



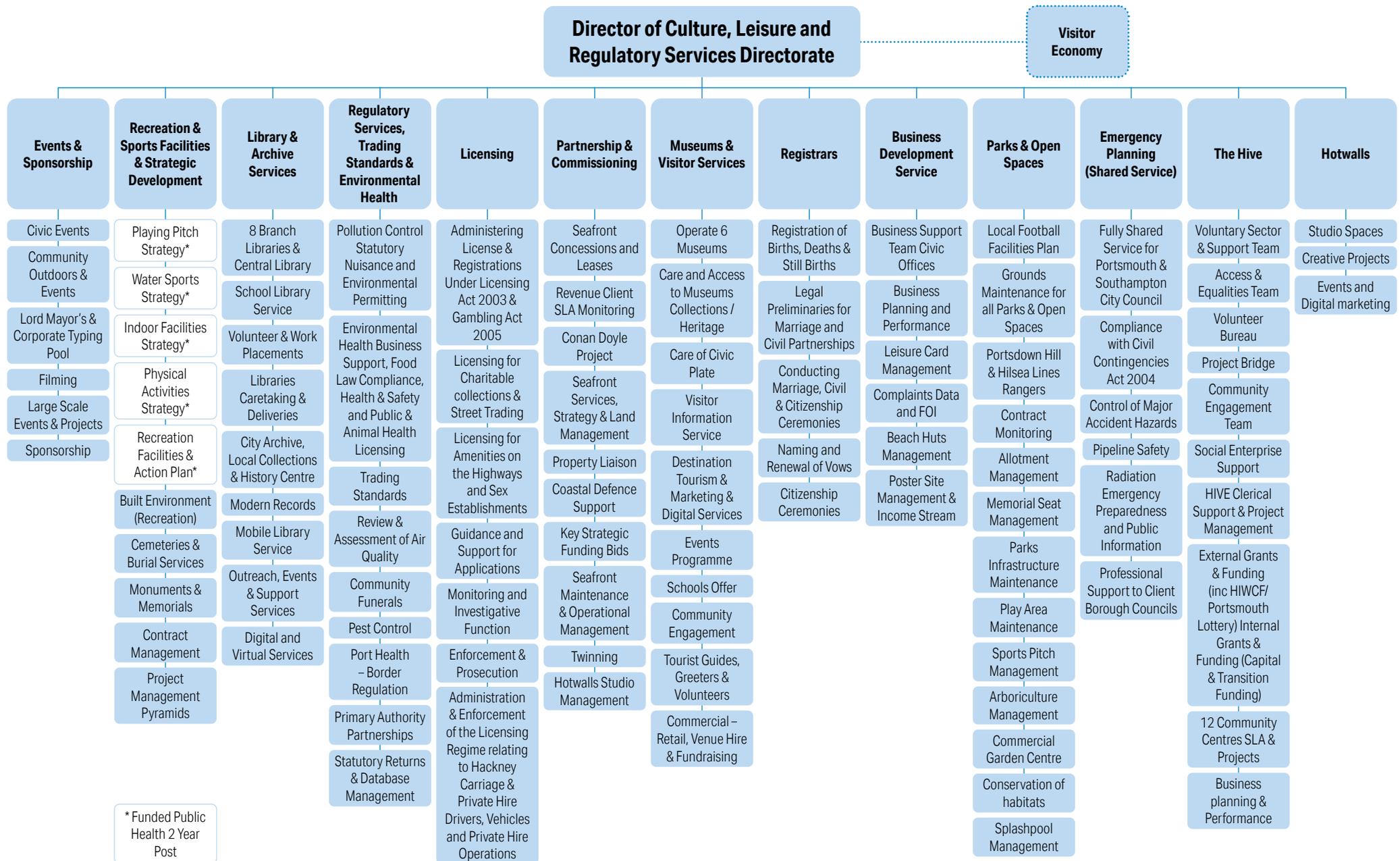
Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services Business Plan

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Contents

Directorate structure	4	2.7 Seafront.....	23
Section 1: Introduction and City Vision 2040	5	2.8 Regulatory Services	26
Support from Central Government	5	2.9 Licensing	27
Support from other bodies.....	6	2.10 Registrars.....	28
City Vision 2040	6	2.11 Emergency Planning	29
Administration's Priorities.....	6	Section 3:	30
Portsmouth City Council Mission	6	3.1 Key Risks and Mitigation	30
Section 2: Service Strategies	8	3.2 Delivery of the Business Plan	33
2.1 Workforce Development.....	8	3.3 Environmental Sustainability.....	33
2.2 Events	11	Section 4	36
2.3 Sports and Leisure	13	4.1 Major Projects.....	36
2.4 Library & Archive Service.....	15	4.2 Register of High Risks	38
2.5 Portsmouth Museums and Visit Portsmouth	18	4.3 Plan on a Page	40
2.6 Parks and Open Spaces.....	21	4.4 Key Performance Indicators	41

Directorate structure



Section 1: Introduction and City Vision 2040

The past 18 months, covering the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, have affected every single service area of local government. In our city, more of our residents have become eligible for support from the public sector. The trauma arising from the impact of the pandemic and accelerated social change has put pressure on health and social care provision and provides a unique opportunity to consider these issues in a different way, particularly as residents spend more time in their local area.

Culture, Leisure & Regulatory Services (“CLRS”) Directorate is a key driver in the city for delivering improvements to both mental and physical wellbeing, the importance of which has been highlighted during the pandemic. The directorate has been able to rethink delivery of cultural provision in consideration of the changes to technological habits and behaviours brought about by lockdown, whilst at the same time not excluding those with limited digital access.

The directorate is divided into both delivery of statutory and non-statutory services. Traditionally, the delivery of non-statutory services is seen as ‘nice to have’ but learning from the pandemic has made it self-evident that the offer from services such as Libraries (statutory in part), Museums, Parks, Leisure and Sports can have a direct impact on the statutory services delivered by local authorities such as public health, social care and education. Whilst recent austerity measures have required local government to make cuts to budgets, it is over-simplistic to make these decisions on a ‘statutory’ or ‘discretionary’ basis.¹

The statutory arm of the directorate covers services such as Licensing, Registration Service and Regulatory Services. Whilst these services have

statutory protection, the pandemic has led to increased demand placed on these services and additionally as a result of recent legislative changes.

Support from Central Government

Initiatives from the government of over £1 billion to support the national Culture and Leisure sector recovery included the Cultural Recovery Fund. This allowed cultural organisations such as theatres and museums to remain financially viable to re-open post lockdowns, in accordance with the roadmap and the directorate has taken full advantage of such opportunities as will be made evident in this plan.

In addition, the Leader of Portsmouth City Council, Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson, in his role as Chair of the Local Government Association Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, wrote to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport in July 2020² setting out the argument that leisure and sport provided by the public sector had a distinct role to play in narrowing the gap between access to physical activity, health outcomes and BAME and deprived communities.

Moreover, Public Health England, in their 2020 review³, made it clear that local government provides an essential role in the delivery of inclusive and equitable green space in the public realm, to improve health and wellbeing outcomes by encouraging active travel, improving social cohesion, mental health outcomes and climate mitigation.

1 Audit Wales ‘At Your Discretion: Local Government Discretionary Services’, April 2021

2 Letter from Gerald Vernon-Jackson to Rt. Hon Oliver Dowden MP, 10 July www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Letter%20from%20Cllr%20Gerald%20Vernon-Jackson%20to%20Rt%20Hon%20Oliver%20Dowden%20MP%20on%20Future%20survival%20of%20leisure%20services%2010%20July%202020.pdf

3 Public Health England ‘Improving Access to Greenspace, a new review for 2020’

Support from other bodies

With challenges to the budget, CLRS directorate is required to work increasingly innovatively to deliver. As will be shown in the plan, the directorate is required to consider strategic funding frameworks from bodies such as the National Heritage Lottery Fund (“NHLF”), Sport England and the Arts Council. The objectives of these bodies accord well with the City Vision 2040. For example, the NHLF require all project applications to meet their inclusion outcome, to ensure that ‘a wider range of people will be involved in heritage’.⁴

City Vision 2040

Imagine Portsmouth 2040 is a forward vision for the city which has been agreed following consultation and engagement with organisations across Portsmouth. It sets out the following objectives:

- a healthy and happy city
- a city rich in culture and creativity
- a green city
- a city with a thriving economy
- a city of lifelong learning
- a city with easy travel

and provides for the following values:

- community
- collaboration
- equality
- respect
- innovation

This Business Plan will show how each service is contributing towards these objectives and values.

Administration’s Priorities

The current administration’s priorities ‘Building a Brighter Future’ also incorporate the City Vision and these are included below where they relate to Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services.

Portsmouth City Council Mission

The Council mission is modelled on the City Vision and Administration’s priorities:

to support the city to recover and renew following the pandemic and to play our part in achieving the city vision by working together as one council and with our partners and communities, to tackle health, social and economic inequalities

The mission is expounded in the **Council’s Corporate Plan 2021**⁵ which was approved by Cabinet on 5 October 2021.

The priorities in the Corporate Plan reflect the themes in the City Vision.

⁴ www.heritagefund.org.uk/about/strategic-funding-framework-2019-2024

⁵ https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s32453/Corporate_Plan_approval_-_Oct_21_Cabinet.pdf

The vision, mission and priorities can be broken down as follows:

Objective 1: A healthy and happy city

We will:

- enhance wellbeing through education
- care and support each person's needs for their physical and mental health
- ensure residents live in good homes where they feel safe and can thrive

Administration's priorities under Objective 1

- Football Facilities at King George V Playing Fields
- New Community Swimming Pool

Objective 2: A city rich in culture and creativity

We will:

- Enjoy a vibrant cultural scene that makes the most of our location, our heritage and our creative energy
- Be known as a great, welcoming waterfront and city destination that brings people together

Administration's priorities under Objective 2

- Support for New Theatre Royal and Kings Theatre as community assets
- Support Portsmouth Creates to ensure our cultural and creative community thrives

Objective 3: A green city

We will:

- Have excellent air quality, green spaces, sustainable transport
- Use renewable energy
- Live healthy and active lives
- Protect and enhance our land and maritime environment for the future

Administration's priorities under Objective 3

- Invest in greening projects across the city.

Objective 4: A city with a thriving economy

We will:

- Supercharge local businesses and entrepreneurs
- Attract investment
- Build strong partnerships
- Offer brilliant career opportunities

Administration's priorities under Objective 4

- Put culture at the heart of the city's culturally-led regeneration

Objective 5: A city of lifelong learning

We will

- Encourage our young people to develop high, positive aspirations
- Provide our adults with lifelong education opportunities that empower them and enrich their lives

Administration's priorities under Objective 5

- Provide placements to young people under the Kickstart programme
- Develop digital access in the city

Objective 6: A city with easy travel

We will:

- Encourage and support more walking & cycling

Administration's priorities under Objective 6

- Reduce air pollution, make for a safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

Section 2: Service Strategies

2.1 Workforce Development

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) report as at March 2021 confirmed that young people's unemployment (16-24 year olds) saw a sharp decline in 2020 compared with 2019 levels. In the hospitality industry, economic inactivity rose by more than 50% in quarter 2 2020 compared to quarter 2 2019.⁶

This is unsurprising given that it is young people most often employed in this sector and the hospitality sector was hard hit by the pandemic. The government responded with the **Kickstart Scheme**, which funded new jobs for 16-24 year olds at risk of long term unemployment. CLRS Directorate has committed to a number of Kickstart opportunities across the services in 2021 as part of its commitment to the City Vision to offer **brilliant career opportunities**. This includes placements in Museums, Libraries, Parks, Seafront and Hotwalls.

