

Briefing Paper The work of York@Large since April 2016

Summary

York@Large currently consists of 12 members representing aspects of cultural activity in York, including Cllr Ayre, the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Tourism. We are supported by Charlie Croft, Assistant Director of Communities, Culture and the Public Realm, and Rosanne Morris.

As we have noted before, York@Large has no executive power and no budget. It exists to help City of York Council by building effective relationships between partners, by promoting relevant initiatives, and by reflecting on the performance of organisations within its remit, and on the situation of culture in York.

Our quarterly meetings over the last year have included discussion of York Central, the Guildhall, Blank Canvas, Aesthetica Short Film Festival and Aesthetica Art Prize, performance measures for the cultural sector, the York Explore Arts programme and the Impact of culture on Economy, Wellbeing and Place. Over the last year we have begun to focus more strategically on these three areas of impact. We aim to align the work that we, or our partners, are doing with the principal functions of the local authority and the outcomes identified in their strategies and plans, the York Economic Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the draft Local Plan.

Once we have identified the strategic priorities for each heading, we report only significant developments, assuming that projects or initiatives are proceeding as planned. For instance, of the 17 festivals referred to by Make It York under the heading City of Festivals, a large number are cultural or have a cultural element. Their improvement and development, while not being taken for granted, should be something we can assume will happen as a matter of course. Our focus is on initiatives that are of strategic value and/or have the capacity to be transformational in their impact.

This report summarises our work in the past year and proposed an revised view of the current position of the Cultural Sector which the Council may wish to consider.

Culture and Economy

Make It York noted in 2016 that York's Economic Strategy (2016-20) has the creative industries at its heart. Telling the 'better story' that

avoids the economic and social decline of the city entails setting targets for growth for priority sectors.

As part of the ambition that led to the UNESCO designation in 2014 we aimed to double the size of the creative economy from £164m to £329m by 2025. To do this York must dramatically increase the number of creative enterprises in the city as well as enhancing the activity and reputation of its arts and heritage organisations.

York@Large advised CYC on the shape of Make It York and contributed a number of items to its initial work programme. Two of these were the **York Culture Awards**, and an 'infographic' that describes the sector and provides a benchmark for future performance. The first edition of the infographic, **York's Culture Sector**, was based on 2013/14 data and will be replaced by an updated edition this year. The first York Culture Awards, which took place at the Central Methodist Church on the anniversary of the UNESCO designation in December, brought fresh attention to the energy and excellence of the sector in eleven award categories, from arts education and participation to festivals and production in every artform and medium. York@Large continues to act as an advisory group for MakeltYork, whose Managing Director and Cultural Development Officer attend meetings.

The trade fair for Yorkshire's priority sectors, **Venturefest**, delivered by Make It York for the first time in 2016, attracted 127 exhibitors and 1800 visitors, a good proportion of them interested in the creative sector. It is estimated that over £1m of business was generated on the day. As the cultural sector's Interface project also demonstrated in 2015, events of this kind enable York businesses to raise their profile with potential customers who otherwise tend to go out of region, or to London, for their needs.

The **Guild of Media Arts** has swiftly reached 200 subscribing members making it one of the largest as well as one of the newest Guilds in York. The Guild is charged with protecting and promoting the UNESCO designation, which it does by, among other things, working towards Mediale, an international biennial festival of media arts, through support for the York Cultural Education Partnership, and a range of sector business support activities. Current planning priorities include apprenticeships, a timebank initiative with Sheffield, Leeds and Hull colleagues, and closer collaboration with Creative York (SCY) on events.

In its first year the Guild has successfully transferred the management of its core operations from Make It York to a Court of nine members, chaired by the Master. Support continues to be provided by Make It York for events and communications. The Guild will shortly be incorporated as a Community Interest Company (CIC), enabling us to apply for funding independently and to establish a contractual relationship with Mediale and with Make It York.

The appointment of Tom Higham as Creative Director for Mediale and the recent announcement of the first programme elements are significant steps towards the first festival in 2018.

Vespertine recently completed a two year programme of 16 innovative art events, taking place 'between the hours of work and play', often in unexpected places, and always involving new partnerships between arts and heritage organisations. There were direct benefits for the 'evening economy' such as increased visitor numbers, and enhanced awareness of the partners' 'normal' programmes. Some 8000 people attended events, which were created by 21 cultural partners across the city. There is a substantial, relatively young, audience from across the UK engaging with Vespertine through social media.

Indirect impacts arose from this more collaborative way of working. For instance as one partner publicly commented, stronger relationships made it easier for organisations to assist one another to retain visitors and public profile in the wake of the Boxing Day 2016 floods.

The recent planning decisions in favour of the **Arts Barge** and the **Guildhall** move the city closer to the significant enhancement of its cultural amenities, as projected in earlier plans. The Arts Barge reintroduces to the city a vibrant resource for cultural participation of the highest quality. The Guildhall complex, by bringing together the capacity to host events in prestigious historic surroundings with distinctive, high quality office accommodation, could potentially attract tenants and users with global reach. The sector is also represented through York@Large on the York Central Community Forum, a long range consultative body for this ambitious project to create a 'new piece of the city'.

