



Originators 2025 to 2026 Fund and Imagination 2025 to 2027 Fund update

March 2025

Bristol City Council is facing a budget gap of approximately £52 million. Over the last few months, several savings proposals have been put forwards across the council, which included the Cultural Investment Programme having a phased reduction over three years by making no further new commitments, but honouring the existing grant agreements. Other proposals included the closure of Blaise Museum, the Georgian House Museum, and the Red Lodge Museum, as well as reducing the opening hours of the Archives Search Room.

On the 25th February 2025, the Full Council met to approve the council's 2025/26 budget in light of these proposals. Full details of the approved budget and spending plans can be found on the [council](#) website.

We can now confirm that the proposal for the Cultural Investment Programme has been deferred for 12 months to enable a review of alternative funding options. The proposals to close Blaise Museum, the Georgian House Museum and the Red Lodge Museum have also been deferred for 12 months to enable a review of alternative operational models.

What this means:

While this provides short-term relief, we must now reimagine the programme's long-term sustainability. To support this, we are commissioning an investment consultant to explore alternative investment models. Their findings will be incorporated into our Cultural Strategy, helping to shape a viable and sustainable approach for the future.

Funded organisations will continue to receive their grant payments as per their agreements.



We also understand that many of you are keen to apply for Originators and Imagination funding. Unfortunately, these funds will not be opening as usual this year. However, we are exploring alternative funding opportunities for artists and cultural organisations that contribute to the development of the new Cultural Strategy. We will share updates as soon as possible.

Cultural Strategy

Establishing a clear and sustainable Cultural Strategy is key to securing future long-term investment and ensuring ongoing support for the sector. This will be the focus of our work this year, with the aim of publishing the strategy in Spring 2026.

We are pleased to announce that Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend is leading the Bristol City Council Culture Working Group. This working group of councillors have been tasked with overseeing the development of the new strategy. The group reports to the Strategy and Policy Committee, chaired by Councillor Tony Dyer, Council Leader.

The [One City](#) Culture Board has been refreshed with new membership and new co-chairs. The Board is co-chaired by Councillor Ani Stafford-Townsend and Dr Anna Rutherford and is comprised of key partners and cultural sector representatives. The Board will play an advisory role in the ongoing shape and direction of the Cultural Strategy.

With strong support from council leaders and the cultural sector, this strategy is being developed with diverse input and dedicated commitment from stakeholders across the city. By working together, we aim to create a sustainable, long-term vision that supports and strengthens Bristol's vibrant cultural landscape for the future.

If you have any questions, please contact ArtsDevelopment@bristol.gov.uk