These posts provide young people with a range of skills and experiences which they can use to move forward in the job market, including by progressing onwards into apprenticeship posts. This approach contributes towards building a city of lifelong learning.

Volunteering and community

With cuts to local authority budgets from central government, most often hitting discretionary services hardest, the directorate is required to operate creatively with its resources to meet service targets. Volunteering not only bridges this resource gap but also enables us to listen, consult with and engage our community and feed back into it. This is evident in a number of services:

- Parks

- Hive
- Libraries
- Museums
- Countryside stewardship

Parks Service: Waterfront Garden Centre

The Waterfront Garden Centre on Avenue De Caen is a key service which enables the directorate to contribute towards the city vision objectives of **a healthy and happy city, a green city and a city of lifelong learning** and demonstrates all of the core values embedded in the vision. The Centre engages staff both on a voluntary basis and via social enterprise. During lockdown volunteers and growers were stood down but have now returned.

The government's Transforming Care Programme comprises an agreement between the NHS, Department of Health, Local Government Association, Directors of Adult Social Services and Care Quality Commission. Building The Right Support Plan empowers commissioners to adopt a service model whereby support and care is focussed as a multi-disciplinary approach within the community and less dependent on institutional care.⁷

For the Waterfront Centre, this means that referrals are made both internally by the Adult Services Directorate and externally from the Solent NHS Trust and other social enterprises such as The Aldingbourne Trust. This provides the individuals referred with a safe environment to develop social and life skills. It also allows for social prescribing models for those with mental health conditions where traditional health plans are not necessarily the best outcome.

The Centre also receives input from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, so that donated seedlings from the community can be nurtured and

⁶ Office for National Statistics, Coronavirus and Young People's Labour Market outcomes, March 2021 www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/march2021#main-points

⁷ www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/natplan

sold onto companies for their office environments or outdoor greening. Moving forward, the intention of the Waterfront Centre is to engage the growers with the Friends groups (see Parks) to broaden their environment and skills base. The Centre will also look to broaden partnerships across the city. The Centre has recently been engaged in partnership with **Hotwalls** artist, Vanderhume, who has provided macramé pots for the Centre growers as part of an Arts Council funded textile community project.

For the volunteers, depending on their individual requirements, the Centre provides a return to work skills growth opportunity and increased involvement with the local community where individuals may be at risk of social isolation.

The Waterfront Garden Centre also provides a model of best practice for community engagement, volunteering and social enterprise models for the **Victoria Park Project** to consider as this project moves forward in development.

The Hive

City Vision 2040 looks to develop a thriving economy by **'supercharging entrepreneurs, and building strong partnerships'** and providing care and support for a 'healthy and happy city' and this is well evidenced by The Hive. This organisation is a strategic partnership in the city comprising representatives from the voluntary and community sector, the local Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council.

Portsmouth has a vibrant voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and HIVE Portsmouth connects VCSE groups within the city to benefit its residents and maximise choice and alternative support. Hive's VCSE network can access marginalised groups which historically have been hard to reach. This will help with the delivery of advice, support, signposting, and awareness raising within the community.

Medium term strategy for the Hive to meet the City Vision objectives is to keep up the momentum of volunteering registrations, support applications for community interest companies (CICs), charitable incorporated organisations

(CIO), support organisations, to continue to work with local communities and work with under-represented and BAME communities.

Library & Archives Service: Volunteering

The Library and Archive Service has a strong history of growing the opportunities provided by volunteers delivering non-statutory services and support. These diverse activities can provide personal enrichment and a sense of purpose for some volunteers, whilst for others it can be a source of work experience and a route into paid work.

Volunteers have helped expand library reach, so that there is **equality of access** to services, for example through the Home Library Service for those with mobility/health issues and Reading Friends, which enables those socially isolated to be connected. The Visually Impaired Groups receive volunteer support for weekly IT and reading group sessions, also providing an audio-newsletter and access to audio books.

The History Centre and Archive receives significant volunteer assistance in cataloguing records to be added to the collection, digitising images and transcribing recordings. A wide range of activities direct to branches includes, but is not restricted to, coding clubs, rhyme-times in Spanish and French, Ukulele Club and crafting. Library and independent Reading Groups are also hosted by volunteers. There are volunteer Friends Groups in two of our city libraries, focusing on raising funds through the delivery of high profile events, towards the acquisition of non-statutory items to improve the library. It is hoped that Friends Groups might develop in other areas of the city to increase overall engagement, interest and participation.

Portsmouth is one of a limited number of libraries selected to deliver Reading Spark. This is a new group of volunteers of secondary school age, who promote interest in STEM subjects, targeting BAME communities, girls and disadvantaged pupils.

Library Service have for many years had a strong relationship with the local job centre, voluntarily arranging 12 week placements to help people in the city

to get back into work and this is currently supplemented by Kickstart posts growing the social media offer.

Portsmouth Museums: Volunteering

Volunteers form an important part of the resource for the museums service and enable the service to **engage with the community**. The volunteers meet and greet the visitors across the museums sites and provide them with site information and history. There are also volunteers working on the collections behind the scenes. The opportunity to volunteer with others is important in developing community and social contact for those who may be isolated at home.

Parks/Countryside Management: Volunteering

The City includes part of Portsdown Hill, much of which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation such as Hilsea Lines, Farlington Triangle, Great Salterns Field, Milton Common, Fort Cumberland and Eastney Beach. Maintenance of all these sites is highly dependent on volunteer staff, who contribute around 4000 hours each year to each of the two Rangers who are based at Fort Widley, Portsdown Hill and Bastion 3, Hilsea.

The Parks Service also engage a number of Friends groups across the city each with a working interest in a particular greenspace. These groups enable the service to **engage with local communities** for involvement in the **care of Portsmouth's green spaces** and engage a sense of pride and ownership in the city.

Directorate Workforce Development Programme

Both at corporate level and at directorate level, one of the reflections from the pandemic is that we can do better to work cross directorate and cross service. The pandemic has brought about change to behaviours and norms, both for the communities we serve and for our colleagues and peers. This section will

consider the effect on staffing and work patterns as the directorate seeks to move forward and reflect the values of **collaboration** and **innovation**.

Working from home and, in the longer term, working to a hybrid model, brings its own challenges. Staff who were previously office based had to change behaviours and upskill quickly to enable working from home. The directorate, together with the rest of the Council, are now utilising this technology more effectively to meet with suppliers and stakeholders online and record meetings so that attendance can be caught up retrospectively. There are representatives across the service to assist staff with IT 'know-how'.

Longer term the directorate plans to embed a programme whereby peer support, mentoring and skill sharing can take place at a grass roots level so that skills and support are not constrained within immediate teams. This will build on, but not take the place of, the corporate lunchtime learning modules.

The directorate has made a full submission to the corporate Connectivity project to ensure that its unique needs (for example, staff working out in the field rather than at a corporate base) are reflected in the plans going forward.

The changes to working patterns accelerated by the pandemic have also renewed the focus on staff wellbeing. This is a consideration fully embedded into line management processes and a focus in the all staff directorate newsletter.

Digital Transformation Projects

The pandemic has accelerated the move towards digital delivery and this provides an opportunity to re-examine how we deliver cultural provision but in such a way that does not contribute towards digital exclusion. This is considered further within the individual services strategies. There is also representation and liaison for these projects at corporate level, from the digital customer team.

2.2 Events

The Events Service is a key driver towards the City Vision objectives for a city rich in culture and creativity, **a city with a thriving economy** and **a healthy and happy city**. During the pandemic the service was redeployed to support the Regulatory Services Team with compliance delivery, setting up a new team for Port Health and also supporting Registrars Service.

Events management awaited the results from the government's Events Research Programme to conduct a number of pilots to ensure events to re-opened safely in accordance with the roadmap⁸. The Purple Guide continue to work with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Public Health England to determine the strategic direction for events management moving forward post-pandemic⁹. The local authority is responsible for permitting outdoor events to take place in the local area, within a framework which considers risks and mitigations together with the economic and social benefits that the event offers to the community. Each event is subject to scrutiny by the Portsmouth Events Safety Advisory Group (PESAG) to ensure a high standard of delivery.

As we move towards recovery and renewal, the service have resumed the planning and delivery of events and it is anticipated that the appetite will return to pre-pandemic levels over the next 18 months.

Events contribute both directly and indirectly to the city's economy as a key ingredient to the visitor offer (see Visitor Services) and associated onward sales. The income raised for the service from events is reinvested to provide further events for the city, to engage the local community and local companies to sponsor resident discounts to enable access to culture for deprived communities (including charitable donations).

Events programme

The current annual programme includes the following free to access events: Armed Forces Day, Southsea Food Festival, King George VI Fireworks, International Kite Festival, Car Boot Sales series, Live at the Bandstand series and Christmas Lights Switch On. Southsea Food Festival and Christmas Lights Switch On events are provided by the Events Service for the Economic Growth Team as a gratis service.

The team is also responsible for delivery of high profile events and anniversaries and this is key to the delivery of Portsmouth's reputation as a forward looking 'Great Waterfront City'. Project Operation Forth Bridge, a citywide protocol, enabled our events team (following the National Association of Civic Officers protocol) to work with other stakeholders across the city to run an appropriate city reflection following the death of Prince Phillip (on a Covid safe basis). The team also collaborated with other local authorities in the Solent region, to ensure consistent communication and design. This involved a **collaborative approach** with various teams working together: Libraries preparing the physical book of condolence for the city archive, engaging the Big Screen to display a slideshow of the Duke's visits to the city, the Anglican Cathedral for a memorial service which the Lord Mayor attended and engagement of Community Centres.

The Events Service includes the Lord Mayor's Team which contributes directly towards **building a healthy and happy city**. The team undertakes all functions to allow the Lord Mayor to represent the city as its ambassador, making connections with internal and external stakeholders across the city. The Lord Mayor also champions our volunteer sector and The Hive. In addition the team have delivered against the objective of a **green city**: the Lord Mayor's new car will be a hybrid model.

⁸ www.gov.uk/government/news/government-announces-pilot-events-to-pave-way-for-larger-audiences-at-sport-theatre-and-gigs-this-summer

⁹ www.thepurpleguide.co.uk/index.php/the-purple-guide/information-news-updates/122-covid-19-planning-guidance-published-for-uk-festivals-updated-april-2021

Virtual Events Delivery and promotion online

During the lockdown periods the Events Service reimagined delivery to meet commitments as virtual events, such as Remembrance Day. This generated a lot of interest and the forward plan for events over the next period is to maintain a digital channel for events in parallel to physical events. This allows the service to maximise engagement, raise the profile of the city, reach international audiences and provide access to events for those who would be prevented due to health conditions. Virtual events also provide the opportunity for recording and use in subsequent promotion material for raising the profile of the city and encourage economic growth. In less than 24 hours of its announcement on Visit Portsmouth, the 2021 Live At The Bandstand programme reached 55,000 on Facebook, generating over 5,000 responses, witnessing a strong customer appetite for this event.