York **Cultural Education Partnership** has been developed with support from the Yorkshire 'bridge' organisation CapeUK, and is now a network of 120 individuals and organisations working in education in York at all levels, and across the cultural sector. An executive group is currently being established to take the project forward. The first awards to the city's Digital Adventurers, a Culture Week for all York schools, and York St John's '100 things you must do while in York', are early initiatives of the partnership.

The newly independent York Arts Education Service and the existing Music Hub are important elements of cultural education provision in York. The CEP is building a collaborative relationship with cultural organisations, artists and other agencies in the city.

There is a continuing need for strategic and operational collaboration across the cultural sector. Where once a local authority arts team might have provided this function it is now carried out through regular meetings of the **Cultural Leaders Group**, consisting of Chief Executives of the major cultural organisations (and those providing a cultural programme) in York. The Cultural Development Officer of Make It York provides support. Terms of reference and priorities were agreed in 2016.

The Group has shared forward programming information and set up communication channels within their organisations. A sub-group has already met to ensure that a consistent approach has been taken to the current National Portfolio funding round of Arts Council England. A second, ongoing, project will establish a core data set about York's culture attenders and visitors (National Centre for Early Music, York Museums Trust, York Theatre Royal, Pilot Theatre and Make It York).

Following Liz Page's departure in late 2016 for a post elsewhere the Group is appointing a new Chair. Under the leadership of the new Chair the Group will become a powerful collective voice with national agencies and funders as well as providing leadership on cultural initiatives, and developing a refreshed Cultural Strategy for York.

Culture and Wellbeing

York successfully completed its tenure as one of five 'locality projects' for the national Cultural Commissioning Programme funded by Arts Council England, giving a well-received final report in Manchester in 2016. With this experience behind them the Culture & Wellbeing Consortium, led by York Museums Trust, successfully tendered for a CYC contract to provide a **Pilot Cultural Commissioning Service** for one year, commencing in March 2017.

Discussion with CYC colleagues in Adult Social Care and Public Health, and with York CVS, helped us to set prevention and early intervention priorities around older people under the 'Ageing Well' element of the CYC Health & Wellbeing Strategy, the areas of the city with greatest health inequalities, and around mental health. We aim to work in close harmony with Local Area Coordination as it is introduced, to enhance the social prescription model currently in place, and to provide a mechanism that will ensure the quality and effectiveness of provision delivered by the sector.

A Coordinator has been appointed to deliver and expand the programme and to help ensure its continuation. A second CYC contract has been applied for in the field of mental health, and further opportunities to work with people in residential care are being explored.

York has an exceptional range of cultural 'assets' which, as the CCP demonstrated, has untapped potential to contribute to the wellbeing of the population. Supported by funding from Voluntary Arts England, an **Up for Arts** Broadcaster has been appointed by BBC Radio York. This initiative is intended to help people to 'self-refer' to the cultural activities in the pilot programme, complementing the referral through Priory Group GP practices currently being provided through the Social Prescription service. York@Large and a number of cultural organisations are also supporting the BBC's Get Creative campaign, which has aims which closely match those of the consortium.

Culture and Place

A sub-group of York@Large took forward the proposal that the national Arts in Place initiative should be discussed and, if agreed, adopted in York. Two **Bootham Meetings** have taken place in the last year. The first, well-attended, meeting, hosted by Bootham School in March, discussed presentations on how culture can contribute to the quality of place and considered what issues should be the priorities for York. A second meeting on the same format discussed issues arising from a presentation from Martin Grainger (Head of Strategic Planning), on the Local Plan.

In parallel with this activity the sub-group undertook to act as a 'critical friend' to the **York Local Plan** team as they work towards a public consultation draft. In February a 'charette' took place, involving 25 people with a wide range of professional expertise. They undertook a study of an area of York as if it was a brownfield site. The conclusions of the day-long event are contributing to the drafting of a topic paper on culture, which will form an appendix to the Local Plan when the draft is released in mid-2017.

In our discussion with Planning colleagues we have increasingly found that the term **Cultural Wellbeing** seems to describe the outcome that we wish for all of those who live, work, study in or visit the city. It is a term that has been gaining currency, not least since the National Planning Policy Framework cited it as one of 12 Core Principles

(Planning should ...) take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs. (DCLG March 2012)

Definitions are harder to come by. Recently Cherwell DC was commended for its Local Plan including The North West Bicester Cultural Wellbeing Strategy. This was a planning supplement for an Eco Town development that stressed the need for attention to the quality of the public realm.

A more generally applicable definition has been adopted by the New Zealand Government.

Cultural well-being is the vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through participation in recreation, creative and cultural activities and the freedom to retain interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions.

(Ministry for Culture and Heritage, New Zealand, 2015)

The definition usefully expresses the importance of institutions such as museums and libraries in preserving and interpreting the culture of the past and of other places, while also connecting the economic business of culture with the enjoyment of the contemporary arts. We should not perpetuate the false notion that the 'arts' and 'heritage' are in conflict. If contemporary culture is the 'present tense' of our heritage, then creativity represents its future.

