



Arts plan to surprise Surrey and nation

21 February 2024



In a bold move to redefine Surrey's cultural landscape, a comprehensive strategy and vision for the years 2024-2034 has been unveiled by The Surrey Cultural Partnership (SCP). The "Surprising Surrey: Cultural Strategy & Vision 2024-2034" outlines an ambitious plan to transform Surrey into a vibrant hub of creativity and innovation, celebrating its rich heritage and fostering community prosperity.

Epsom and Ewell Times summarises the highlights:

Vision for 2034:

The vision for Surrey by 2034 is one of confidence and vibrancy, where the county's cultural heritage and creativity are celebrated as cornerstones of individual and community wellbeing. Key objectives include improving access to creative experiences, fostering cultural engagement across demographics, supporting creative practitioners, attracting visitors, and boosting investment in cultural activities.

Cultural Strategy Highlights:

The strategy underscores the belief that culture is integral to societal well-being, offering benefits such as enhanced quality of life, improved mental health, and economic growth. It aims to address existing disparities in cultural access and investment across Surrey, recognizing the county's diverse needs and potential.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Despite its affluent reputation, Surrey grapples with pockets of deprivation and underinvestment in cultural infrastructure. The strategy highlights the urgent need to secure funding and support from both local and national stakeholders to address these challenges and realize its goals.

Priorities and Action Plan:

The strategy outlines four key priorities: ensuring culture is accessible to all, fostering resilient communities, enhancing county-wide cultural infrastructure, and supporting creativity as an economic driver. An action plan details specific initiatives, including the establishment of cultural hubs, support for creative enterprises, and community engagement programs.

Monitoring and Financial Implications:

To ensure accountability and progress, the Surrey Cultural Partnership (SCP) will monitor the plan's implementation and evaluate its impact through key performance indicators. Financially, the plan anticipates a requirement of approximately £2 million over the next decade, to be sourced from various public and private funding channels.

Next Steps:

SCP will establish a steering group comprising stakeholders from diverse sectors to oversee the plan's execution. Additionally, workshops will be conducted to recruit Culture Champions and mobilize community support for the initiative.

The unveiling of the "Surprising Surrey: Cultural Strategy & Vision 2024-2034" marks a significant step towards transforming Surrey into a dynamic cultural destination, where creativity thrives, and communities flourish.

Surrey University's Professor Caroline Scarles, Professor of Technology and Society, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, and Director of Visit Surrey, said: "It has been a privilege to work with the Surrey Cultural Partnership to develop this strategy that brings together the wide range of vibrant and inspiring cultural leaders, organisations and communities across the county. It is a strategy that has the collaborative voices of the cultural sector as its very foundation. It provides the collective voice and vision for capturing the diversity, drive, and ambition of the county and recognises the central role that culture plays not only for the economy but also for inclusion, diversity, health, and wellbeing."