Representing the Local Community

The Bandstand, which runs throughout the summer season, is a prime opportunity for the service to increase the provision of multi-cultural events such as African Weekend and World Music Weekend in conjunction with city promoters.

The majority of the events are held in the south of the city due to the topography of this area. Looking forward, the service are planning to hold more events in the north of the city. There are potential opportunities to increase footfall in the north by relocating the Car Boot Series and approving a new location for Park Runs.

Health & Wellbeing

As noted by Sport England in their most recent Active Lives Adult Survey¹⁰, the pandemic led to 'unprecedented decreases in activity levels'. Moving forward the Events Service are looking at provision for events that are approachable for a broader range of fitness levels for all abilities, ages, backgrounds and interests that will help to improve **physical and mental wellbeing**.

The Events Service has a high proportion of new staff in the team and the depth of knowledge is currently being rebuilt. This is an additional pressure which will remain for an initial year period. A further pressure on the service is the increased time required to ensure that events are Covid safe, which involves further liaison with Public Health for both directly delivered events and those being organised by external organisations. This puts pressure on the capacity of the team to deliver within required timescales.

Partnerships & Commissioning Service

One way the directorate contributes towards **a city rich in culture and creativity** is by providing revenue and governance support to a number of organisations including Portsmouth Creates, Kings Theatre and New Theatre Royal to name a few. By ensuring that the parties enter into appropriate service level agreements, the directorate ensures full accountability for its investment in these cultural organisations and allows the service to influence the contribution these organisations make to the city in line with the City Vision objectives. **Partnerships and collaboration** are a key part of the Council's working and City Vision values. Officer time is essential in ensuring their success across a large number of projects, which support and work directly with communities such as supporting the Portsea Events Group.

To support organisations with regard to governance and delivery of service level agreements can be particularly time intensive if the organisation requires considerable support. The last 18 months have been particularly challenging where performance venues have been unable to operate and a number of cultural venues have been unable to secure Cultural Recovery Funding – this has put pressure on the Council as the primary funder to support the organisation through the pandemic. Whilst most organisations are now in their recovery phase, the past 18 months have highlighted the dependency on the Council for this service.

¹⁰ Sport England Active Lives Adult Survey April 2021

International profile – developing links

This function is responsible for managing and supporting the formal links the Council has through twin and sister city networks worldwide. The nature of the work promotes **collaboration** and can involve officers from across the Council depending on the specific areas of work being undertaken.

This work contributes towards the following City Vision objectives:

- A city with a thriving economy - attracting investment
- A city of culture - to be known as a great waterfront and city destination.

The Commissioning and Partnership Manager works with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Central Services to promote and enable visits from locations twinned with Portsmouth across the world, which are supported and facilitated by the office of the Lord Mayor and Events team. These relationships include:

- Maizuru (Japan)
- Caen (France)
- Duisburg (Germany)
- Haifa (Israel)
- Zhuhai and Zanjiaogang (China)
- Sylhet (Bangladesh).

The current work plan includes expanding the reach to include formalising new links with Halifax (Canada) and the Falkland Islands. This will have a particular focus on economic development.

The international work is not serviced by a dedicated role but managed around other demands, which means engagement in this area can be compromised.

2.3 Sports and Leisure

The pandemic has highlighted the importance of sport and physical activity as a major contributor to our physical and mental wellbeing. The July 2020 government policy paper, *Tackling Obesity*¹¹, stated that 'two thirds of adults are above a healthy weight' and this is much more likely within a deprived neighbourhood. People who are overweight are more at risk of contracting viruses such as Covid 19. With increased restrictions on the public purse, the government are looking to move health care to a preventative basis. The leisure service has a crucial role to play in supporting the statutory delivery of public health objectives.

UK Active Impact Report¹² into the fitness and leisure sector considered the broader impact of the sports and leisure sector to society, beyond physical and mental wellbeing into healthcare, education and crime prevention. The sector is crucial to society's recovery post pandemic as a whole.

This is recognised by the City Vision 2040, to which the leisure service contributes directly towards **a healthy and happy city** supporting the physical and mental health needs of our residents. To achieve this the Council is working in line with Sport England's strategy which identifies that local sports and physical activity groups operate as community hubs, **reducing social isolation** and raising pride and belonging in an area, **increasing social cohesion** across different groups¹³.

Sport England help people into physical activity by investing over £250 million each year into National Lottery and public schemes. They have regular funding streams designed to bridge the inequalities gap in access to sport.

On a local level, the County Sports Partnership for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight advocates to bring investment into the area to support delivery of their strategy to beat inactivity¹⁴.

11 www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives

12 www.ukactive.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ukactive-COVID-19-Impact-Report.pdf

13 <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement>

14 <https://www.energiseme.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Hampshire-and-Isle-of-Wight-Physical-Activity-Strategy-2017-21-January-2018.pdf>

Access for all

Public Health England Local Authority Health Profile at March 2020 showed prevalence towards obesity in Portsmouth to be 1% above the average for England.¹⁵

Sport England's latest vision 'Uniting the Movement' includes a focus on tackling inequalities within access to health. It identifies that persons in lower social economic groups are more likely to be inactive¹⁶. Funding for schemes in the future will therefore include consideration of quality facilities to encourage further participation in activity.

For those that are eligible for a Leisure Card, the Council continues to provide 40% discount on many of its leisure facilities across the city, to ensure that access to sport activities is open to all.

BH Live Contract

BH Live, who currently manage most of the leisure facilities for the Council, are required to deliver against sports development objectives as part of their contract, including tackling inequality. Covid has brought this into focus through health referral schemes. The Council have direct input into BH Live's strategy which is monitored quarterly. Since BH Live were awarded the contract in February 2017, a review of the pricing model led to an increase in membership by 90% from approximately 2700 in February 2017 to 5200 in February 2020.¹⁷

The Council's Sports Facility Strategy 2017 - 2027¹⁸ seeks to provide for all residents to have 'good quality local accessible and affordable provision'. Updating existing provision is based on Sport England guidance, to

rationalise or improve existing buildings and invest strategically for long term sustainability.

A recent report from Community Leisure UK identified considerable challenges for community return to public leisure facilities which by early Autumn 2021 had plateaued between 60-80% so potentially significantly limiting recovery¹⁹. In addition to reduced throughput and associated income there are other significant financial pressures due to increases in electricity and gas prices, increases in National Insurance contributions, supply chain issues and increases in the National Living Wage which will all squeeze budgets. There are also considerable employment pressures nationally that could impact the recovery.

The Council were successful in obtaining funding from the National Leisure Recovery Funding and additional support from the Council has been critical in ensuring the continuation of the service and that facilities could reopen. Forecasts against performance are set accordingly for the year 2021/22 and for the following year. The next six to twelve months will be critical in assessing the recovery and possible future implications.

Key Sports Projects

Bransbury Centre

In February 2021 the Council agreed to prepare a bid to Sport England for up to £2 million towards a new community leisure centre at Bransbury. This centre is designed to replace the Eastney Swimming Pool and Wimbledon Park Centre which have extensive defects.

15 <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/health-profiles/data#page/1/gid/8000073/pat/6/par/E12000008/ati/201/are/E06000044/cid/4/tbm/1>

16 www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement/our-mission

17 Culture, Leisure & Economic Development Decision Meeting - Pyramids and Eastney Capital Schemes Update, 16 October 2020

18 <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s14923/03.1%20Portsmouth%20City%20Council%20Sports%20Facility%20Strategy%202017%20-%20exec%20summary.pdf>

19 <https://communityleisureuk.org/news/new-report-evidences-continued-financial-challenges-for-the-public-leisure-and-culture-sector/>

The community consultation on the new facility revealed that:

- 83% respondents wanted to be able to walk or cycle to the centre (Active / Easy Travel)
- 84% of respondents wanted ease of access for disabled people and people with limited mobility (community / access for all)

The consultation also revealed that there were a number of issues that could not be addressed by the existing facilities such as limited transport connections and an unsuitable pool for children.

The decision to progress with the Bransbury Centre will take these factors into account as part of the design, enabling active travel to the centre as part of the commitment **towards a green city, a city with easy travel** and contributing to the **community** with **equality of access** to all.

Pyramids Redevelopment

A condition survey in 2018 showed that refurbishment costs to the value of £1.33 million were required for the Pyramids and capital funds were set aside. However, it was not evident that swimming participation would increase at this site and there was no financial provision to subsidise the site beyond April 2021. There is, however, demand for an improved gym that could compete with other Portsmouth offerings.

Therefore a reconfigured design of the site proposed that the pool be replaced with an indoor adventure site for children and an expanded gym to cater for more members, including women, who are less likely to participate²⁰.

The first phase of the redesign opened in summer 2021 and the second phase will open in January 2022.

2.4 Library & Archive Service

Local authorities who provide a public library service have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons'²¹. This duty is overseen by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and informed by the Localism Act 2011, providing some flexibility and ensuring any change does not compromise local need.

The strategy for the library service is also informed by **Universal Library Offers | Libraries Connected**²²

Libraries Connected seeks to empower the Library Service to deliver across the following themes:

- Reading
- Culture and creativity experiences
- Information and digital
- Health and wellbeing

Cross cutting, are The Children's Promise and The Vision and Print Impaired People's Promise to ensure a proactive welcome and equality of access for these groups. These outcomes are mirrored by those set out in the City Vision 2040 - a city rich in culture and creativity and a literate and numerate city committed to lifelong learning.

Digital Delivery

After initial closure in March 2020, Portsmouth's larger Libraries re-opened on 6th July 2020 for essential digital services, to enable those without privately owned devices to get back on-line in a world that was rapidly moving to a digital-only position. This provided access to government and public health updates, email communication, broader information enquiry and on-

²⁰ www.sportengland.org/news/me-again-this-girl-can-returns-new-campaign

²¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-libraries-as-a-statutory-service/libraries-as-a-statutory-service

²² www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-offers

line purchase. Digital library services retained 24/7 access throughout the year, including e-books, e-audio books, newspapers, magazines, and music, showing an overall 158% increase on the previous year and safely supporting the learning, information, cultural and recreational needs of residents during lockdown. This delivery is a key part of the Library strategy moving forward and the library Bookfund has been rebalanced to support this demand, which continues to grow. Key providers include Press Reader and Borrow Box.

Covid restrictions prevented the ACE funded City of Stories from concluding with a physical celebration, so key elements were recorded for posting online to extend the reach and breadth of the project. The format of social media posts has also been used to provide on-line stories and rhyme times for children, video help on accessing on-line services, promotion of an on-line information service and virtual reading group. As time has progressed a number of pre-existing reading groups have also gone on-line.

Prior to lockdown the History Centre had consolidated its digital provision through a contract with FindMyPast which digitised and made available key historic sources, including parish registers, crew lists, exemption records and directories. The Centre also offered Ancestry resources for genealogists and for a number of months during lockdown, the library edition of this site was made available free of charge for home access.

