

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday, 13 January 2022

DRAFT ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

Report of the Head of Arts and Culture

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Panel consider and comment on the emerging themes for the draft Arts and Culture Strategy as part of early engagement.

Summary

The Council is currently in the process of reviewing and developing a new Arts and Culture Strategy as the previous Cultural and Creative Strategy ran from 2015 – 2019 and is out of date. Due to the pandemic, the Council has only been able to commence work on a new strategy this year.

This paper outlines the current position in the development of the new Arts and Culture Strategy and details the outcome of a review which has been undertaken, working closely with key stakeholders and partners, and the emerging themes following initial consultation.

Focus for Scrutiny

The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the draft themes of the strategy as part of early engagement.

Statutory Powers

Localism Act 2011

Strategic Implications

1. Nationally, local authorities will continue to play an important role, not only in shaping policy and strategy for culture and creative industries in their area, but in funding and delivering creative and cultural assets – including public libraries, archives, galleries, museums, concert halls, theatres, training and education facilities, enterprise hubs and community venues.
2. While funding in some areas has reduced significantly or even ceased over the past decade, some local authorities, like Eastleigh Borough Council, continue to maintain dedicated cultural teams, services and/or direct funding

and support for local organisations or projects. They are often the single largest public funder of such activity within the local authority area in question

3. Within the region, several other Authorities are developing their Culture Strategies. Hampshire County Council are developing their cultural strategy and examining the role of culture in:
 - placemaking - its positive impact on tackling deprivation, increasing aspiration, and improving wellbeing
 - economic recovery - in 2020 there were some 8,840 culture and creative businesses in Hampshire/ 12.3% of all local business units, and culture & creative industries generated at least £2.8bn to Hampshire's GVA in 2019.
4. Other neighbouring local authorities (e.g., Gosport, Basingstoke and Rushmoor) are also reviewing the impact of their local culture and creative sector. In addition to this, the Creative People and Places application for the New Forest has recently reached second stage interviews, and arts venues and organisations across the country (including The Point) are preparing business plans and forging partnerships as part of their applications to be in the Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio. A new cultural strategy for Eastleigh must align with such initiatives and developments across the region
5. The Arts and Culture Strategy will support the Council's corporate priorities including Health and Wellbeing, Prosperous Place and Green Borough.
6. Health and Wellbeing - The new Arts and Culture strategy will measure health and wellbeing impact and will positively support EBC priorities within the Corporate Plan. Over the last decade charities, government and medical bodies have gathered a weight of evidence for the positive impact and value of arts and cultural activity on health and wellbeing. The benefits of the arts on public health can be categorised into four main outcomes: prevention, promotion, management, and treatment.
7. A further advantage to the NHS and Local Authorities is the significant cost saving that can be achieved by tackling health inequalities and reducing the need for medication and treatment. Social prescribing is an increasingly common way of linking patients to non-medical sources of support within the community. Popular activities include singing for improved lung health, dance for dementia patients, and volunteering to aid mental health. In addition to this, there is widespread acknowledgement that the arts are a critical part of providing holistic care and enabling people to connect with each other and the place in which they live or work, and that this is acutely important in the context of Covid-19 and its impact on the mental health of the nation
8. A Prosperous Place – Working with strategic partners the Arts and Culture Strategy will define and prioritise economic impacts and identify the need that culture can address. Attracting new creative businesses and building on strengths in TV, Film, Music and Photography whilst supporting the development of the arts and museum sector. Supporting entrepreneurs, skills,

and talent with educational partnerships. Developing the cultural offer for young people, including career pathways into the creative and cultural industries. Ensuring that culture reaches young people who most need it and ensuring cultural education provision is sustainable and strategic rather than reliant on time limited projects

9. A Green Borough – The Arts and Culture Strategy will use tools available via sector leader Julia’s Bicycle (<https://juliesbicycle.com/>) to set SMART targets to reduce the impact of its cultural venues and buildings. Work will take place with staff and audiences to change behaviour and shift attitudes. Training and resources will be provided to the culture sector in Eastleigh to reduce environment impact and programming will deliver innovative and thought-provoking projects that engage young people and a new generation of activities in a sustainable way.

Introduction

10. Over the last two years the culture and creative sector has been significantly affected by Covid, the full impact of which will not be known for some time. However, there are reasons to be confident that the sector will recover, not least because of the growing recognition in recent years of the wider value that culture, and the creative sector contribute through positive impacts on health and wellbeing, environmental responsibility, education, skills, national identity, and global influence.
11. The Arts and Culture service is a primary deliverer of arts and culture in the borough, through assets such as The Point and Berry Theatres. The service delivers professional performance, artist development and participatory programmes and festivals including Unwrapped (Street arts) and Eastleigh Film Festival. It also supports the development of the creative industries and owns and manages a variety of premises for start-ups and independents:
 - The Sorting Office – studio space for creative start ups
 - The Creation Space – state of the art facilities at The Point
 - The West Wing - office space for creative practitioners
12. The most recent strategies and plans for the delivery of arts and culture are the Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy 2015-2019 (which had a strong emphasis on digital development and learning), the Public Art Strategy 2015 - 2019 (with a focus on profile building and identity and currently under review) and the Point NPO extension year Business Plan (which is very much aligned to ACE’s Let’s Create Strategy and the Corporate objectives of health, skills development and tackling deprivation).
13. The Arts and Culture service plan has a clear vision:
 - To position Eastleigh as a cultural destination, locally, regionally, and nationally. To be part of the regional arts ecology, presenting excellence in the arts within a range of high-quality programming, festivals, events, and activities that offer balance between commercial, social impact and artistic excellence.

