

*The Independent Voice of Local Business*.....

## **SOUTHAMPTON & FAREHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

### **COMMENTS ON DRAFT PAPER TOWARDS AN INTERNATIONAL CITY OF CULTURE**

**By the SCC Arts and Heritage Team to be published as a brochure  
Comments sought by 16 July 2008**

In July 2007 Southampton was identified as the third fastest growing city in the UK in terms of economic growth, population growth and skills of local residents. But cultural regeneration is as important as economic regeneration, in the creation of an attractive city as a place in which people want to live, work and enjoy life.

The paper "Towards an international city of culture" proposes that Southampton aspire to become an international city of culture within the urban South Hampshire region by 2026 by building on the current regeneration and 2012 context. It brings together for the first time existing plans, projects and early ideas into one document. It explains that Southampton is presented with a strategic opportunity to exploit its significance within the PUSH regional development area to ensure that its cultural potential can be realised over the next twenty years, particularly within the context of the Living Places Partnership agenda put forward by Government for areas of significant economic growth.

Comments are invited on this draft paper, before it is published for consultation purposes. The Arts and Heritage Team are particularly interested to know the following:

#### **1. Do you think the arts/heritage of our city is important and should be invested in?**

YES: It is traditional for the arts and culture in a town or city to be greatly advanced by rich patrons who create their wealth from the local economy.

#### **2. Do you think that Southampton should aspire to be an international city of culture?**

YES – this would be appropriate in, say, five years time, bearing in mind the existing culturally diverse population and the planned cultural quarter, which will take time to develop as such.

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**3. Have we identified all the important arts and heritage resources? If not, what else would you like us to consider?**

Page 7 – Maritime Story – include mention of the double tides, Port City with Chamber of Commerce since 1851, the development of the hovercraft.

Page 7 – Isaac Watts, Southampton resident and composer/hymn writer, whose house was demolished to make way for a new road.

Page 8 – Under surviving artefacts and global impact, or under Maritime Story - include the Merchant Navy Holyrood Church ruin, now a Merchant Navy memorial.

Page 8 – Long heritage of green open spaces – include Oldest Bowls Green by Town Quay and the Sports Centre.

Page 8 – Key milestones – include 2018, 50<sup>th</sup> Southampton Boat Show.

Page 17 – Old Town, key vistas – The vista down Bugle St across to the other side of Southampton Water is unique in Southampton and we are glad to see it mentioned. There is an excellent view from the city pavement outside West Quay across to the cruise liner in berth 101. This view joins the city to its waterfront in a manner of speaking, but it has been partially blocked by the new Carnival building.

Page 17 – Old Town experience – Castle House - For some 30 years this 11 storey housing block has dominated what little is left standing of the Old Town/Bugle Street.

**4. What role would you like the Council to play in helping this happen?**

The role of strategic facilitation towards achieving the cultural city vision and ensuring resources are forthcoming. Page 6 refers to a range of public and private funding programmes, including developer contributions. The Resource Delivery Plan (funding?) to be added to the final version of the document (page 13) is, of course, essential, because it is difficult to be enthusiastic about commenting on the document without knowing how likely it is that the resources to deliver this aspiration will be available.

**GENERAL COMMENT ON THE BROCHURE**

**Diagram 1 - covering 3 pages (14, 15, 16)**

These three pages give an unnecessary academic treatment to what is otherwise a very comprehensive and well illustrated text. The huge arrows give the impression of needing to use up spare pages. One arrow is labelled “Creative Inds” which is unclear.

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**Questions asked within the text**

A separate on-line or tear off consultation questionnaire would be popular on a general interest topic such as this paper addresses.

The Southampton & Fareham Chamber of Commerce is familiar with the documents forming the strategic framework for this arts and heritage position paper, like the PUSH strategic objectives, the Southampton Local Area Agreement targets, the Government's living Places Partnership. It has submitted comments on the City of Southampton Strategy and several wider Southampton City policy initiatives of direct relevance to this Arts and Heritage Strategic Position Paper. These include the City Centre Action Plan and the Old Town Development Strategy.

The Chamber also takes very seriously its role as a stakeholder in the city's heritage, being the owner of Bugle House, one of the older buildings in the Old Town and former vicarage for St Michael's church. The Southampton Chamber of Commerce was established in Southampton as long ago as 1851 and as such is part of the history and culture of Southampton. The Chamber of Commerce is proud to have sponsored the first Southampton Boat Show in 1969, one of the annual leisure events for which Southampton is now well known, which was founded by Chamber member Norman Kemish.

Captain J Chestnutt  
Director General

**ABOUT US**

*Your regional Chamber working for you locally.....*

As the independent voice of local business, Southampton and Fareham Chamber of Commerce represents some 4,000 businesses in the South Hampshire region concerning the issues that affect their ability to grow and prosper. Their views are central to the Chamber's thinking on the many local, regional and national planning or government policy initiatives on which we are asked for formal comment as a business representative organisation. The volunteer Chamber members on the committees provide expertise and a wide knowledge of specialist topics. This is of great help in formulating the **Chamber Viewpoint**, which is published monthly in the centre pages of our magazine and on our web site.

This brochure will be published and available from Southampton City Council later in the year.