Cultural Diversity and Access

The pandemic necessitated the delivery of events online and this is likely to develop into a hybrid option, as part of the reimagining and reshaping of services. Portsmouth BookFest in 2021 offered a full 3 week programme of talks and workshops online with high attendance for events such as Around The World in 10 Books and provision of events with international authors including Lemn Sissay and Jim Al-Khalili. Other events supported the local music and writing scene and celebrated the outcome of the Portsmouth Short Story Competition. In doing this Bookfest is becoming a key deliverer and focus for cultural activity in the city. Audiences and speakers were drawn from

a wider cohort including local residents with access or lifestyle challenges and international attendees from the United States, Canada, Germany and Sweden, thus increasing the reach and promoting Portsmouth as a literary destination. The Library delivered the Big Read providing KS2 pupils with 3000 copies of Michael Morpurgo's book about a child refugee. A webinar with the author on 2nd July, engaged pupils and the head teachers conference. The Reading Sparks project was also supported by the service which involved STEM themed reading packs being issued to children from disadvantaged backgrounds or ethnic minority communities.

Transformational Delivery

Physical library visits and loans have remained below pre-covid levels, while digital engagement continues to increase. Through 2020 deliveries and click and collect provision of books, craft and distractions packs became a popular means of supporting the reading, learning and cultural needs of residents. Working with the HIVE, libraries supported self isolating residents and provided a link to library members at times when they were unable to access the library directly. Peoples Network Computers became essential for access to government and public health information and guidance, job seeking activity, learning and broader communication. Going forward, Libraries will explore opportunities for structured delivery models and mechanisms for the loan of IT devices as well as provision from existing service points.

Healthier & Happier Lives: Wellbeing

The Library Service is a key contributor towards the health and wellbeing of the city, providing book and leaflet wellbeing collections. The libraries are social hubs, connecting residents to culture and essential digital access, information, learning and recreation. The Summer Reading Challenge and holiday craft provided packs in summer 2020 to enable activities to be carried out at home. Adult packs were provided to the self-isolating including homeless individuals in temporary care.

The Housebound Library Service trebled its membership, supporting the wellbeing of residents who were experiencing isolation. In-line with Six Steps, the Vision Impaired Support Group continued to meet in a Covid-secure environment, and provided support via a phone and email helpline.

Archive Service

The Archive Service is underpinned in statute by the Local Government Act 1972 offering, via the Portsmouth History Centre, access to the registers, papers, maps and books that tell the stories of our city's past. The Archive Service gained reaccreditation with The National Archives in 2016 and resubmitted in 2019 moving its accreditation status from provisional to Full Award. Archive Services have three key responsibilities under this accreditation, to provide security, conservation and access. All will be embedded in the Portsmouth History Centre Development Strategy 2022 - 2025 and associated Operations Plan.

Conan Doyle

Conan Doyle lectures were also delivered virtually and included an audience from across the world, increasing reach and communication regarding this important collection.

A successful bid to Arts Council England will enable project work to support and engage people with learning difficulties, mental health challenges or those requiring additional support. As 'Detectives', participants will deliver cultural projects and thereby develop skills, supported by professional artists. This will strengthen the relationships across different sectors of the community.

Schools Library Service

As a traded service, SLS has continued to support schools during this period, with book collections, book exchanges, advice and reader development activities, to ensure literacy and learning assistance. Key engagements for reader development have been the Portsmouth Book Awards and the Literature Quizzes. Pupils continued to benefit from these initiatives via a

hybrid model of class activity and on-line delivery of events providing access to authors, illustrators, announcements and celebrations of the winning books and teams.

Challenges in the Library Service include staffing capacity issues (in part associated with Covid) and it is possible that some smaller branches may have to close on occasion. Whilst library volunteers have returned to support library staff, given the demographic of many library volunteers there is a perception of greater risk and anxiety in returning. There is a need to recruit more library volunteers to deliver books to residents in their homes, given the success of the 'at home' library service.

Due to the pandemic there has been an understandable pent up demand for activities in our library buildings, particularly for children and early years (e.g. RhymeTimes) and schools have been eager to re-engage with book exchange visits in branch libraries. It has been challenging to keep up with demand given waves of infection rates, caution around distancing and space within library buildings and varying perceptions of personal risk from library staff, volunteers and public.

2.5 Portsmouth Museums and Visit Portsmouth

Portsmouth Museums are a key driver towards the City Vision 2040 objectives of **a healthy and happy city, a city rich in culture and creativity, a city with a thriving economy and a city of lifelong learning**. All six museums across the city are accredited by Arts Council England (ACE). ACE accreditation means that a high standard has been met with regard to how the museums are run, how their collections are managed and how users are engaged.²³

The Arts Council Strategy, 'Let's Create: 2020-2030', states that *'By 2030, we want England to be a country in which the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish and where every one of us has access to a remarkable range of high quality cultural experiences...If access to either creativity or culture is limited by where people come from or what they do, the whole of society loses out.'*²⁴ A museums strategy is under development to achieve this by:

- Being inclusive, reflecting the breadth of the city's culture and communities;
- Enhancing the wellbeing of residents and communities;
- Working together with communities and partners

These objectives arise from the vision for the museums strategy 2021- 2025, to create a new Museum of Portsmouth together with the city's communities that captures the spirit of Portsmouth and is at the heart of the city. This would be a long term outcome of a participatory approach with the city's communities and has the potential to be part of the transformation and renewal of the city centre.

The challenges brought by Covid brought some of these points into focus and acted in part as a catalyst. During the pandemic the museums were required to close, however the service took the opportunity to run sponsored posts

on social media and developed new content including video tours, live Q & A sessions, a heritage open days programme and 80th anniversary of The Blitz. Whilst the public could not enter Museums, the service took the opportunity to share natural history content in Cascades whilst Cumberland House was closed. The Cultural Recovery Fund enabled the service to open more sites from May 17 2021 and during the first quarter of the year.

Community & wellbeing

As part of the LCT 7074 project funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, grants were offered to community groups who could evidence benefit to the people of Portsmouth. The grant awards included examples such as 'Chat Over Chai', a cookbook celebrating the diversity of Portsmouth's communities and 'Pompey in the Community', to enable visits to Landing Craft Tank 7074 for Life & Chimes Carers.

Providing access to the city museums for all is at the centre of the museums offer. Exhibitions at The D-Day Story have been designed with direct input from visitors with disabilities and the events programme includes British Sign Language tours, touch tours and autism friendly family days. The service were therefore delighted when they won Silver in the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Award at the Beautiful South Awards 2021-22.

Together with Portsmouth Creates and The You Trust, the museums service also received funding from ACE Thriving Communities Fund. This will enable social prescribing to improve mental health and wellbeing through six walks and an activity booklet for adults inspired by the museums collections.

Digital technology

Digital access is included in the museums offer moving forward as this enables both enhanced access and further reach into the community. The Service arranged 8 free online family workshops in Spring 2021 as part of the Holidays Activity Fund. The City Civic Silver Collection in 2021/22 will include

²³ www.artscouncil.org.uk/supporting-arts-museums-and-libraries/uk-museum-accreditation-scheme

²⁴ www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/our-strategy-2020-2030

the digitisation of the collection as part of the exhibition. Further, the service is working with a number of students at University of Portsmouth to create digital content inspired by the collections. The 'Tiny Things' project involved creating 3D printed small items of artefacts from the museum collection with QR codes. The printed items are attached to lampposts in the public realm for members of the public to discover. The QR code once scanned provides a connection back to the museums website collection. The service has also developed a social media strategy for The D Day Story Museum.

National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status

Portsmouth Museums will be submitting a NPO bid to ACE in early 2022 as part of the museums' strategy. Central to Portsmouth Museums' bid will be the involvement of the city's communities in what Portsmouth Museums do and working with the communities (rather than for them) to tell the city's stories. The bid will contribute directly to the City Vision objectives around wellbeing, creativity, learning and a thriving economy. The funding will allow the service to make a greater difference to the lives of the residents of the city and contribute towards preventative programmes. NPO status would allow Portsmouth Museums to receive funding to deliver programmes of activity that would contribute to ACE's Let's Create strategy.

Developing collections

Community Covid Collection

The service identified a key opportunity to engage with the community to represent the pandemic as a significant shared experience and a valuable collection for the future. The collection is ongoing until such time as the pandemic items are no longer in use. The collection is also an opportunity to reset the perception of museums towards contemporary collecting and marking contemporary events. Significant progress has been made on natural history collections, with particular regard to cataloguing and documentation (in connection with the National Lottery Heritage Funded project, *Wild About*

Portsmouth). The handling collection has been reviewed and rationalised and updated location details provided for the photograph, print and drawing collections. This work continues as it underpins access to the collections.

Green city

Through the City Vision 2040 objectives the city commits to *Protect and enhance our land and maritime environment for the future*. The Museums Service is contributing to this objective, by sharing the environmental information that accompanies the collections, biodiversity and historical environment records (HER). As work on collections progresses, Portsmouth Museums proactively contribute biological data to recording schemes and through HER, contributing information to planning.

There are challenges inherent in achieving the vision for Portsmouth Museums service. Budget cuts continue to be a pressure point, amounting to almost £800,000 in 10 years. The service has made (and continues to make) great efforts to attract financial support from a range of funding bodies (particularly the National Lottery Heritage Fund) but this does not meet the loss of revenue funding from the Council. The result of the cuts has meant that the service has had to reduce its offer to schools and the community.

Consequent to the cuts Portsmouth Museums does not have the staff numbers to operate its buildings, however this also provides an opportunity as outlined above to reimagine the offer by repurposing buildings and collections to free up resources, to deliver the service within and with the community it serves.

Visit Portsmouth

The directorate includes the Visit Portsmouth Team who contribute directly towards the City Vision 2040 priority, **A city with a thriving economy**.

A healthy visitor economy is a key driver for the regeneration and cultural vibrancy of the city. It generates approximately £610,000 of direct & indirect

revenue, over 12,000 jobs and attracts investment by highlighting Portsmouth on the national and international stage.²⁵

Covid 19 had a devastating effect on the tourism sector. The Office for National Statistics figures confirmed that visits in 2020 were down by 73% on the same period for 2019. Similarly, visitor spend was down by 78% on 2019.²⁶

The government's Tourism Recovery Plan points out that domestic tourism has a wider impact through supporting health and wellbeing, connecting communities with local culture, heritage and the natural environment and inspiring civic pride. The plan references Oxford Economics forecast that 2019 levels of domestic spend and numbers will recover by 2025.²⁷

The focus for the Visit Portsmouth team is therefore in rebuilding our domestic market in Portsmouth and the region, whilst remaining engaged with the international market. The team meet with key external stakeholders, Visit England and Visit Britain every quarter.

Portsmouth has a unique offering of outdoor attractions - Historic Dockyard, Gunwharf Quays, Millennium Walk for example - and is therefore in a strong position for the domestic market, as reflected in the media.²⁸

Digital Engagement

The pandemic has brought into focus opportunity for reaching audiences digitally where physical proximity has not been possible. It enables engagement with the visitor market even when travel has not been permitted. It also enables a quick reaction where circumstances change, such as the Portsmouth Is Open campaign which was run entirely digitally.

The website, Visit Portsmouth, has been rebuilt to the most recent search engine optimisation and accessibility guidelines. It has a wide reach, generating an average of 995,000 annual visits. The pandemic has accelerated customer business online and therefore the direction of marketing to social media platforms rather than traditional out of home marketing. Spend across top marketplaces and social media platforms rose by 31% year on year to March 2021.²⁹ The Visit Portsmouth team therefore delivers marketing through social media platforms via Facebook (36,600 likes), Twitter (15,600 followers) and YouTube (147,000 views) (average annual figures).

