

Cheshire East Council Cultural Framework

1. Who is the Cultural Framework for?

Cheshire East Council's goal for Culture is to **transform lives and places through access to great culture**. Our role is to enable the economy, communities and places of Cheshire East to benefit from engagement with culture, contributing to wellbeing, quality of place, creative skills and prosperity. This is achieved through the provision and commissioning of arts, heritage, museums, creative media, festivals and events. (CEC's Strategic Priorities for Culture - See appendix A).

The Cultural Framework is designed to be widely used in Cheshire East by Cheshire East Council, the Council's partners, national agencies and stakeholders, the voluntary sector, commissioners of public services for the people of Cheshire East, and cultural organisations and individuals in the cultural sector.

Culture can empower and influence in various ways that help to shape:

- Relationships between individuals and groups
- Shared memories, experience and identity
- Diverse cultural, faith and historic backgrounds
- Social standards, values and norms
- What we consider valuable to pass on to our children

These effects have individual, economic and social dimensions that can be fleeting, life-changing or affect successive generations, and which we are mainly interested in when we commission culture for outcomes. We believe that culture has a significant role to play in bringing these benefits to the people of Cheshire East.

2. What We Mean by Culture

For the purpose of the Cultural Framework, culture is defined as: arts, public art, heritage, museums, festivals & events, creative media, creative and digital industries.

3. Quality of Place

Quality of Place is a strategic priority for the Council and recognised as a key economic driver by the Local Strategic Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The cultural offer, quality of our natural & built environment, vitality of our towns and reputation for business, creativity, educational standards, lifestyle and wellbeing all contribute to Quality of Place. Distinctiveness of identity influences perceptions and supports place marketing opportunities. As well as supporting the prosperity of its residents and businesses, 'quality of place' can help create and communicate the 'identity' of a place.

Culture has a pivotal role in contributing to or achieving each of these elements of Quality of Place.



Achieving Quality of Place

4. The Framework

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Framework is to:

- a) Inform a cohesive approach across the Council to engage with the cultural sector to ensure delivery of Quality of Place.
- b) Develop a comprehensive understanding of the benefits of engaging with the Cultural sector across public sector commissioners and Council services.
- c) Develop a cohesive approach across the Council, to engage with the cultural sector to ensure high quality outcomes for specific programmes of work.
- d) Support the Cultural sector to engage with Public Sector commissioners and Council services.
- e) Facilitate closer relationships with the Cultural sector to maximise opportunities for investment in cultural activity in Cheshire East.

4.2 How it will be used

This framework is intended as a guide for Council services in delivering Quality of Place through Cultural interventions and the Council's priorities for Culture. It is designed to inform how the Cultural sector can be engaged by different service areas, to deliver specific objectives and in particular to inform the work of the Council's Cultural Economy Service in delivery of the Council's outcomes.

4.3 Council Priorities for Culture

The Council has adopted a set of priorities to inform the commissioning of cultural provision and services. These are set out at appendix A. These priorities are intended to inform all instances where the Council will commission or directly provide cultural activity in order to deliver Quality of Place.



Cultural Priorities

4.4 The approach

To help achieve its goal for Culture, **‘to transform lives and places through access to great culture’**, the Council can enable engagement with culture that contributes to wellbeing, quality of place, creative skills and prosperity. Cultural activity, engagement and interventions should:

- **Help to achieve the Council’s stated goal and priorities for culture**
- **Be delivered by appropriate, quality providers in an efficient, effective way that delivers for our residents.**
- **Seek opportunities to add value, capacity or resource.**
- **Maintain and conserve quality and standards and seeking betterment where possible.**
- **Be outcome focused, supporting the quality of place agenda and the Council’s outcomes**

This can be achieved in a number of ways through direct engagement by the Council, through partnerships or through commissioning and other delivery mechanisms. To maintain quality and ensure that the Council is best advised on appropriate mechanisms and providers, the Cultural economy Service will support services in delivering against this framework as well as its own direct service provision.

5. Delivering the Framework

5.1 Role of the Cultural Economy Service

This describes how the Cultural Economy Service will use core budget to commission cultural services in line with the Council’s priorities for Cultural provision. In addition, the Cultural Economy Team will be involved in the design of all tenders that potentially involve cultural activity, and in the ensuing processes of selection, appointment and evaluation.

The responsibilities of the Cultural Economy Team as sponsors of the Framework are threefold; to monitor, evaluate and report on progress towards the Framework objectives; to work collaboratively with commissioners and commissioning bodies including through cross-sector working groups; and to develop the capacity of the cultural sector to take up the additional opportunities for funding with the Framework.

