

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.

### **Background**

2. 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 developed with the cultural sector, steered by the Cultural Leaders Group, and ultimately adopted by the Council on behalf of the city.
3. The Council subsequently provided a sum of £38k to support the process.
4. The Council's SLA with Make It York contains a requirement for MIY to provide a "secretariat" to the Cultural Leaders Group to drive the process for ward and to ensure that the process delivers against the agreed brief.

### **Project Objectives**

5. York wants to make a **FRESH LOUD STATEMENT OF CULTURAL AND VISUAL IDENTITY** and the Cultural Strategy will help to achieve this aim. As stated in the York Economic Strategy 2016-2020 this is a priority because:
  - Culture and visual identity define perceptions of a city
  - We need to get people to sit up and take notice again

- York has achieved UNESCO City of Media Arts status and needs to maximise the benefits of this
- Major new development sites create significant opportunities for the future of the city

### **Project Outcomes**

6. Project outcomes are grouped under a number of themes:

#### ***A. Informed Choices:***

7. The Cultural Strategy should map (and benchmark) our infrastructure and activities and make the case for our cultural impact and development. This will identify the need and opportunities for culture through an objective and evaluated understanding of the current cultural offer.

8. Outcomes:

- York will have an evidence base to demonstrate cultural impact and excellence to inspire funders, policy-makers and politicians to invest and engage in and with the city

#### ***B. Engagement***

9. The Cultural Strategy will support and emphasize engagement, which will encourage participation (e.g. volunteers) as well as audience attendance in cultural activity. Audiences to engage are York residents and visitors (all ages and backgrounds) as well as national and international audiences.

10. Outcomes:

- The people of York are active participants in cultural activity
- The people of York are strong advocates for culture in the city
- Visitors to York come to York specifically to engage with culture
- York will be democratic about culture honouring people's right to create and giving the public opportunities to curate culture
- A collaborative approach to audience development and engagement

#### ***C. Story***

11. The Cultural Strategy should make the most of our unique cultural assets in telling York's story as a cultural city. This shared narrative about culture would include an ever evolving cultural offer and

recognise the desire to develop and consistently offer something new.

12. Outcomes:

- York will have a coherent city narrative about culture for stakeholders
- York cultural organisations and City of York Council will be able to tell a shared cultural story
- York's cultural story will be contemporary, creative, and ambitious, proud of York as a place that is confident and ambitious about its place in the world and about its future

***D. Collaborate***

13. The Cultural Strategy will set out to enhance collaboration across the city in order to create synergy greater than the individual parts. Benefits of collaboration will include generating new ideas, attracting greater levels of financial support, raising awareness, establishing networks, sharing insight and best practice as well as coalescing around themes. We also wish to partner with others regionally, nationally and internationally to deliver culture beyond our boundaries.

14. It will include an education pledge by the cultural sector working together to ensure that every school child in York gets to experience the full range of York's Cultural Offer, working through the CEP.

15. Outcomes:

- Cultural organisations will collaborate on audience development and marketing supported by City of York Council (MIY)
- Cultural organisations would work together towards shared cultural priorities for the city (including co-ordinating funding bids)

***E. Ambition***

16. The Cultural Strategy should be central to the delivery of the York Economic Strategy 2016-2020 in that we want to "make a fresh loud statement of cultural and visual identity". York needs to articulate its ambition effectively with the Strategy focussing on big ideas, 'import and export' of culture and increasing York's national impact. It should articulate the way the cultural sector contributes to the life of the city and the importance of the sector.

17. Outcomes:

- Culture will be central to place-making in York
- Culture will be central to York's international image achieved through large international events, strategic investment and its designation as a UNESCO City of Media Arts
- Cultural tourism will be welcomed and increased with residents acting as participants and key advocates
- A single, clear goal will be identified as a focus for ambition

***F. Talent***

18. The Cultural Strategy will address developing, retaining and attracting creative and cultural talent in York as a priority. It will consider how to develop and nurture the needs of the cultural sector (including arts and heritages) as well as the creative industries. This has been divided into three sections:

19. Opportunities and Outcomes:

- York's Cultural Strategy will help offset the current decline of creative subjects in schools
- We will make more of cultural assets to enrich cultural education
- The Cultural Strategy will improve recruitment to cultural and creative industries for graduates and school leavers
- We will improve retention and return of creative graduates
- The Cultural Strategy will support the retention of creative businesses in York
- The Cultural Strategy will work to reduce loss of local talent
- The cultural sector contribution adds to the York Economy

**Project Deliverables**

20. A focussed document with a small number of ambitious options to further the city's cultural offer, it will:

- Underpin and enable collaboration between cultural organisations for the greater good, setting out an approach to resourcing collaboration and joint projects, providing clarity and focus for collaborative action that supports City of York Council's goals
- Be actively used by the Cultural Leaders Group, external agencies, City of York Council, Make It York, external funders

and other organisations and demonstrate York's ability to deliver joined-up culture

- Convince funders of the city's strategic commitment to culture. A key outcome for the strategy is to increase funding in both type of funding and scale of funding achieved for culture in the city
- Provide evidence of York's cultural activity, including data about audiences.
- Engage educational providers
- Provide a long-term vision
- Include an action plan
- Be outcomes focused. The Cultural Strategy must include outcomes for local people, residents, and visitors as well as stakeholders and describe how people will experience culture in the city

21. The contract to undertake the work has been let to ArtReach and the work is being led by David Hill.

### **Progress**

22. 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.

23. One-to-one meetings with key stakeholders have taken place. The majority of the engagement will take place in July through focus groups and other events covering:

- Artists and practitioners
- Festival organisers
- Cultural enablers
- Community arts organisations

Care will be taken to ensure that there is engagement with young people, older people, and our diverse communities including rural.

24. Further workshops will be organised in September in order to seek feedback on emerging themes and ideas from the first phase of the engagement. Members of this committee will be invited.

25. The final draft of the strategy will then be developed over October with a view to it being complete by December.

**Recommendation**

26. The committee is asked to note the report.

Reason: To keep Members updated on the development of a cultural strategy for York.

**Contact Details**

<b>Authors:</b>	<b>Chief Officer responsible for the report:</b>			
Charlie Croft Assistant Director (Communities and Equalities)	Charlie Croft Assistant Director (Communities and Equalities)			
	<b>Report Approved</b>	✓	<b>Date</b>	2.5.18.
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		✓	
<b>For further information please contact the author of the report</b>				

**Background Papers**

None

**Appendices**

None