Marketing our healthy and happy city

The key marketing campaign for 2021-22 is *Portsmouth, Put the Wind in Your Sails* which includes digital marketing in the London area at the inbound & outbound M3. This campaign ran in Spring 2021 and was repeated in the summer with an extended reach to Bournemouth in the west and Brighton in the east. Campaigns have encouraged local businesses to adopt the Visit Britain 'We're Good To Go' standard³⁰ to bring confidence and reassurance to our visitor market.

The team took advantage of the government's Welcome Back Fund, to resource local campaigns to bring back visitors and work with stakeholders such as South West Railway and Stagecoach to confirm targeted marketing activity. The team also promote 'Portsmouth Champions' which provides free training from the National Coastal Tourism Academy for those working in the tourism industry in the city.³¹

25 [https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s29164/Visit Portsmouth Marketing Communications Plan 2021-2022 Appendix 2.pdf](https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s29164/Visit%20Portsmouth%20Marketing%20Communications%20Plan%202021-2022%20Appendix%202.pdf)

26 www.visitbritain.org/2021-tourism-forecast

27 www.gov.uk/government/publications/tourism-recovery-plan

28 www.which.co.uk/reviews/uk-destinations/article/best-city-breaks-in-the-uk-a1WQr6P7b1Gx

29 <https://econsultancy.com/stats-roundup-coronavirus-impact-on-marketing-advertising/>

30 www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/were-good-go-industry-standard

31 www.portsmouthchampions.co.uk

2.6 Parks and Open Spaces

City Vision 2040 provides for **'a healthy and happy city'** where we

- care and support each person's needs for their physical and mental health
- ensure residents live in good homes where they feel safe and can thrive

The Parks Service has a key role to play in this deliverable. Outdoor space has reached a new level in the national imagination since the pandemic as parks were one of the few facilities that remained open and accessible during the lockdowns. Google mobility data for this period shows that there was a huge increase in usage³² as the pandemic illustrated the importance of parks and green spaces to health and wellbeing, peaking at 200% increase at the height of the pandemic. Parks provide an easy way for people to get active, boost mental health and strengthen immune systems. The Local Government Association is lobbying the government for more funding for Parks via a local Green Parks Fund to enable parks to recover and be fully flourishing to contribute to health and wellbeing in the future.³³

Public Health England have set out 4 ways in which Parks and Open Spaces are linked directly to health and wellbeing:

- improving access to greenspace promotes healthy behaviours, such as engaging in physical activity and connecting these spaces can encourage active travel;
- greenspace can improve social contacts, foster belonging, community, reduce isolation and loneliness;
- greenspace supports development of skills and capabilities - for young people, time in greenspace can improve motor skills and increased concentration;
- greenspace can mitigate environmental damage which can impair physical/ mental health³⁴

A new Parks Strategy is currently under development to consider a number of objectives including the above, to reflect upon updated policy, consider key case studies and develop an action plan to take forward.

Victoria Park Project

The City Council, on behalf of 'The People's Park of Portsmouth' was successful in securing £251,000 of National Lottery Heritage Funding (NLHF) to develop plans for the Park, to restore and improve the space. The new design is being progressed directly with the community, involving over 200 organisations and schools and responses from over 1500 individuals. This initial phase of funding was also used to commence restoration of the centenary fountain, which is now working.

The second phase will be to secure further funds from the NLHF to deliver the planned restoration and improvement works. The plans include:

- a community hub for learning, volunteering, and arts projects in the community;
- improved children's play facilities;
- improved places to rest for those with limited mobility;
- sheltered space for informal groups;
- public toilets;
- improvements to the aviary;
- cycle stands & recycling bins
- interpretation plans for the historic monuments.

Key to the Victoria Park project is a celebration of the Park's history and restoration to be undertaken in sympathy with the heritage of the park.

32 www.google.com/covid19/mobility/

33 www.local.gov.uk/parks-fit-future

34 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf

Engaging with the Community

The Victoria Park consultation revealed the types of activities that local residents and communities would like to see in the park, including:

- Cultural events - open air cinema/theatre/music
- Community events - green fairs, craft markets
- Organised activities - workshops and skills classes;
- Gardening, community-led and volunteer projects

The project is a unique opportunity to meet a cross section of the objectives of the City Vision 2040 whilst at the same time delivering through the key values of **community, collaboration** and **equality**.

Victoria Park is one of the city's key heritage sites and the directorate is developing a **Heritage Strategy** to encompass the public realm and historic sites in the city. The strategy identifies the open spaces in the city that meet historical interest criteria. It identifies both urban settings in the hard landscape and the open spaces of the city which are listed, together with historical fortifications which are part of the greenspace offer. The strategy sets out the challenges to maintaining the heritage condition of the city and prioritises a number of future projects.

Green city initiatives

A reduction in human presence outdoors during lockdowns highlighted the importance of biodiversity as wild plants sprang up in previously cultivated areas. Since 2017 the Parks Service has been introducing wildflower planting across the city which benefits insects and small birds and increases pollination within the urban area. It also releases resources to be directed elsewhere.

Wildflower planting has the potential to increase the number of green corridors across the city. This has the potential to link up various parks, so that active travel options of walking and cycling to different areas of the city are more attractive.

The Parks Service works actively with other stakeholders in the Council in pursuit of the Council's Greening Strategy.³⁵ The focus of tree planting will be on areas of the city where the requirement to address air quality is most needed. Increased trees in the city will mitigate against the urban heat island effect by providing a cooling canopy, offset air pollution and help prevent and reduce flood risk.

Alternative Parks Management Models

The Parks Service has had a considerable reduction to its budget in recent years due to austerity and demands on statutory services. To meet demands on budget the service has taken steps such as the successful move in house of maintenance operations. However, as identified by the Nesta Rethinking Parks project, innovation is required to manage parks and open spaces assets in new ways.³⁶ The Parks Service will continue to involve the community on a consultative and voluntary basis (for example via Friends groups) to increase the sense of ownership and pride in the city's green assets.

One of the ways of meeting the demands on budget will be for sports clubs to have greater responsibility towards the management of the facilities they use, provided this does not impact on wider public access to the open space. Examples to date have been the transfer of maintenance responsibility for pavilions to bowls clubs, re-purposing of pavilions no longer required and for teams to take on some basic responsibilities on football match days. Whilst the service is looking at new models for support, public provision must remain available to match citywide usage demand.

³⁵ [https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s26330/Greening Portsmouth Strategy appendix.pdf](https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s26330/Greening%20Portsmouth%20Strategy%20appendix.pdf)

³⁶ www.nesta.org.uk/project-updates/rethinking-future-parks/

Nesta also considers alternative funding models for parks regeneration. In Portsmouth, a section 106 developer contribution will fund improvements to Orchard Park Basketball Court. This is in conjunction with a Crowdfunder initiative by Form and Function with a number of other partners, which will fund an artistic redesign of the court. The project will drive the urban regeneration of the area. In turn this will drive up participation improving the wellbeing and confidence of users and the community.³⁷

Due to its island geography, the ability to increase the greenspace available in the city is limited and relies on the interplay with the Planning Service and associated development agreements. The pandemic and climate change movement has also brought the importance of greenspace higher up the agenda for consideration. There is an ability to improve the quality of greenspace where it is not possible to expand the quantity of greenspace. This depends on adequate budget and capital grants to fund the necessary improvements, where grant funding is not available. A key example of leveraging funding to improve greenspace is the Hilsea Linear Park project which is considered later in this document.

2.7 Seafront

The seafront forms part of the 'natural capital' of Portsmouth. It contributes directly to City Vision 2040 objective for '**a healthy and happy city**' where we

- care and support each person's needs for their physical and mental health
- ensure residents live in good homes where they feel safe and can thrive

Comprising 'blue space', it has a similar contribution to our health and wellbeing as 'green space'. The seafront provides a sense of interconnectedness with the natural world, opportunities for sensory pleasure and contributes improved mental health outcomes.³⁸ The promenade provides ample opportunity for active travel, safe physical activity and recreational activity. This has been particularly important during the period of lockdowns arising from the Covid pandemic and beyond. Open space ('green' parks and 'blue' seafront) usage saw increased footfall by up to three times against baseline during the first lockdown and much busier than the comparative local authorities of Southampton, Plymouth and Brighton.

The Seafront Strategy 2010-2026³⁹ sets out a vision, including the following, which accords with the City Vision overarching objectives

- improving accessibility
- increased use of the seafront
- high quality public realm
- improved offers along the seafront
- a range of experiences on offer
- a vibrant local economy

Equality of access for all is important and the service has considered how access can be improved for those with mobility difficulties. This includes a ramp to the beach, matting and working with the Portsmouth and Southsea

37 www.crowdfunder.co.uk/orchard-park-project

38 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf

39 www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Seafront-Strategy.pdf

mobility issues and families with pushchairs. Through the trial of the ramp during 2021 people were able to access a safe part of the shingle to spend time on the beach with friends and family for the first time.

Increasing use of the seafront relies on an attractive and vibrant offer. The service supports a number of well-used free to use activities including tennis courts, beach volleyball and two splashpools in addition to an outdoor gym located across the wider seafront area.

Such increased use requires a high level of attention to the physical landscape which is provided in part through the Parks Service and also, with regard to safety aspects, through effective partnership working with the RNLI, Portsmouth and Southsea Volunteer Lifeguards and support of the Portsmouth Water Safety Forum. Provision of seafront personal rescue equipment and water safety signage is an essential component of the wider seafront offer. Additionally, working with the British Heart Foundation and South Coast Ambulance Service two new defibrillators have been installed on the seafront.

Byelaws are also being brought up to date to take into account new activities such as electric scooters and land sailing. The new byelaws will cover the promenade and the seashore in addition to the public gardens, public walks and open spaces. The public realm in Portsmouth includes over 70 memorials and 25 of these have recently been restored including the Nelson statue. This included an installation of coloured lighting.

The service is consistently looking to review and improve the catering offers along the seafront by overseeing a procurement process to provide the best value for concessions with a broad reach across different food themes and whilst at the same time, providing opportunities for local and small businesses to grow and develop whilst strengthening the local economy in the area and complimenting the broad events programme.

The service offering includes a number of beach huts under tenancy and further huts offered at weekly rental. There has been a strong demand for

weekly rental as a result of the pandemic and encouragement to spend leisure time more locally.

The service are also managing Shopmobility. This allows for increased independence and freedom for those with mobility difficulties, so that they are not excluded from accessing the city's full range of facilities including the seafront and promenade. It is anticipated that usage will grow as the city moves beyond the pandemic.

There are significant seasonal pressures on the service with the seafront being a very heavily used area 7 days a week, especially from Easter to the end of September. Small staffing levels result in an amount of additional hours being worked by managers from across the directorate in order to provide the necessary level of manager cover for weekends. However this does have the benefit of more staff understanding the complexity of the space and the public's expectations as to how they would like to use it.

The Hotwalls Studios

The Hotwalls Studios are integral to supporting the following objectives from the City Vision 2040:

- **A city rich in culture and creativity**
- **A city with a thriving economy**
- **A happy and healthy city**
 - Attracting investment
 - Providing career opportunities
 - Enhance wellbeing and support mental health

The Hotwalls Studios creative quarter is a landmark development in the city of Portsmouth. The studios provide an environment in which artists and makers can start and grow their businesses in an environment of mutual support, creativity and innovation.

