a range of protests and gatherings across the city.

The financial and strategic impact on Bristol City Council, and the Culture and Creative Industries (C&CI) service which includes Bristol Museums has been, and will be, significant. However Bristol City Council was well placed financially to deal with the immediate challenges thrown up by the pandemic, due to significant levels of reserves, and has not had to make the budget cuts and redundancies that other Councils have had to make in the short term. The C&CI team continues to assess this impact and what it means for how we deliver the service, and particularly our museums, as well as the practical financial implications.

The C&CI service has grown significantly in recent years to encompass a wide range of functions and services. The public facing museum and archives teams have had specialist

teams added, providing valuable advice and capacity to Bristol's large cultural sector. In recent times more commercial ventures, including Bottle Yard Studios and the Create Centre, have also joined. In addition the service's responsibilities now include providing support to Bristol City Council's: [One City Culture Board](#), [Bristol History Commission](#) and Legacy Steering Group, amongst others. This recent growth of our service has provided us with unexplored opportunities for exploiting the breadth of talent and specialisms and greater cross-service working and we are working towards a one team approach with the museums working with the other teams and functions seamlessly.

The pandemic has highlighted further the inequalities within the workforce and we have been making steps to address this, such as our work with young people through apprenticeship schemes and the Young Collective programmes and [BE IT](#) placement. The latter will involve young people working on our behalf to explore the views of other young people within, and external to, the organisation so that we can become a better service and employer in the city. We are continuing to make steps towards making a more diverse workforce with a recent recruitment of Project Assistant from a Somali background to deliver our [Migration, Heritage and Belonging](#) project and are recruiting for a freelance curator, specifically from a South Asian background, who will deliver a display drawn from our British Empire & Commonwealth Collections, in autumn 2022. We will learn from these recruitments and hope to find further opportunities during 2022.

Going forward, the impact of the pandemic may result in further challenges for museums to operate, but it also provides a unique opportunity for us to play a tangible and sustainable role in the lives of the people of Bristol and the city-wide recovery process from that pandemic. We are already providing a range of high quality services, including digital and collections projects that are setting a national lead.

## 1. SERVICE STRATEGY

During 2021-2022 we undertook a review of our previous ACE business plan (2018-22) to ensure that it was still relevant and realistic and could respond to the challenges of the pandemic. Following a series of workshops with team managers, we created a new service strategy '*Plan on a Page*' (see appendix). The strategy responds to [Bristol City Council's corporate strategy](#), and reflects key features of [Bristol's One City Plan](#), and [Bristol's Culture Strategy](#). Arts Council England Let's Create strategy will also be embedded into this strategy as indicated in *illustration A*. The *Plan on a Page* and its delivery will be reviewed annually by our service and with key stakeholders including Arts Council England.