5.2 What We Mean by Commissioning

Bringing about development and change in communities is often a slow process and it may involve testing different approaches and evaluating their impact. The outcome we want to achieve may only come about as the result of a number of initiatives being commissioned over quite a long period of time. When we talk about ‘commissioning for outcomes’ we are drawing attention to the impact of the activity on those it is intended to benefit. Commissioning therefore always involves those who are receiving the service, or engaging in the activity, in helping to shape it. Within the context of the cultural development framework we define commissioning

as, the provision of a quality service/s for individuals and communities to address needs and inequalities within the resources available.

Having decided the best way to achieve outcomes, the council will then contract with an individual or organisation to provide the service. Contracts for cultural activity may be issued by any of the commissioning bodies referred to in the Framework. The Cultural Economy Team should be involved in the design of all specifications that potentially involve cultural activity, in order to ensure quality as part of the selection, appointment and evaluation processes.

5.3 Delivery Mechanisms

a) Restricted Funding– Cultural Organisations

The Cultural Economy service is keen to support development of a vibrant and sustainable cultural economy in the Borough. To this end, and in line with Council priorities, we will commission a number of Cultural organisations to deliver a range of services or programmes of work. These commissions may last between 1 and 4 years and are likely to be strategic in nature and part of a wider cultural economy, supported by Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery programmes and will form part of an ongoing strategic conversation with these bodies. Invitations to submit proposals for this commissioning strand will be issued on an annual basis. Organisations may only have one restricted funding operating at any given time.

b) Strategic Commissioning

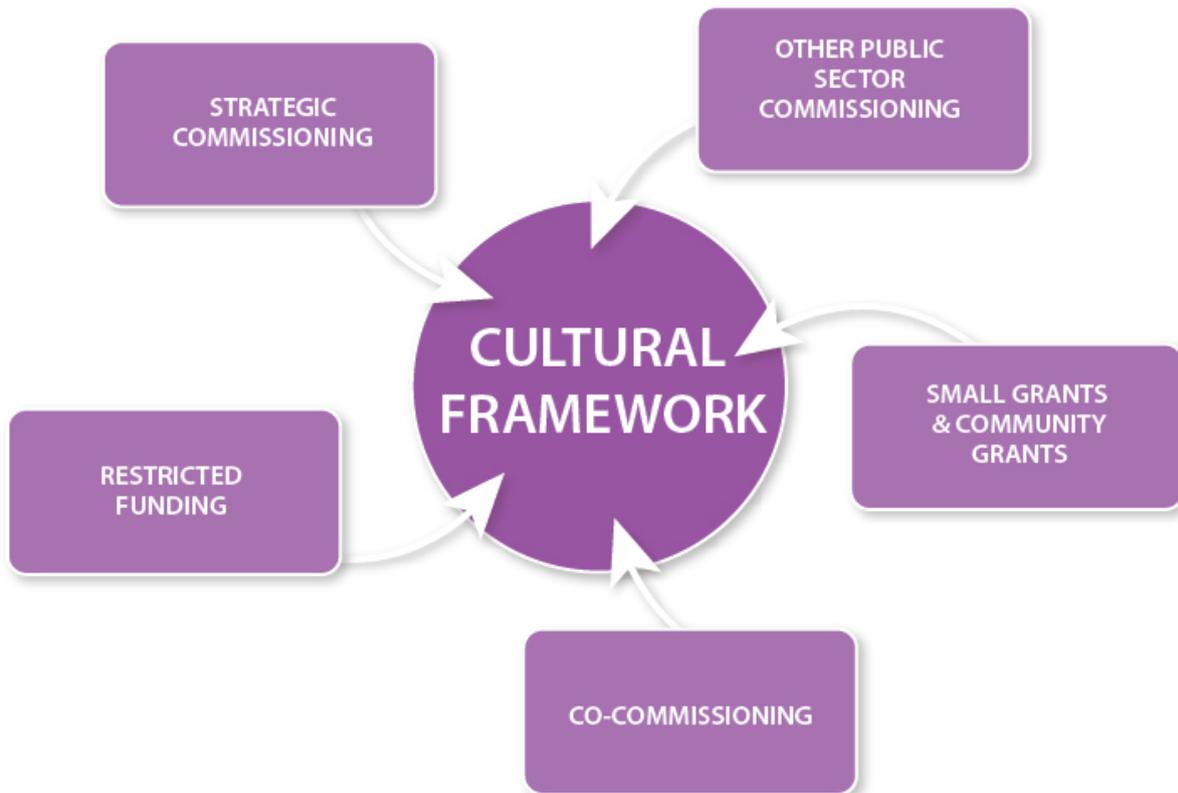
The service will, from time to time, as appropriate to need and available budgets, issue invitations for tenders for specific interventions or programmes of work. These will be in response to an identified strategic need, again, in line with service and Council priorities. Invitations to submit tenders for these contracts will be issued on the basis of need.