The project is an excellent example of the way in which the council can maximise the potential of its assets to create employment, economic development and growth.

Thirteen studios have been created for new and developing creatives who practice a wide diversity of arts and crafts, participate in workshops and market their products. It is a mixed business model of individual artists and shared studios.

The site location comprises several artist-maker studios at affordable and developed rates. It also forms part of the attractions and offers on the seafront and makes use of a scheduled monument, contributing to a high quality public realm.

As a contribution to the city's culture, the Hotwalls Studios offers an event programme, social media presence and online exposure together with outreach to other audiences within the community. Contributing events include the *Pause, Reflect, Create* exhibition, which, through funding from Arts Council England, enabled the artists to create art work as a reflection of their experience of the pandemic. Following the exhibition the items were moved to Portsmouth Museum as part of the Covid Collection.

The Studios also engaged with Portsmouth Creates as part of the collaboration to enable the *We Believe Art Trail* to take place across the city for residents to enjoy outdoor public artwork during the lockdown periods.

Hotwalls Studios has successfully secured funding from Arts Council England Cultural Recovery Fund 2 for digital development to showcase an online gallery and retail for the artists and will continue to focus on audience development, improved social media reach and investment for the Round Tower.

The final phase for the Hotwalls Studios is to complete the development and re-use of the Round Tower acting as a platform which to showcase creative organisations from both across the city and wider region:

- Work with like minded organisations to create further opportunities for our artists and design makers
- Develop a cultural hub for the creative community locally and regionally by showcasing a wide range of diverse, high quality and professional artists and design makers, through a varied cultural and creative events programme.

2.8 Regulatory Services

Regulatory Services is a direct contributor towards the following City Vision 2040 objectives:

- **'a green city'** comprising 'excellent air quality' so that residents can 'live healthy and active lives';
- **'healthy and happy city'** to 'ensure residents live in good homes where they feel safe and can thrive';
- **'a thriving economy'** that 'supercharges local businesses & entrepreneurs'

Air Quality is a key deliverable for the service in meeting the above objectives. Public Health England have estimated that in Portsmouth, air pollution is a contributing factor to approximately 95 deaths per year.⁴⁰

The Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000 set out a number of national objectives. Through monitoring and reporting and production of the Air Quality Annual Status Report, the service contributes to the air quality local action plan, which includes the implementation of Portsmouth Clean Air Zone.

A thriving healthy and happy city, following the UK departure from the EU, requires a new **Port Health Authority** (PHA) as part of the Border Control Post (BCP). This will ensure that the required health checks are carried out on food imports and exports. The government timetable requires the BCP to be financially independent by March 2022.

As set out in the City Vision, residents need to **feel safe** in their city. Regulatory Services deliver a range of services and professional advice to the public including but not exclusive to: nuisance resolution, environmental assessment, effectual development design, pest control, health and safety, food safety, fraudulent trading, product safety, age restricted sales, and illicit alcohol and tobacco.

Regulatory Services is required to respond promptly for the city when new legislation is introduced such as the government's new laws to protect public health and restrict business activity resulting from the Covid pandemic, leading to consequential changes to the regulatory framework. To protect the city and its residents, the service delivers in the region of 150 statutory duties.

The work of the service enables the public to feel confident both personally and in the wider context of the reputation of the city and its economic development and regeneration. As such, the service can be said to be a key deliverable towards the City Vision objective of a **thriving economy** as the service *'supercharges local businesses and entrepreneurs'*. The essential nature of the service to the city can be best seen through consideration of the effect on personal safety and the local economy if the service were unable to deliver, resulting in the following scenarios:

- Sales of unfit and unsafe products, goods and food that causes harm;
- Unscrupulous individuals misleading others and taking advantage for their own gain;
- Targeting of vulnerable individuals; destroying lives
- Damage to the environment, public health and the city's reputation.

40 Portsmouth Air Quality Strategy 2017-2027 www.portsmouth.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/env-air-quality-strategy.pdf

2.9 Licensing

The Licensing Service is a direct contributor towards the following City Vision objectives:

- A healthy and happy city;
- A city with a thriving economy;
- A green city

The legislative picture

The Service is required to keep abreast of an ever-changing national picture with regard to legislation. Most recently, the Department for Transport introduced statutory guidance for taxi and private hire vehicles (PHV) licensing authorities, to reflect best practice on a national level in terms of licensing policies for the safety of the travelling public. The service is now reviewing licensing policy to reflect government best practice.

Further, as a result of the increased use of 'App' based hiring of PHVs across the UK, and a change in accepting bookings by private hire operators, there has been an emergence of "cross-border" licensing where a licensing authority will licence operators, vehicles and drivers who are mainly working in another local authority area. The impact of such practices means that the licensing authority where the vehicles/drivers are mainly working are not subject to local policy requirements or compliance checking.

This remains a challenge for all licensing authorities and will be kept under review pending any legal challenges or amendments to legislation.

A healthy and happy city

The overarching aim of the service is to ensure Portsmouth is a city where residents, visitors and businesses feel safe. In addition to Private hire and taxi licensing, this includes persons and premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 for the sale of alcohol, regulated entertainment and late night refreshment, licensing of premises for gambling facilities under

the Gambling Act 2005, consents for street trading, permits for street entertainment, licensing of scrap metal dealers, charitable collections and sex establishments. In particular, the service are required to stay up to date with alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment licensing which is subject to continual change, in addition to responding to the restrictions during the pandemic.

Reviews of the Council's policies in relation to Licensing Act and Gambling Act premises are subject to review in 2021/2022.

Under Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010, the service are working towards designation of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

A city with a thriving economy

The service is required to interpret legislation to inform stakeholders, Licensing Members and external agencies. It works closely with the police and safeguarding agencies and jointly with other authorities. It should be noted that in the last financial year, the service delivered 100% success in defending appeals against licensing decisions and pursuit of legal proceedings. The quality of delivery of the service enables confidence in the city in areas such as crime prevention, transport, tourism, town centre development and the night-time economy, thereby encouraging investment and economic growth.

A green city

The service continues to work closely with the Air Quality Team to help hackney carriage and PHV to access funding for compliant vehicles in anticipation of the implementation of the Portsmouth Clean Air Zone commencing autumn 2021. A charge will be levied against non-compliant vehicles entering the Clean Air Zone, unless an exemption applies. The service will also continue to liaise with the Highways Authority in terms of the provision of taxi ranks throughout the city and support further discussions with regard to the use of bus lanes by private hire vehicles.

2.10 Registrars

The Registrars Service cares for the needs of the people of the city by registering births, deaths, stillbirths, marriages and civil partnerships. In addition, it conducts celebratory ceremonies and citizenship ceremonies. This is a statutory service but the quality of delivery demonstrates the commitment of the City Vision towards building **a healthy and happy city** through the values of community, collaboration, equality, respect and innovation.

The service deal with sensitive issues and the quality of the relationship of the service with the community is important. The covid pandemic meant that the service had to work efficiently and sensitively to progress the registration of deaths. This led to some changes in processes, innovative practice and improved customer care, such as:

- electronic transfer of medical certificates from hospitals/GPs, enabling the service to act proactively in contacting the next of kin and providing the same to the funeral director. This reduces the burden of unnecessary stress on the bereaved
- 'drive through' style birth registrations and using online forms
- Still birth/infant death registration over the telephone, avoiding any potential stress arising from such customers meeting customers in person registering new births

The changes to practice of the service will inform delivery going forward.

Serving the community: Marriages

A number of changes should be noted in delivery of service moving forward:

Equality

Changes to legislation with effect from 4 May 2021 mean that names of both parents of a couple, rather than only fathers' names, will be registered.

This is a result of the Marriage Schedule System (MSS) which means information previously entered on a marriage register will be required to be inputted to Registration On Line from which the legal marriage certificate will be issued.

Impact on the service

The service are contacting all couples affected by MSS, at a time when the service is already under pressure. Following the lockdowns and limitations on weddings, the 2022/2023 wedding season is expected to be very busy due to rescheduling of previous wedding appointments. The rescheduling is taking place at a time when the team are also retraining for MSS procedures. The marriage schedule will need to be brought to the office for the issue of a certificate which will increase pressures on the service at the start of each week.

The service will also be responsible for collecting registrations stock from 96 local churches and the intention is to commence this in autumn 2021 when the number of ceremonies will reduce.

Serving the community: Foreign Nationals

Foreign nationals were previously required to give their notices of marriage to a Designated Register Office. All register offices are now designated offices, which will increase the need for the number of appointments offered by the service.

From June 2021 all EU nationals are required to have applied for settled status. When taking notices of marriage or civil partnership registration from EU nationals, status must be checked, thereby increasing appointment time. Time pressures are also increased when the service is required to deal with foreign nationals as the required immigration status must be verified. If the submission is incomplete then further work is required by the service together with the necessary reporting to the Home Office. As a coastal city port, many communities seek to settle in Portsmouth and this has an impact on the demands of the service.

2.11 Emergency Planning

The Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR) team is a formal shared service serving Southampton City Council and Portsmouth City Council. It works to ensure that the two authorities and their local communities can effectively prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies in accordance with authorities' statutory obligations, including the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 and the Coronavirus Act 2020.

In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) (2004) and supporting non-statutory guidance, the EPRR service undertake a number of activities that directly contribute to the City Vision objective of:

- **a healthy and happy city** - ensure residents live in good homes where they can feel safe and thrive

This includes assessing the risk of emergencies, developing emergency plans, putting in place business continuity arrangements, ensuring effective communication with the resident, business and transient community of Portsmouth and work with local partners to prepare for and respond together effectively.

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic response, the EPRR service has continued to deliver its critical services (emergency response, REPPIR) and contractual obligations borough support).

As Covid-19 recovery progresses, non-critical services such as the delivery of updated training and exercising, risk assessments and some partnership engagement will resume. In addition, a review of business continuity arrangements will be undertaken, incorporating lessons identified during the pandemic and other incident responses.

Section 3:

3.1 Key Risks and Mitigation

Risk 1: Continued budget pressures, 'Brexit' & Covid

The National Audit Office has advised that local authority finances will continue to be under significant pressure in 2021-22 and in future years. The combination of existing budget pressures prior to Covid 19 combined with the damage to local authority finances by the pandemic means that financial recovery is likely to be a long term process, with only a minority of councils anticipating finances returning to pre-pandemic levels within the next two financial years.⁴¹ As such, the Local Government Association have argued that the impact of both the UK's changed relationship with the EU and financial pressures of Covid 19 should not lead to further cuts to Council funding, as Councils are in a prime position to deliver services to maximise economic growth, revitalise areas and enable communities to thrive.⁴² These points are also reflected in the delivery of Portsmouth's own City Vision 2040.

Culture and Leisure Services (CLS) are not a statutory function, however as argued elsewhere in this plan, the pandemic has clearly demonstrated the direct affect that CLS can have on the physical and mental wellbeing of the residents of Portsmouth and therefore the services provided by the directorate have a direct effect on the outcomes and demand for statutory services such as Adult Services, Childrens Services and Public Health. It is therefore overly simplistic to view the directorate's offer as 'nice to have'.