Situation analysis

As the following diagram, which also originates with the New Zealand government, indicates, cultural wellbeing is often held to be one of four aspects of wellbeing, the others being Environmental, Social and Economic. Like Culture, Health and Education are tools that societies can use to improve outcomes for individuals and communities. As the diagram shows, culture contributes significantly to other forms of wellbeing and we might do well to be more aware of its potential. With York Environment Forum and York CVS we are exploring how these aspects of wellbeing interact in the York context.



Economic wellbeing, having generally been defined in supposedly 'objective' terms, such as GDP per head, is also undergoing reappraisal through projects such as RSA Inclusive Growth Commission. The commission's Its report, recently launched in Bradford, indicates the potential for 'key cities' such as York to lead in regional development.

Presentations to CYC have presented a consistent analysis of the threats that face the cultural sector. In summary these are

1. Decline in arts funding at all levels
2. Competition for visitors from other UK cities
3. Lack of coherent economic strategy for North

We have also previously presented a list of priorities for action and some potential solutions (which form the bulk of what is discussed above).

These are

1. Embed culture in strategies for wellbeing, place and economy
2. Refresh the image of York as a leading UK destination
3. Reconnect cultural policy across local authority boundaries in region
4. Develop a new York narrative with Arts Council England

The fourth point has additional strength given the emerging relationship between the Arts Council as the primary public funder of the arts in York and those cities and regions that have devolved powers. Our policy and strategy context is changing all the time. In particular the message from the Minister for the Northern Powerhouse that Yorkshire cannot make progress without addressing the regional collaboration and leadership issue, and his highlighting the role that culture can play, should spur us to concerted action. In the North East and in Greater Manchester culture is seen as vital to achieving coherent and effective devolution.

The response from the Arts Council to 'devo deals' was given in 2016. It seems clear that this describes the relationship ACE increasingly expects to have with any city, not just the 'combined authorities' and cities with devolved powers.

Where local authorities and combined authorities are in receipt of devolution deals with the government then we will engage positively and proactively with them in order to realise the potential value of the new powers, freedoms and flexibilities. This might include:

- Strategic engagement with new combined authority geographies in order to identify shared investment priorities and strategies to realise them;
- A commitment to approach each devolution deal as a 'fresh start' to clearly identify potential and new opportunities, for example whether devolution of NHS funding creates a public health commissioning opportunity, or whether new financial freedoms provide an opportunity to grow and retain value created locally through culture;

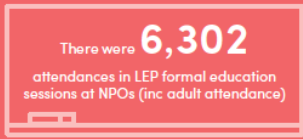
- Identifying new investment approaches which utilise new financial and fiscal instruments – with the potential for Arts Council investment to unlock their potential for the cultural sector;
- Development of new investment vehicles for the cultural sector, with support for innovative business and governance models;
- Defining Arts Council engagement with combined authority-wide delivery and strategic partnerships and organisations; and
- Formal consideration of whether the advent of a devolution deal and/or a combined authority necessitates changes in existing Arts Council engagement

Chris Bailey
9 March 2017

Engaging with Culture



of local authority areas for engagement with the Arts, with 52.7% of York's residents engaged with the arts (compared to 44.3% nationally)



3,057,079

visits to York's attractions

207,706

were educational visits (7.37%)

57%

of York's residents have visited a museum/gallery in the last 12 months (vs 51.5% national average)

91% of leisure visitors to York enjoy the ambiance of the city



71% visit the attractions

10% enjoy a festival or event while in York



4% go to a cultural performance

190,000

attended performances at York's NPOs

50.3%

of adults in York attended/participated in an arts event/activity at least 3 times in the last 12 mths (vs 43.8% national ave)

Impact of Culture

Annual investment in York's three NPO's is

£5,092,608



57% earned income

8% private giving

37% public subsidies



£1.84 per head

of population is invested in arts & culture by CYC and £6.71 per head invested by ACE

71%

of York residents say that cultural opportunities are important in making somewhere a good place to live

York's cultural, sporting & recreational economy is annually worth

£75,092,608

£8.81

The median hourly wage for someone working in arts, entertainment or recreation in York is £8.81 (compared to £8.50 in the retail sector, which employs more people than any other sector in York)

55%

of residents have volunteered in the last 12 months, with

33%

doing so at least once a month

Working in Culture

Across 21 attractions, the Association of Voluntary Guides & the VIC, there are estimated to be

2,100

volunteers in the tourism sector in York.



Recent community productions by the York Theatre Royal involved

1,700

volunteers in the 2012 Mystery Plays, over 700 in both Blood + Chocolate in 2013 & In Fog & Falling Snow in 2015

1,483 fte

on F/HE courses are following courses relating to culture in York's universities, 677 of whom graduated

412

business in heritage, creative industries & art sub sectors (6,489 York businesses = 6.4%)

University research in York is 'internationally recognised' in Music (YSJ & UY) & Drama, Dance & Performing Arts (YSJ) & 'internationally excellent' in Theatre Film & TV (UY)

3,200

jobs in heritage, creative industries & arts sub sectors (101,300 total employee jobs = 3.2%)

York's Culture Sector

Research data is available from:
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Make it York