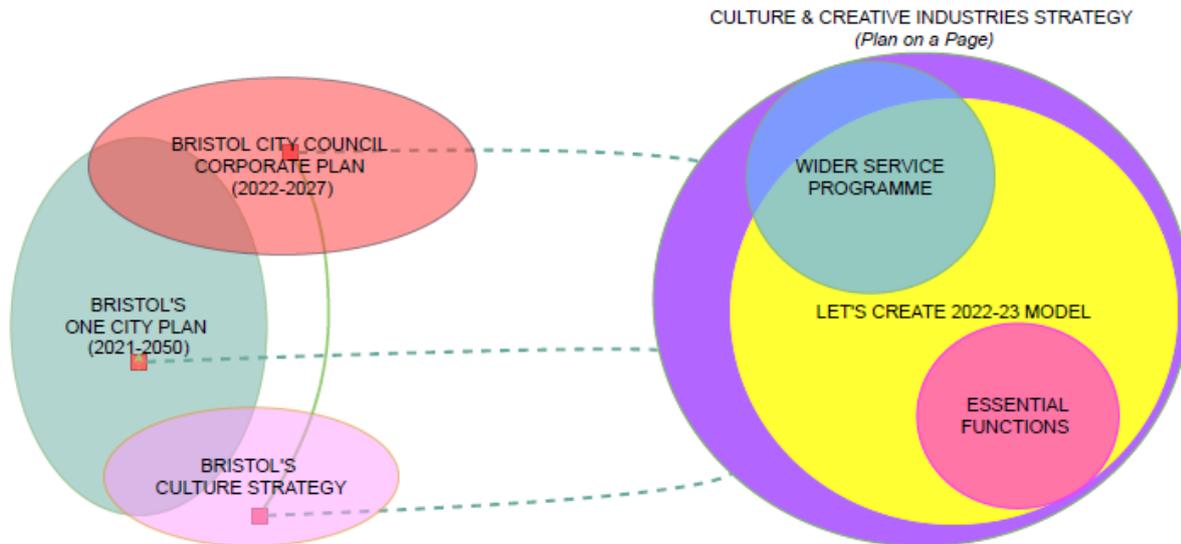


Illustration A

## 1.2 Service SMART Plan (Aims)

1. Places service users at the centre of our decision making through innovative engagement and a data-informed approach.
2. Delivers and invests in high quality cultural activity that celebrates the story of Bristol and attracts local, national and international audiences.
3. Proactively manages historic buildings and world class collections, making them accessible and relevant to everyone.
4. Challenges inequality and ensures diverse groups are represented, empowered and have a voice.
5. Invests in developing a diverse workforce which is highly skilled, creative and resilient.
6. Actively contributes to the city's economic recovery and regeneration, which addresses issues of inequality and wellbeing.
7. Demonstrates sector leadership locally, nationally and internationally.

- 8. Develops innovative responses to the ecological and environmental emergency.
- 9. Influences, supports and advocates on behalf of the wider culture and creative industries across the city and at regional level.
- 10. Maximises commercial opportunities and appropriately manages risk to deal with the impact of change.

The SMART plan (10 service aims) will be delivered through the Let's Create model as demonstrated in the illustration below.

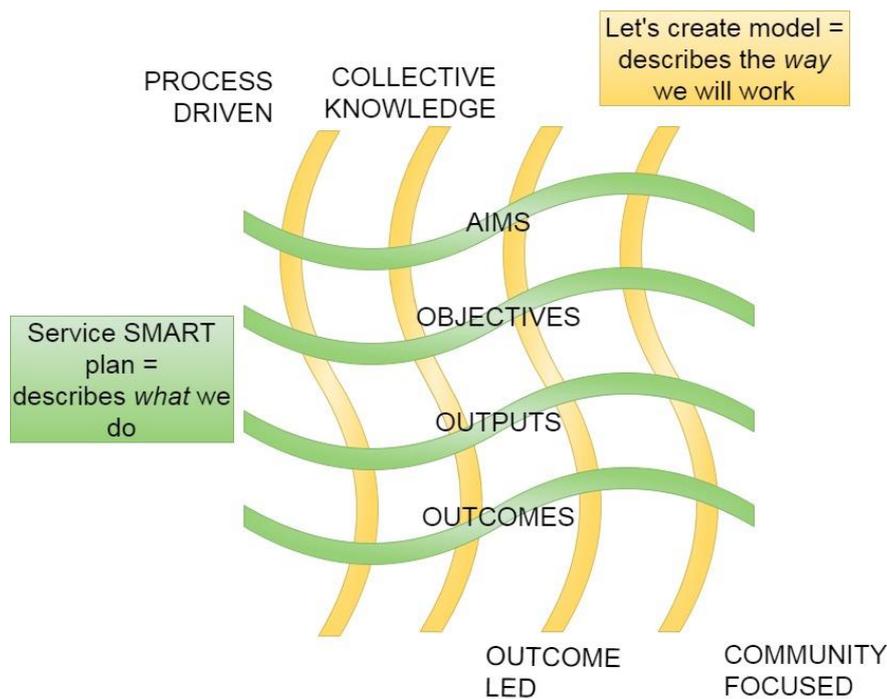


Illustration B

## 2.LET'S CREATE MODEL

2022 -23 will be a year for us to listen, explore, test, measure and learn. In order for this to be achieved we aim to review and reduce some of our activity and invest more into our people and working culture. We will test the Let's Create model across our whole service, and hope by doing this we will improve the quality of *how* we deliver our services, leading to a better quality experience for communities and stakeholders.