Mitigation 1: Partnership working

Councils need to invest in cultural services to improve the wellbeing of residents, increase the sense of community pride and belonging together

with the confidence of the residents of the city. There is also an opportunity for partnership working, as improving socio-economic opportunities via cultural regeneration is a strong thread through the strategies and funding eligibility criteria of organisations such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Sports England strategy 'Uniting the Movement', Arts Council strategy 'Let's Create' as already referenced in this plan. More locally, the directorate has the opportunity to partner with the LEP and the University of Portsmouth, together with Portsmouth Creates and The Hive.

The directorate and wider Council has a number of stand-alone projects with the University of Portsmouth ("UoP"). The City Vision 2040 commits to the development of a community through collaboration and the UoP is looking to becoming a Civic University in the future. A Civic University Agreement would articulate the UoP's civic strategy and 'place' based plan to meet local needs and opportunities as part of their mission.⁴³ For our part, the directorate is looking to create an established and co-ordinated relationship with UoP going forward. This may benefit UoP with regard to their application for Civic University status. Our relationship with UoP may also bring greater influence with The Arts Council, as evidence of two large organisations working together to benefit the city community. Our Library Service have a strong reciprocal relationship with the University, which raises the profile of our BookFest. Collaboration with the University for this event has enabled high profile speakers / hosts and widened the audience reach. In addition our Museums Service have volunteers from the UoP and University of Southampton working a number of museum collections.

41 www.icaew.com/insights/viewpoints-on-the-news/2021/mar-2021/levelling-up-funding-gap-as-local-authorities-cut-spending

42 www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/lga-march-2021-budget-submission

43 <https://civicuniversitynetwork.co.uk/civic-agreements/>

Risk 2: Impact of Covid on services

Covid has had a significant impact on the delivery of our services. The shielding of our volunteer infrastructure during the lockdown period meant a reduction in resource for our Library Service, Museum Service and Parks Service. Some services have seen increased demand (Parks, Libraries, Seafront). Other services have had to react incredibly quickly to embed the Covid restrictions at the same time as seeing a demand on their services (enforcement services). Whilst the pandemic has provided an opportunity to reimagine and re-envisage, there is a risk that some services will be left behind.

Mitigation 2: Reframing services

The directorate is investigating how to reframe its services and long term delivery to take into account the pandemic impact. The service is changing how it delivers by developing hybrid models of physical and digital events and services. One of the advantages of this approach is that individuals with mobility challenges are no longer precluded from participation in our offers as they can take part digitally from their own homes and still interact. Highlighting both physical offers and digital offers on our social media channels also operates as a fantastic advertising opportunity. We also have the opportunity created by Covid to involve our communities more in the redesign of services as we come out of the pandemic.

Risk 3: Demands on Staff and Staff Wellbeing

The pandemic resulted in a number of challenges with regard to our staffing. Most services in the directorate have for some time been operating on a low cost, high impact model, with minimum flex to adjust for any periods of sickness. Pressure and demands on staff have therefore increased, to take into account furloughed staff and, with an older age profile in our directorate,

a high proportion shielding. There has been an emotional toll on services that have had to deal with the number of deaths - Registrars and Cemeteries.

The age profile of our directorate will also be reflected in the attitudes to working flexibly, adopting new technology and future career planning.

The shift to working from home put staff under additional pressure where there were caring responsibilities for children or elderly parents. Other staff live alone and working from home presented challenges of isolation. However, there were also concerns with regard to hybrid working, that staff felt a lack of belonging.

It should be noted that Covid-enforced working practices are not proof of the success of homeworking, without examination and reflection they are difficult to sustain long term.

Mitigation 3: Consultation on Future Ways of Working

The Local Government Association have set out a number of principles for hybrid working.⁴⁴ Service delivery and business need are required to be balanced against employee wellbeing, diversity and inclusion.

As a directorate we are fully engaged with the Connectivity project and Future Ways of Working. We have consulted at managerial level and each manager / team leader has been required to meet with their team to make sure all staff are represented in the project and each team examines their future way of working as we come out of the pandemic lockdown period.

The directorate has a wellbeing champion and a directorate newsletter which includes wellbeing advice and updates. Following the results of the Wellbeing Survey for the directorate, each service is reviewing their flexible working requirements, as the directorate is broad and each service will have different needs due to different operating models.

44 www.local.gov.uk/hybrid-working-key-considerations

Risk 4: Regulatory risks - legislative change

The enforcement services are subject to the interpretation, implementation and full delivery of legislative change, in addition to running their services. The following changes are apposite:

- Requirement of the Port Health authority to manage the activities of the Border Control Post to be financially self-sufficient by March 2022
- Anticipated legislative modification regarding increased 'App Based' hiring of private hire vehicles;
- Marriage Schedule System and Designated Register Offices
- Significant expansive changes to the range of enforcement duties required to be performed by the local authority following changing government priorities.

These legislative changes cannot be delivered within existing budgetary frameworks and cost recovery processes unless to the detriment of the existing service. The risks are high with regard to legal challenge, costs and the city's reputation. Reductions in local government funding have had a significant effect on regulatory budgets and limited the number of newly qualified staff entering the service.

Mitigation 4: Forward planning and prioritising services

The level of demands on the enforcement services can only be met if there is agreement on the strategic priorities for delivery. There is increasing pressure on the regulatory service to deliver additional functions including around food, air quality, port health, animal welfare and anti-social behaviour matters. In addition, review of service plans requires transition to online application processes where possible to make best use of resources.

These changes cannot be achieved on the existing framework as the influx of new regulatory responsibilities cannot be met unless further measures are considered:

- Additional resources to increase capacity to fulfil the new duties further to the existing ones;
- Reaching agreement across services about which competing priorities should be delivered first on the basis of a lack of capacity to absorb new duties without disrupting existing ones

Regulatory Services requires a commitment from the local authority to continued investment over the long term, so that the various legal requirements arising from Brexit and continued expansion of enforcement duties can be met.

3.2 Delivery of the Business Plan

The Business Plan is taken to Culture, Leisure and Economic Development (CLED) Portfolio or Cabinet for approval. It may also be considered at a number of other Cabinet Member (Portfolio) decision meetings and Regulatory Committees.

The plan is held accountable by the following:-

- Cascade of objectives - each service in the Business Plan is considered in more detail via service operational plans;
- Corporate Performance Monitoring is reported to Governance & Audit & Standards Committee each quarter;
- Key projects are added to the Members Projected Work Programme
- Budget management, forecast outturn and savings are included in quarterly monitoring to Governance and Audit and Standards Committee

The directorate works closely with portfolio holders and opposition spokespersons, including a weekly briefing meeting with the Cabinet Member for CLED. We encourage all Members to take an interest in the work of our directorate and Members are welcome to have site visits with us at any time.

Key projects for the service are subject to consultation with the community to embed customer feedback into design. Customers are also able to contact us by service enquiry and the directorate has a strong network of volunteers who are encouraged to feedback as part of their role.

3.3 Environmental Sustainability

Caring for our planet, its creatures and climate

The City Vision 2040 aims for a green city, which includes protecting and enhancing our land and maritime environment for the future.

The directorate is contributing to this objective in four ways:

- Animals and events
- The animals cared for in the city's parks
- Wildlife and biodiversity protection
- Climate care

Animals, Events and Licensing

As part of our Events application procedure, the service ensures that where animals are involved, the application includes a veterinary certificate, specific animal-centric risk assessments, an animal welfare policy and specific insurance for the animals involved. The assessment considers the welfare of the animals both when performing and at rest and including transit to and from the events. Events are not permitted that include captive or wild animals.

Static exhibitions of animals are not permitted unless the main role of the venue is for educational purposes, such as the Cumberland House Natural History Museum. The restrictions on animals does not include therapeutic use unless any animal welfare concerns are raised.

Experienced animal exhibitors are usually already licensed with their local authority (if outside Portsmouth). On notification of an event, the licensing authority are contacted to establish whether an inspection is required. If an exhibitor wishes to attend an event and is not licensed, then advice is sought from Regulatory Services.

Regulatory Services have responsibility for compliance with regard to **The Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England)**

Regulations 2018 (legislation.gov.uk)⁴⁵. Staff are being trained to meet this competency and veterinarians are also being recruited with regard to animal imports following Brexit.

The Events service have also facilitated a number of beach cleans with external organisations along the promenade (Southsea and Eastney Beach), between the pier and the Model Village and also the areas of beach in front of Canoe Lake and Rock Gardens. Moving forward it is hoped to expand litter cleans to other areas of the city such as Eastern Road and Hilsea Lines.

Animals in the city parks

The Parks Service cares for a broad range of animals including the following:

Victoria Park: peacock, 2 species of chicken, 2 species of dove, ring-necked parakeet, cockatiels, lovebirds and terrapins.

College Park: guinea pigs, goats, 4 species of duck, rabbits, cockatiels, lovebirds and budgies.

This provides an ideal opportunity for city children to have access to animals. Subject to funding in the longer term this could also include an education programme.

Wildlife and biodiversity protection

Portsmouth is ranked 9th in the Royal Society for Arts Heritage Index⁴⁶ for landscape and natural environment and 8th for assets. The assets include Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), local nature reserves, and two wildlife trust reserves. A number of these sites fall under the directorate's responsibility:

Portsdown Hill is a SSSI managed by a Hill Ranger and actively protecting a wide variety of wildlife including butterflies, moths, beetles, amphibians, birds and mammals and hundreds of plants.

Hilsea Lines Conservation Area is also managed by a Countryside Ranger and protects 323 species of plants, 94 species of birds and 141 species of moths.

Baffins Pond provides a home to ducks and wildfowl in the city and **Tangier Field** is a particularly important location in the winter season when it is fenced off for Brent Geese. Considerable work has been undertaken at Baffins Pond to control the water quality and enable oxygenation of the plant life.

Milton Common provides a refuge in the city for flora and fauna including butterflies, voles, shrews, 176 plant species and 16 bird species. The site includes nesting sites for birds and the lakes support frogs, toads and newts.

Eastney Beach, whilst a shingle beach, includes significant vegetation, supporting some rare species including Sea Holly, Sea Kale, Sea Bindweed and Sea Radish

Fort Cumberland, a coastal healthland open space, supports over 100 species of plants, reptiles and birds.

To protect these important sites requires regular activities such as scrub control, grazing, footpath maintenance, checks on water quality and safety equipment, controlling litter and addressing anti-social behaviour, as well as managing the volunteer resource who play a key role (see Volunteering section).

Climate care

The Council has recognised the importance of climate care by appointing a Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Green Recovery. Key to addressing climate change is to increase canopy cover in the city, to minimise urban heat island effect. Urban heat islands (dense concentrations of pavement and buildings) increase energy costs, air pollution and heat related illnesses.

⁴⁵ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2018/9780111165485

⁴⁶ www.thersa.org/reports/heritage-index-2020

The Council has undertaken in its Greening Strategy to increase the number of trees. To double canopy cover in the city requires an increase of 360 trees in parks and open spaces. Subject to budgetary constraints, the Parks Service is well placed to make the most of opportunities in the city to improve the quality of green space and introduce further green pockets of biodiversity to mitigate urban heat island effect.

The directorate, through its Regulatory Services and Licensing Service also has a clear work focus on air quality and regulating the Clean Air Zone (see Regulatory Services and Licensing sections).

