

Report of the Assistant Director Communities & Equalities

Cultural Strategy: Update

Summary

1. This report provides an update on the development of a cultural strategy for York for the period 2019 – 2025.

Recommendation

2. The committee is asked to comment on the emerging vision and key ideas for the strategy with particular reference to:
 - Which of the 15 key ideas they consider to be the most important to prioritise for implementation
 - Which they consider it would be most appropriate for the council to be involved in
3. The committee's feedback will inform the subsequent report to the Executive.

Background

4. Following a review of the *Impact of Arts & Culture on the Economy* by the Economy and Place Policy Development Committee, the Executive agreed, in January this year that a cultural strategy for the city should be progressed. Under the Council's leadership this strategy will be steered by the Cultural Leaders Group, and ultimately adopted by the Council on behalf of the city.
5. The Council provided a sum of £38k to support the process. The contract to undertake the work was let to ArtReach with the work being led by David Hill.
6. Following an initial desktop research period, the strategy-making began in earnest on 19 June with an ambition-raising workshop. This was attended by representatives of the cultural organisations in

the city including the Council. The Council's representation included the Chair of this committee.

7. One-to-one meetings with key stakeholders took place in July through focus groups and other events covering:
 - Artists and practitioners
 - Festival organisers
 - Cultural enablers
 - Community arts organisations

Engagement was undertaken with young people, older people, and our diverse communities including rural ones.

8. Feedback workshops took place on 23 October to present back the ideas generated in the initial process. The emerging strategy will be further refined as a result of these workshops.

The Vision 2019 – 2025

9. The vision proposed, following the consultation, is that:

York brings together outstanding, internationally renowned heritage with a cutting-edge contemporary approach to creativity.

By 2025 York will be internationally recognised for its unique interface between exceptional heritage and contemporary art.

Key Ideas that inform the Vision

10. The following key ideas were generated through the engagement process. They were presented at the 23 October feedback sessions (and may be further updated and refined in the light of feedback at those sessions):
 - i. Ensure that major developments – Castle Gateway, York Central, Deans Park and the Guildhall (along with potential new archaeological initiatives) all bring substantial, embedded arts and heritage ingredients and place-making.
 - ii. Alongside these international place-making developments, York will embed the concept of “every child in the city is an artist”.
 - iii. York to become recognised as a national pioneer and innovator for Arts and Heritage for Health and Wellbeing

activity, with particular focus on young people's mental health and the needs of an ageing population.

- iv. The rivers Ouse and Foss, and their riverside locations, will be developed as an attractive and popular canvas for arts and heritage activity and events.
- v. A regular and dynamic programme of high-quality twilight activity to be established, including animation of the public realm.
- vi. The universities' communities will be further embedded within the cultural offer – with an increased osmosis of artists / practitioners and audiences/participants between Higher York and the city and its neighbourhood areas.
- vii. An effective and embracing network will be established for artists, musicians, designers, makers and practitioners in the city.
- viii. Facilitate a significant increase in making, studio and workshop space in York (including rehearsal and music studio space), contributing to an increase in the cultural and wider economy.
- ix. York will reach the top 5 in the UK Local Authority league table of cultural engagement for its residents and will score higher in the EU Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor. It will achieve a database / pool of 10,000 committed cultural volunteers.
- x. The cultural offer will be highlighted within York City branding, the Vision and international profile reflecting the unique arts/heritage interface, making a fresh and loud statement of cultural and visual identity.
- xi. York to establish a special cultural relationship with china, Chinese culture and York's Chinese community, as a focus for its approach to international relations.
- xii. Establish an open and comprehensive arts and Heritage Forum.

- xiii. Complete and implement a city-wide Marketing and Communications Strategy for arts and heritage (promoting the Vision and City of Media Arts brand).
 - xiv. Develop enhanced cultural leadership with increased capacity to implement the Strategy.
 - xv. York to seek to achieve UNESCO World Heritage Status and by 2025 will have two UNESCO designations.
11. Further background regarding these ideas will be provided at the meeting.

Embedded Priorities

12. The following cross-cutting priorities are proposed:
- Sharing York's story
 - Enhanced cultural collaboration
 - Increased and widened engagement
 - Development and retention of cultural talent
 - Partnership working is fundamental to our approach, providing a transparent and democratic platform for culture from which all voices can be heard
13. Over-arching outcomes will be:
- We aim to ensure that all citizens of York, irrespective of age or background, are proud to be engaged with our arts and heritage offer
 - Artists and creatives will increasingly find that York offers unprecedented and inclusive opportunities and empowerment
 - As part of One Yorkshire and Leeds City Region we will play a unique role in this rich and vibrant cultural landscape

Next Steps

14. By December the strategy will have been informed by feedback from the public forums and from this committee, and by further review from the Cultural Leaders Steering Group. In its provisional form it will be ready for presentation to the Executive in January 2019.
15. The intention is that whilst support is given to the provisional Strategy (enabling important development work to move ahead), the

Strategy will continue to be refined (and key strands developed) through the period January to July 2019, to align with the process for completion of new council led branding and completion of a refreshed Economic Strategy for the city. This will include development timelines, key outcomes and, where appropriate, detailed action plans.

16. A final version of the Strategy will be endorsed in summer 2019.

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	✓	Date	25.10.18.
Wards Affected:				All ✓
For further information please contact the author of the report				

Abbreviations

EU- European Union

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation