

City of York Council
Learning & Culture Policy and Scrutiny Committee
21 March 2016

Report on the work of York@Large the Cultural Partnership since January 2015

This is a report on a year's work by a large range of partners in cultural development in York. It should be understood that, aside from the organisations represented on York@Large, there are many more working with us. Leadership in the cultural sector is widely distributed. The role of York@Large is to help ensure that partners are, as far as possible, sharing plans and information, and assisting one another to achieve objectives.

We were set up as part of Without Walls, which said
Our priorities for the future are to be:

1. Recognised internationally as a cultural city
2. A diverse, inclusive and cosmopolitan city
3. An active and participative city
4. A city of high quality spaces both public and private
5. A UNESCO Creative City for the Media Arts.

(Without Walls Strategy 2011-25)

In 2015 we said that our activities should help to

- Raise the profile of the sector
- Increase the impact of the sector on the economy, wellbeing and quality of place
- Develop the capacity of the sector

1. Raise the profile of the sector

Culture in York

The infographic is currently in the hands of the designer at Make It York. It is three sections, cultural 'assets', engagement in culture, and impact of culture. This first iteration is seen as setting a benchmark for the performance of the sector. The publication of Arts Council England's Active Lives data next year will enable us to judge the distance travelled since the last such exercise, in 2009.

Reliable information on the impacts of the sector is not readily obtained. However economic impact studies of specific impact give evidence of a highly productive sector. For instance, Aesthetica Short Film Festival 2015 generated £550k of additional value for the city, and attracted 28k attendances over

York Culture Awards

MakeltYork is managing the Awards, the presentation Ceremony for which will take place later this year on the anniversary of the UNESCO designation, 1 December. The website is live and accepting nominations in eleven categories.

<http://www.yorkcultureawards.com/york-culture-awards>

Sponsorship has been obtained for all categories with Benenden as headline sponsor. A lasting record of the event will be made. Arts Council funding has been applied for to support the commission of three new works.

Mediale

Mediale is a major international biennial that showcases media arts practice. It is one of the primary objectives of the Guild of Media Arts working with Make It York. A fundraising strategy and business plan is currently being prepared. This will involve an application for Arts Council support.

By 2020 we hope to be in a position to invite all representatives of all 116 Creative Cities in 54 countries to York for the second Mediale.

<http://www.cityofmediaarts.com/mediale-1/#medialeintro>

Increase the impact of the sector eg on the economy, education and skills, wellbeing and quality of place

Vespertine

The second and final year of Vespertine started with a very popular retrospective show of the first year's events at St Mary's. There is satisfactory progress on the projects' objectives, to enable collaboration across the sector, to increase the number of 'cultural tourists' and to bring diversity to the 'evening economy'. The group is still growing beyond its original 20 members and has a full schedule of Vespertines planned for the 'hours between work and play', that are in easily accessed places and free of charge.

<http://www.vespertineyork.com/>

Culture & Wellbeing in York

In Feb 2015 we applied successfully to become one of five national Locality Projects of the NCVO Cultural Commissioning Programme. The consortium of seven organisations is led by York Museums Trust. A consultant has worked with us this year to map the priorities of the major commissioning bodies in York, to devise a common approach to interventions based on the Six Ways to Wellbeing, and to explore opportunities for cultural commissioning in York. On 16 March York and Manchester locality projects will report back to a national seminar. We are currently working with CYC (Public Health and Social Care) on a pilot to consist of 4-6 projects designed to test the value of our approach after which we hope to see this built into the mainstream.

<http://www.artspfessional.co.uk/magazine/article/developing-narrative-people-communities-and-place>

Quality of Place

Earlier this year we began a conversation with CYC Development Services about the cultural contribution to Quality of Place through the Local Plan. We have been invited to act as a 'critical friend' to the process as it continues.

We have been contributed to discussions about a planning framework for York Central. A cultural organisation (NRM) is at the heart of this development. This is true also for the Southern Gateway, where the plans of English Heritage for Clifford's Tower, and of York Museums Trust, are an essential aspect of the 'new' quarters that are being created.

With Beam, an national organisation specialising in the arts and environment, York Architectural Association and Bootham School we have planned a public event, Culture at the Heart of York's Future Development, to take place on 21 March, to raise the profile of culture as an aspect of planning and development.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/public-discussion-culture-at-the-heart-of-yorks-future-development-tickets-22041749466>

York Cultural Education Partnership

This new partnership is being established with support from the regional Bridge Organisation, Cape UK. It includes CYC Education and Skills, higher and further education, schools and the cultural sector. As the first project of Digital Adventurers it is one of the first priorities of the Guild of Media Arts. With the support of the Lord Mayor the first primary school media arts workshop will take place after Easter.

Develop the capacity of the sector

The Guild of Media Arts was formally launched at Hiscox last December. We already have over 100 members. The first meeting on 11 February at the National Centre for Early Music was attended by over 80 members. They enthusiastically endorsed the key projects, Mediale and Digital Adventurers.

Members also offered practical support for apprenticeships in the sector. An Arts Council supported scheme managed by the CYC is coming to an end. There is also interest in related skills development models from other partners; Screen Yorkshire through the BFI funded Report currently underway, and Aesthetica through its Talent Development Programme.

The first Court has been elected and will meet in the next few weeks. The other Guilds have given a warm welcome to the first new trade guild in York for 700 years.

<http://www.cityofmediaarts.com/guild-1/#guildintro>

Useful Knowledge workshop series

The Universities have collaborated to develop the series which is hosted by York St John. The first workshop was held on 13 July and was on the subject of 'everyday participation'. Other meetings were planned, but have been delayed until funding issues are clarified.

York Cultural Programme Group

Seventeen major programming organisations attended the first meeting on 4 February to share their programme and development ideas for the next two years. The meeting was supported by Make It York and the group is jointly led by the National Railway Museum and English Heritage. Future meetings will establish shared themes for development. This is a vital component of the cultural 'narrative' for York which can be used as a framework by other partners or funding agencies.

Workspace

Current developments include the Guildhall, Blank Canvas (Stonebow, Gillygate and Acomb), Hiscox and ACollective

Workspace that is suitable for the sector is at a premium in York. ACollective is an example of a refurbished shared office for small creative businesses at affordable rent. Hiscox formed a business club and interviewed a number of creative businesses. Blank Canvas, based in Leeds takes over empty buildings working with developers to make temporary accommodation for a wide range of creative workers.

Stonebow, now about to be handed over, has housed Arts Barge, Plastic Fortune, York St John Fine Art and others.

The Guildhall is of great significance to the sector as it combined managed workspace, restaurant and cafe and a programmable venue, potentially offering for the first time in York a real presence for the media arts. We are involved in the development process through the Project Board.

Business to business

Inspired by the UNESCO designation Shakespeare's Globe, the organisers of Interface held the 2015 version of the annual cultural business event at the Guildhall in York. National cultural organisations met York based suppliers of creative services, resulting in a number of first time contracts for them at this level.

The regional business event Venturefest has been acquired by Make It York offering an opportunity to enhance the profile of York for creative businesses throughout Yorkshire.

York@Large

A recruitment process was undertaken at the beginning of 2015. A public advertisement for new members resulted in 13 expressions of interest. Following meetings with all applicants three new members were appointed. Three members resigned.

For the time being York@Large remains a CYC Committee. Our proceedings are published on the website. Comparators with other successful cities indicate that a cultural partnership is essential in presenting a convincing 'narrative' about the city to outsiders and guests. At present York@Large also provides a vital platform for working with statutory commissioning bodies within CYC and elsewhere.

Chris Bailey
9 March 2016