Sustainability is also an important consideration for all the services across the directorate. The directorate is undertaking an environmental sustainability audit which will assess where steps can be implemented by the services to manage and minimise environmental impacts and identify opportunities for moving forward.

Section 4

4.1 Major Projects

There are a number of major projects in the directorate to advance the City Vision 2040 and current administration's priorities:

Building a Happy and Healthy City

Local Football Facilities Plan

The Football Association, the Premier League and Sport England commenced a programme in 2017 to develop a programme of investments for areas of demand for football, noting its importance to the community.⁴⁷ Following an expression of interest, Portsmouth was invited to Stage 2 and worked with other stakeholders to produce a Local Football Facilities Plan. King George V playing fields have been identified as the preferred site for an enhanced pitch and pavilion. Funding in part has been awarded for initial feasibility work and the Parks Service continue to work towards the bid submission.

Regeneration of Victoria Park

The project 'Reviving Victoria Park - the People's Park in Portsmouth' seeks to uncover the park's heritage and create an inclusive space that more people can use and benefit from. Round 1 funding of £251k from National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) enabled the appointment of project staff and a consultation to take place to feed into the Round 2 submission for the delivery phase, comprising contributory funding of £2.05m from NLHF.

New Community & Sports Hub

The current facilities at the existing sites (Eastney Swimming Pool and Wimbledon Park) require an ongoing subsidy. By combining the facilities at both sites into one site, the requirement for a subsidy is avoided and the

new site is eligible for £2m grant from Sport England. This project was also included in the Portsmouth South Levelling Up Fund bid.

More detail on this project is outlined in the sports section of this plan.

A City with a Thriving Economy

Regeneration of Portsmouth Guildhall

The Guildhall requires a major overhaul and refurbishment of facilities. This development will follow the Guildhall Trust's '[Guildhall Renaissance](#)'⁴⁸ programme so that on completion of the project the venue is a leading cultural organisation for the city. This will reflect the investment by the Council and the priorities identified by the community and customer base. Improvements will include the concert hall, front of house foyers, bars and meeting rooms and consequently attract the best acts and exhibitions, to the benefit of the community and city centre regeneration. The project formed part of the Portsmouth South Levelling Up Fund bid.

New Theatre Royal

The Council is purchasing this theatre and leasing it back to the operator to run as a trust. This will enable the future of the theatre's place, as a key part of the cultural offer of the city, to be delivered moving forward.

Hilsea Linear Park

This project was submitted as part of the Portsmouth North Levelling Up Fund bid. In November 2021 the government confirmed that this bid had been successful in securing project funding via the Levelling Up Fund.

⁴⁷ <https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/parklife-football-hub-prospectus-july-2017.pdf>

⁴⁸ <https://portsmouthguildhall.org.uk/about-guildhall/about-us/guildhall-renaissance>

The project for Hilsea Linear Park is comprised of 3 elements:

Refurbishment of Hilsea Lido

The Hilsea Lido is a well loved attraction in the city. Refurbishment will enable a high quality leisure and events destination which will provide year round attraction and will also function as a community hub.

Development of facilities in the immediate area

The play and water play facilities such as Hilsea Splash Pool are popular. Further investment will provide high quality play areas. The local ecology and heritage offer at Hilsea Lines will benefit from signage and interpretation to link Hilsea Lines to the wider area and offer.

Creation of the linear park, linking east to west

The Park will link the city from the park and ride, round the top of Portsea Island to the eastern tip. This will include a safe active travel routes incorporating integrated cycling and walkways. It will improve the current connection from the park and ride to the Mountbatten Centre and extend the coastal defence works and footways to the east.

Hilsea Linear Park has clear links to the City Vision 2040. Development of higher quality leisure facilities and green infrastructure provide for positive physical and mental health outcomes for a healthy and happy city. Connecting the Park and Ride to further green travel options contribute to the wider objective of a green city. Development of a community hub at Hilsea allows for events and activities to take place across different communities, building collaboration and social cohesion. The project provides an opportunity for the north of the city to become a destination in its own right.

4.2 Register of High Risks

Activity	Drivers	Service	Theme	Code Risk	Threats	Assurances	Risk as at 2021	Triggers	Current Risk	Cost	Changes
Libraries & Archives	Budget Pressures	CLRS	Financial	S	Non delivery/ Unsustainability of service if further cuts	Re-scheduling and reviewing opening hours volunteers on frontline. Putting forward as closures, automation of services	High	If further cuts required and all libraries required to remain open	Yes		
Whole Service	Budget pressures	CLRS	Financial	S	Loss of key skills as flatter structure and increase of absence more pressure on fewer staff	PDR's, 1:1's every 4 weeks and team meetings. Management training. Salary benchmarking	High	At any time due to budget pressures	No		
Whole service	Budget pressures	CLRS	Financial	S	Greater than expected deterioration of buildings and failure to adequately maintain assets	Also risk for Housing & Property Services and Finance	High		Yes		
Cemeteries and Burial services	Demographic increase	CLRS	Environment	S	Availability of land for the religious burials is 5 or 6 years based on current death rates as more space is required due to a different burial alignment & limited space.	Identify land and set aside within existing cemeteries and identify new sites.	High	Current, due to increased death rates in some communities. Takes 5 years to develop a new cemetery.	Yes		

Activity	Drivers	Service	Theme	Code Risk	Threats	Assurances	Risk as at 2021	Triggers	Current Risk	Cost	Changes
Regulatory Services	Impact of Brexit	RS	Regulation	G	Complex uncertainty remains. Full cost recovery mechanism insecurity.	None	High	Now	Yes	c. £2 million	Yes - greater
	Implementation of Government legislative changes				Increases in resources required in the short / medium term	None	High	Now	Yes	C £200,000	Yes - greater
	Resources not meeting demand for services, legal statutory obligations and financial investigations (FI)				Currently occurring in all service areas	None - services will require review - FI are subject to failure and costs	High	Now	Yes	C £100,000	Yes - greater
Water Safety	Public Protection legislation	Culture & Parks	Security & Legal	V	Resources to monitor and maintain combined with increasing public use of areas adjacent to water	Seasonal tendered RNLI contract;	Medium	Now (April 2021)	Yes with anticipated numbers expected to engage with water	Unknown	
						Monitoring process for water safety signs across the city	High				
						Monitoring for legislation changes which are anticipated	Medium				

Code	Risk Type
V	Vulnerabilities/Corp Legislation e.g. DPA, Health & Safety, Asbestos, Legionellas
G	Government- specific Service Legislation
S	Service Priority
LO	Lost opportunity
P	Project risks
F	Fraud
BC	Business Continuity

4.3 Plan on a Page

1 Healthy & Happy City

- Developing links with the community & voluntary sector
- Fitness events and festivals
- Building relationships & links across the world
- New community sports leisure centre
- Redevelopment of Pyramids
- Blue space seafront access for all
- Improving the public realm
- Development of a new Port Health Authority
- Keep residents safe in performance of our statutory duties
- Ensure legislative changes are reflected in practice by our statutory services
- Emergency Planning to keep residents safe
- Football Facilities Plan to implement improved sports and community opportunities

2 A city rich in culture & creativity

- Multi-cultural events with city promoters
- Revenue & governance support to cultural organisations
- Broaden cultural participation across communities
- Make collections more accessible and relevant to the community
- Museums bid for NPO status

- Regeneration & restoration of Victoria Park
- Outreach to new audiences via Hotwalls Studios
- Engagement with Portsmouth Creates
- Partnership working with other city stakeholders and external cultural organisations
- Regeneration of Portsmouth Guildhall

3 A green city

- Access to greenspace for healthy behaviours and active travel
- Greening projects to mitigate environmental damage
- Wildflower planting to increase green corridors
- Tree planting to provide cooling canopy and engagement with stakeholders
- Community Parks models
- Delivery of Air Quality reporting for Clean Air Zone
- Hackney carriage & PHV to access funding for compliant vehicles.
- Protect & enhance the city's green space

4 A city with a thriving economy

- Providing an events programme to encourage tourism including high profile events to showcase the city

- Digital marketing campaigns to extend the reach of the domestic market and spend.
- Delivery of trading standards and licensing requirements to protect our economy and stimulate business growth
- Improve the visitor experience across all services
- Attract high quality concessions to the seafront

5. A city of lifelong learning

- Developing Kickstart opportunities for young people
- Opportunities for community volunteering & promotion of social enterprise
- Digital access & offers from across the services
- Improve literacy and raise education levels
- Utilise our cultural assets for learning outcomes

6. A city with easy travel

- Blue space seafront access for all
- Active travel incorporated into design for new sports centre and Victoria Park consultation
- Shopmobility scheme increasing access for all across the city & its facilities

4.4 Key Performance Indicators

Events	Museums	Libraries
<i>Support the opening up of the Events industry to reignite the city and its tourism economy</i>	<i>Build a city rich in culture by encouraging the recovery of visitors across our sites</i>	<i>Support to the vulnerable and the wellbeing of the city through various activity packs for use at home and click & collect services</i>
400 Events both physical and hybrid	100,000 visitors	Dispatch over 1,200 activity packs

Hive	Sports	Digital engagement
<i>Volunteer placements across the city and community</i>	<i>Encourage healthy & happy lifestyles by a return to our contracted sports facilities</i>	<i>Provision of online content to expand reach and accessibility</i>
3,000 volunteers	Over 1,200,000 visits	Over 100,000 downloads & e-loans

4.5 Key Strategies, Documents and Partners

A number of documents and strategies were considered with regard to this plan:

Audit Wales, 'At Your Discretion: Local Government Discretionary Services', April 2021 www.audit.wales/publication/your-discretion-local-government-discretionary-services

Public Health England, 'Improving Access to Greenspace, a new review for 2020' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf

National Heritage Lottery Fund www.heritagefund.org.uk

Sport England, Uniting the Movement Strategy www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement

The Arts Council, Let's Create 2020 - 2030 www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/our-strategy-2020-2030

Imagine Portsmouth: City Vision 2040 <https://imagineportsmouth.co.uk>

Department of Health & Social Care: Tackling Obesity www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives

UK Active Impact Report www.ukactive.com/reports/covid-19-impact-report-the-fitness-and-leisure-sectors-path-to-recovery

Portsmouth City Council Sports Facility Strategy 2017-2027 <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s14923/03.1%20Portsmouth%20City%20Council%20Sports%20Facility%20Strategy%202017%20-%20exec%20summary.pdf>

Libraries Deliver Ambition for Public Libraries 2016-2021 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/579207/Libraries_Deliver_-_Ambition_for_Public_Libraries_in_England_2016_to_2021_accessible_version_.pdf

[attachment_data/file/579207/Libraries_Deliver_-_Ambition_for_Public_Libraries_in_England_2016_to_2021_accessible_version_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/579207/Libraries_Deliver_-_Ambition_for_Public_Libraries_in_England_2016_to_2021_accessible_version_.pdf)

Libraries Connected, Universal Library www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/universal-library-offers

Portsmouth Museums Strategy 2021-2025 <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s35194/Museums%20Strategy%202021-2025.pdf>

Visit Portsmouth Tourism Marketing Communications Plan 2021-2022 <https://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s29164/Visit%20Portsmouth%20Marketing%20Communications%20Plan%202021-2022%20Appendix%202.pdf>

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