

Please see below my notes for consideration - on the whole I think the plan does make a lot of sense but perhaps requires a little more thinking about the future vision of Bath (and how it may change because of technology and lifestyle changes etc) and could be bolder and more ambitious.

NOTES:

1.2 - Methodology - I'm not aware of any of the smaller artistic cultural orgs being consulted on this plan. I think, if it is really to show a snapshot of Bath and the cultural offer here then there should be consultation and involvement from them which has been lacking in the past with the focus being primarily on the bigger orgs.

2.3.3 - I would argue that this statement is not entirely accurate. For example the Theatre Royal is a massive draw for cultural tourists in Bath, as are Komedia and Chapel Arts Centre.

2.3.4 - Why are these events and festivals not achieving this? I would argue that it is because the visibility of them in Bath is restricted because of issues around displaying of posters and banners etc throughout the city. When a festival is on in Bath, as a tourist you currently would not know this. There are easy ways to rectify this - using Edinburgh Fringe as example - they allow the promotion of the festival across the city. Simple things like triangular Periaktoi created using corrugated material with posters printed on and then stood around lamp posts can make a huge difference. The fringe festival in Bath used to have pyramids that advertised the festival across the city. If we really want to promote culture as a tourist option then you have to find ways to make the events visible across the whole city. Bath is currently failing to do this.

One other solution - there are lots of empty shops in Bath. Theatre companies and arts organisations take advantage of this (with the support of the Council) and fill shop windows with show posters, photos, information etc. Why could this idea not be rolled out across the city to support all cultural tourism? That way it would increase visibility of events and attractions and would also go some way in disguising the fact that there are so many empty shops. If we can find a way to utilise the spaces that we have it can only be of benefit to the city as a whole.

A single information website. This has been discussed for sometime but nothing has ever really materialised. We desperately need one single point of information in Bath and I believe that should be the VisitBath website and app. I worked for Wiltshire Arts Promoters and helped them launch the Wiltshire Loves Arts website which is directly linked to the VisitWiltshire website. On the backend of the site (which is the same design and network as all the other cultural websites across the country) there is an application you can enable which allows users to upload their own events and content. As a member of the public you could also use it to create an itinerary for yourself by choosing which venues or attractions you wanted to see. User-generated content would take the strain off of BTP staff. I appreciate that BTP gains revenue from hosting content on their site but perhaps this could be something that was in some way subsidised? I would also like to see links from this site to the other listings, venues and bloggers sites about Bath. That way you are monopolizing on the vast amounts of free information and content that is already out there, this gives visitors a greater choice, helps local events and venues market themselves and highlights Bath as a cultural city.

A centre of learning and creative industry - yes! Use this creativity. Use the universities and students. Use Bath's creatives and they can help you overcome all manner of marketing issues and problems. Ask for their help. It will benefit everyone.

Independent Traders - Again Bath should be celebrating the independent businesses that thrive here. There should be more investment in shouting about them and directing people to places such as Walcot Street, the artizan market, green park market etc - this is something we should be proud of and could be a unique selling point for Bath is marketed in the correct way. Perhaps there could be a monthly independent feature on the website somewhere - or a "meet our local traders" type interview? Celebrate and support them and they in turn will support you.

Cultural Destinations Project - what benefit has that actually had to Bath? It feels very much like the funding has disappeared Bristol direction again.

Areas outside the city centre - are conversations being had with organisation like Midsomer Norton Town Hall, The Victoria Hall in Radstock and even Frome Farmer's Market? All of them offer great opportunities to promote the cultural offering outside of the city centre.

Joined up approach - there needs to be a joined up approach to help promote all of the different festivals in Bath and this should tie in with the marketing plan. The city identity should transform to enhance the different festivals that are happening. This perhaps needs to happen at the organisations level. But this should include ALL festivals that happen here - the Jane Austen Festival, Fringe, Music, Literary, Digital, Film, Food etc - a massive opportunity was missed this year to really push the 250th anniversary of the Crescent. Whilst some events did happen it should have been a massive showcase event for Bath and could have had so much more ambition and impact than it eventually did.

Bath as a brand - needs to focus more on Bath in 10 years. What will the offer look like then. I understand that a lot of our marketing is based around the Roman Bath's and WHS but Bath should also promote the future and not be stuck in the past. It has much more to offer than just the Roman's - I think this is perhaps where this plan lacks ambition and vision. The five aims lack ambition and should be a celebration of Bath and need to not forget the social side of Bath.

Residents as tourists and consumers - should not be over-shadowed by the promotion of facilities like the Roman Bath's etc. It is as important to advertise Bath and it's events to those who live here and spend money here all year around.

What does our World Heritage Status actually mean to Bath? What will it mean to Bath in 10 years time?

The second part of the vision statement sounds lovely but I do not believe it to be true. I am not convinced we have an enviable reputation for events when a lot of the events we produce are carbon copies of what happened the year before, aimed at the same niche audiences. This comes from a lack of support for the arts and culture from the current administration and I think a lack of vision of what Bath could be.

Accessibility - Bath is not an accessible city - far from it. I have friends in wheelchairs who now actively avoid Bath because of issues getting around and in and out of shops and

restaurants etc. Bath Hacked recently produced a map which shows where is accessible in Bath - this data should be used to help highlight those areas that truly are accessible to Bath and be used to market to those demographics.

Core values: A vibrant, creative and exciting city with a contemporary 21st century vibe - Bath is nowhere near this yet. We do not feel contemporary and we are certainly not exciting. There are pockets which produce this (such as Bath Carnival, Bedlam Fair and Party in the City) but in reality these will become fewer and fewer as the impending arts cuts really hit those organisations producing this work. Investment is needed to help get us anywhere near aligning with this statement.

If Bath is to experience a 21st-century renaissance, it must reposition pleasure, culture and creativity right at the core of its future regeneration. - **YES TO THIS! Great!**

Enhance the personal welcome that visitors get on arrival - could performers or buskers also be present at these key areas to add vibrancy to Bath. Brunel Square is the ideal location to create an immediate atmosphere as people arrive by train. The same could happen at Bog Island or wherever coaches drop off.

The Events Strategy and Cultural and Creative Strategy should be key to this plan. However without investment I'm not sure how relevant they will become. My worry is, like the previous cultural strategy it will just sit on a shelf for three years and not be of benefit to anyone. Again it needs proper and meaningful consultation with arts and cultural organisations and also those who are tasked with trying to create the work with no support or funding from the Council.

Partnership working - again needs to be more inclusive of smaller cultural orgs who offer as much (sometimes more) than the big cultural orgs and also the opinion of the end users of these cultural events.

My final question would be: in three years time the next round of Arts Council National Portfolio funding will come around (this is three year funding for arts organisations with the aim of helping them to be sustainable). Currently in Bath we have one NPO organisation based in Midsomer Norton. Bristol have over 20. We should be aiming to get more organisations within the National Portfolio and bringing much needed funding to Bath. What impact could this have on this strategy and also will B&NES be in a position to support those organisations as they will have an impact on tourism within the city?