The Let's Create model will be resourced with a multidisciplinary team, drawing expertise from across the service and beyond to extend the 'team of teams' approach, by this we mean teams that are formed around a common goal and the makeup of the team may not be based on their position or function. The team will embed the cyclical process associated with agile project management into their planning, delivery and evaluation.

The following methods and methodologies form our Let's Create model and they intend to reflect and deliver upon the four investment principles; Quality & Ambition, Dynamism, Environmental Responsibility and Inclusivity. These will be reviewed and refined as part of the workshops that will be carried out October 2021 - Jan 2022 with the workforce and with key stakeholders including our major funder Bristol City Council.

### 2.1 Methodology

- We will move to being more **process driven** - making more time to examine how we are carrying out our work and make improvements for better results.
- We will become more **outcome led** - placing user needs first, then developing 'products' that best serve them.
- We will move to having more **collective knowledge** - learning from others inside and outside the organisation, developing a breadth of new skills and sharing our expertise wider.
- We will be more **Community focussed** - making steps to become more embedded in our community and continuing to invest in our digital communities.

### 2.2 Mechanisms

#### **Being a Team of Teams**

*Develop and extend the roles of our working groups, leading towards a goal driven workforce structure.*

- Goal-focused team structures focussed on delivering the 10 service aims.
- Increased cross-discipline skills service wide; project management, digital, communication, leadership, mentoring.

- Being more supportive to each other and sharing knowledge inside and outside of the sector.

### **Making great things together**

*Develop a co-production framework that allows time and investment into getting our partnerships right.*

- Improve the way we contract people including greater sharing of power and decision making with our creative partners.
- A systematic way in how we carry out consultation with greater opportunities for communities to be involved in all aspects of our service.
- Apply a risk embracing 'scratch process' to our activity by inviting creatives to share ideas and unfinished 'products' with our audiences at an early stage to get feedback and then develop further.

### **Let digital do the work**

*Invest in developing a system that improves the collecting, monitoring and sharing of our data from audiences to the environment.*

- Improve our communications with stakeholders around our performance through an open dashboard.
- Improve software and hardware efficiency and invest in training and expertise to make digital work harder for us.
- Have a better understanding of our users through improved interrogation of our data collection.

### **Having time to talk**

*Review our activity to invest more in bringing people together to reflect and respond to city and world events.*

- Create more ways to share skills and expertise and enable collaboration through 'big' city conversation forums.
- Reflect local and global events and trends by developing a more rapid response framework.
- Consultation with users and non users to support future planning of our service.

### **Tell a big story**

*Focussing on one story that can deliver across multiple service aims from inclusion to income generation.*

- Goal and outcome driven programming focussed on meeting the 10 service aims.
- Better reach and relevance across the city with investment into community-based programming.
- Review the opportunities for how audience development can drive profile and revenue.
- Test and refine a 'one story' approach to create a programme that delivers across service areas, to improve our brand and work more efficiently.

## 2.3 Essential functions

### **Visitor experience**

We will focus on providing the best service to the communities we serve, for us this means everyone we engage with from general visitors, to schools pupils and those that hire out spaces. The last two years have been challenging operationally and we want to use the year to ensure that we learn from our communities and audiences what makes the best museum visit and create a plan for us to get there, this includes working with [Forging our Future](#) to make improvements to the accessibility of our museums from marketing to inclusive seating.

It is anticipated that improving the visitor experience will have a positive impact on our income streams. We also know that we will need to work hard to return and increase our commercial income streams on pre-pandemic levels. Guided by a recent review, carried out by consultants Black Radley, we will look to rework our proposition to protect existing commercial income and build new ones. Via our commercial working group we will continue to test and learn from commercial interventions with a focus on the visitor journey. We are already seeing significant improvements on spend/ donation per head. This coupled with increasing footfall and a refreshed fundraising plan will help us to continue to deliver quality services.

### **Museum sustainability**

We will be making sure that our museum buildings are looked after so that they are fit for the future, which includes a successful MEND funding application that ensures the secure future of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. We will also need to progress more rapidly our environment action plan, through greater investment of our time, and inviting in expertise to see how we can go further in our commitments and play a greater role in educating others.