- To engage with and inspire the local community, ensuring cultural prosperity and health and wellbeing opportunities for all.
 - To support, nurture and inspire the next generation of nationally significant artists working in dance, theatre, circus, and outdoor arts.
 - To build resilience around the arts and culture offer, stabilising and diversifying the funding position through the continued development of a mixed-income model.
14. Significant progress has been achieved over recent years, including a new business model which has been implemented to develop the theatres into an innovative, externally focused Civic Hub, which focuses on programming that is inclusive and relevant to local communities. This new service direction has challenged historical perceptions of the 'exclusive' nature of Arts and Culture.
15. External funding has been secured for creating spaces dedicated for children and families. Digital and External programming has been put in place in response to Covid and funding was sought to secure the future of the venues and grow the Health and Wellbeing impact. However, it is recognised that the Council has faced significant challenge through the pandemic which has disrupted many regular aspects of life including accessing cultural opportunities.
16. The new Arts and Culture Strategy will be a key document in galvanising the cultural sector and identifying investment priorities whilst we continue to navigate through Covid and a focus on innovation and inclusion will be a catalyst for this work. It will be aspirational, inclusive of the cultural sector and community stakeholders and will set a vision for the future which acknowledges the Borough's heritage, ensuring culture is at the heart of the Borough's placemaking plans.

Arts and Culture Strategic Review

17. To shape the future Arts and Cultural strategy a research methodology plan has been established and work has started. Counterculture consultancy company have been commissioned with externally secured funding to work with the EBC team to provide robust data and evidence on which to base the new strategy. Counterculture will deliver a report after Phase 2 and the Council will action further community consultation in 2021 Q4.
18. Methodology:
- Phase 1 – Desk based research including;
- EBC strategies, plans and documents
 - a literature review of local authority cultural strategies and key national strategies, policies and plans for culture
 - ONS data regarding creative industries and national policy
 - Demographics and Cultural engagement in the Borough

Phase 2 – Consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to better understand the existing provision and opportunities for culture to inform its strategic direction.

Phase 3 – Community consultation to test and confirm themes, recommendations, and implementation.

19. The data and evidence from the assessment will be used to inform the development of the new strategy and help identify and encourage more people to access arts and culture in their community. It will also recognise the benefits this will bring to health and wellbeing, the economy, and the environment.

Initial themes for the next strategy

20. Evidence from the initial phase of research highlights that Eastleigh has always been a town based on connectivity – from a history of engineering and travel to its river location. This connection has led to opportunity, ideas and commerce and given the place a strong sense of identity. A place of makers and doers, one where there is a culture of rolling sleeves up and making things happen. Where “movement”, be that the story of the railways or reputation for world-class dance; and a “hands-on approach” be that in the strong creative economy or industrious heritage, both provide Eastleigh with a clear brand position and USP as a cultural connector.
21. Therefore, as the landscape in Eastleigh and culture more broadly continues to change, the borough could draw on this role as cultural connector. With more grass roots creatives in the area, an influx of new younger residents and new innovative models of regeneration springing up, this ethos of connecting, keeping things moving, living by the tradition of makers and doers is highlighted as a key theme.
22. Eastleigh as cultural connector is a place that can:
 - Build networks so that makers, doers, creators can benefit from cross borough or region-wide collaboration more easily
 - Connect people with spaces, thinking outside the box about what natural and physical assets sit within the borough and what the needs of the creative community are
 - Create opportunities for participation for all residents – supporting programmes that enable people to tap into their inner creativity
 - Celebrate the stories, people, and spaces of Eastleigh – so that the makers and doers of the past can be part of the fresh story of the future.
23. This means focusing on impacts that are:
 - Authentic: Enable current residents to feel more connected to culture and creativity and empowered to contribute, and future residents see the attraction of the area by the development of the Eastleigh USP, both in message and regeneration, taking its authentic heritage and personality

- **Equal:** Creating a place where cross service working, inclusivity, supporting Creatives/Makers, and addressing areas like health inequalities and access are fundamental aspects of strategic development
- **Amplified:** A place where venues, parks, and spaces to feel better utilised and energised by new cultural activity, new programmes, and new partnerships. Where culture is powering up a better night-time and visitor economy
- **Connected:** Where Hampshire, wider stakeholders, businesses, creatives, and residents benefit from Eastleigh's position as a borough that can act as broker, effectively seek out and manage relationships, and act as effective leaders in collaboration

Next steps

24. Initial data will be analysed by the EBC team and community consultation will be carried out in 2021/22 Q4. The results of this will lead to the creation of a new Arts and Culture Strategy and implementation plan for Eastleigh in Q1 2022.

Financial Implications

25. The Strategy has no implications above existing service and project budgets.

Risk Assessment

26. The Culture strategy is key to ensuring the Council achieves the Health and Wellbeing objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. By not having a strategy the Council risk not clearly articulating it's commitment to address the emerging challenges in the Borough nor will it demonstrate how it intends to monitor it's delivery of agreed objectives and actions. It could ultimately mean opportunities to improve health outcomes for residents are missed.

Equality and Diversity Implications

27. The Equality Act is not relevant to the decision in this report as this paper is seeking early engagement with Policy and Performance and not seeking a decision.
28. Therefore, it is considered that for this decision the Equality Duty does not need to be addressed and an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has not been carried out. However, an EqIA will be generated within the creation of the new Arts and Culture Strategy.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications

29. There are no climate or environmental implications of this report. However the new Arts and Culture Strategy will outline how the objectives contribute to the climate and environmental emergency.

Conclusion

30. The research stage for the new strategy is still in progress and the proposed themes are subject to change. The Panel is invited to comment and feedback as part of early engagement.

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Appendices Attached: None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

List Background Papers: None.