A key project for 2022 will be Think Global Act Bristol which will not only be a project that supports our audiences to make a difference in their own lives and communities but also provides us with the platform to review changes we need to make within our own buildings and delivery of services.

### **Museum future and relevance**

We will continue to invest resources into the collections most at risk and our work to improve long term storage provision and access to those collections. We will also prioritise the research, development work and digitisation of the collections that link to decolonisation, and the ecological and environmental crisis. The collections offer a unique opportunity to enable members of the Bristol community to gain a greater understanding of how Bristol has developed as a city, the role and context in which it has developed with regard to a colonial past and how coming to terms with that past can contribute to a shared more harmonious future for both communities locally and internationally. Through new targeted collecting, working collaboratively with those communities, the relevance and importance of the collections will be further enhanced. The collections will be used to raise the profile of the need to address

environmental concerns as a further pressing issue for society. Developing the staff team and the concept of the team of teams will be key.

## 2.4 - Wider programme

Our Museum service is part of a larger wider cultural service and this provides us with a wealth of expertise from wider arts and culture sectors to add value to our work and successfully embed the Let's Create model across the service. For example the [Create Centre](#) and [Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre](#) (BRERC) will be instrumental in the specialist advice and data for us to be able to deliver against the environmentalism principle. Both [Bristol Archives](#) and [British Empire & Commonwealth Collections](#) have significant assets that we would be utilising to tell the Bristol story and successfully move forward our decolonisation work. The reach and profile of [Bottleyard Film Studios](#) in South Bristol alongside the work of the Arts Development and city Events & Festivals teams will support our community based programming.

## 3. BUDGET

The Culture and Creative Industries service sits within the Growth and Regeneration Directorate of Bristol City Council, a local authority providing a range of public services to a core city with a population in excess of 450,000. The revenue budget of the Council for 2021/22 is in the region of £424 million.

We have developed the NPO budget to reflect our current allocated ACE NPO annual funding of £1,364,320.00. The draft structure of the NPO budget reflects the changes to how we want to work as a service with reduced activity through combining projects to deliver against the same objectives. There are some budget allocations that are carried over from previous budgets due to existing contracts or are key service deliverables i.e schools workshops. The NPO budget will be refined during Oct 2021- Feb 2022.

Some assumptions and adjustments we have made at this point:

- We expect Bristol City Council investment that supports the delivery of our museum service, to move towards the pre-pandemic level but allows some security as we continue to build back to our pre-pandemic earned and contributed income levels.
- We have taken guidance from our consultants Black Radley alongside our third party hospitality operators to forecast earned income levels, this will be reviewed during Oct - Feb 2022 as part of our commercial recovery work and in relation to the continued impact of the pandemic.
- The budget reflects changes to workforce salaries since 2018, which include changes to posts and local government pay increase from April 2021 of 1.75%.

- The budget reflects some adjustments to supplies and services, with the aim that by bringing projects together as part of the Let's Create model will enable us to make our resources go further.

## 4. RISK

### 4.1 Financial Risk Management

Our financial management is operated through Bristol City Council finance systems and is compliant with their procurement, reporting and audit procedures. Significant spend over £100,000 is reviewed by our division Service Director. We generate financial forecasts and reports on a monthly basis and have two named BCC finance officers who help compile and check figures. We provide detailed management accounts monthly to both ACE and BCC as well as update quarterly on our activity and risks.

### 4.2 Bristol Museums Senior Leadership

One forthcoming change we have referred to in the risk register is the restructure of our Senior Leadership Team. The review and restructure has been discussed with colleagues from ACE and is a critical first step in the wider repositioning of the service. This new Senior Leadership Team will create three new posts to provide robust leadership for the service. A consultation process around the restructure is underway. The restructure will result in the appointment of a leadership team that will have an extensive range of skill sets and expertise in strategic and operational management. One of the roles will be dedicated to the day to day management of the Museums within the service. The Head of Service, Jon Finch will oversee this process and this team will be in place for the start of the financial year in 2022.

The service will continue to work closely with, and secure support and expertise, from our colleagues across the Council to assist in the delivery of the priorities outlined in Let's Create, and the City Council Corporate Strategy. This will include partnerships with Council teams representing economic development, neighbourhoods, regeneration, libraries, public health and social care.