c) Small Cultural Grants

Smaller grants may be issued to Cultural organisations or other, constituted, not-for-profit organisations wishing to undertake a cultural activity. This is likely to be conducted through the Council's existing Community Grants programme although at times, and where specific need is demonstrated, it may be undertaken by the Cultural Economy Service in line with published priorities. When these opportunities are available they will be published and open applications will be invited.

d) Co-commissioning

From time to time there may be opportunities for the Cultural Economy team to partner with other commissioning services, either within the Council or external, in order to maximise available budgets and meet a wider identified need. We will actively seek out these opportunities and will publish as and when they are available.



Delivering the Framework

5.4 Use of the Framework by Other Services

Any service intending to commission or contract cultural provision should refer to the Council's priorities for Culture (Appendix A) to use as a guide to what should be prioritised. The framework and its priorities may also be of value as a guide for other commissioning bodies. The Council's Cultural Economy Service is able to support engagement with the Cultural sector and to provide help and assistance to ensure that appropriate specifications, tender documents, selection and evaluation criteria are in place.

5.5 Monitoring and Measuring Success

Depending on its complexity, the evaluation of the resulting contract should take account of the outcome, the benefit that is conferred on residents, visitors, businesses, and other target groups. When asking how successful a commission has been we may, for instance, not just want to know about the number of people taking part, but how they or their community were affected as a result. This would enable the services that are provided to be placed in the wider strategic context of Cheshire East.

Striving for the highest quality in everything we commission, or provide, is of the utmost importance in achieving outcomes. The Quality Benchmark we will use draws

on Arts Council England's guidance on the subject. They offer areas to consider throughout the life of projects, from planning to evaluation, and ensure that the voice of communities remains firmly at the heart of activities.

When evaluating bids we will expect applicants to explain how they address the following aspects of quality where they are relevant to the nature and size of the commissioned service or project.

- Striving for excellence
- Emphasising authenticity
- Being inspiring, and engaging
- Ensuring a positive audience experience
- Actively involving people
- Providing a sense of personal progression
- Developing a sense of ownership and belonging

Detailed evaluation criteria will be made available along with tenders or funding opportunities and requirement will be scaled appropriately according to size of investment.

6. Sector Support

Cheshire East Cultural Forum

For the Framework to succeed, cultural organisations will require the capacity to engage with partners and with commissioners. Building their capacity includes creating the structures and systems, identifying the right people and embedding skills so that they are better able to meet their objectives and engage in consultation and planning, manage community projects and take part in partnerships and community enterprises.

In the first instance this will be delivered through the establishment of a Cultural Forum. The Cultural Economy Team will provide support and co-ordination for this forum in the early stages. Following the first year, the group will determine the best way to proceed.

The functions of the Forum will be to:

- Evolve a collective voice for culture in Cheshire East
- Discover and share commissioning opportunities
- Identify partners to collaborate with
- Share and develop best practice
- Work together to lever in funding for Cultural activity
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The Cultural Economy team will also work with the forum in its early stages to identify training needs of the sector in relation to commissioning and responding to tenders and to introduce the Framework.

7. Resources

The Framework is designed to encourage flexible and adaptable use of available resources. Wherever possible, opportunities to lever in additional funding from external sources will be pursued. Partnership working and collaborative

commissioning will also be explored fully and put into place wherever possible in order to maximise available resources. In this way the Framework will seek to ensure value for money.

Appendices

Appendix A – Cheshire East Council Cultural Priorities

Appendix B - Other Public Sector Commissioning Priorities

Appendices

Appendix A – Cheshire East Council Cultural Priorities

Purpose:

To transform lives and places through access to great culture ¹.

Enabling the economy, communities and places of Cheshire East to benefit from engagement with culture, contributing to lifestyle, wellbeing, quality of place, creative skills and prosperity.

Achieved by: *Championing and supporting cultural activities which;*

- Promote Cheshire East as a high quality place to live, work, visit and invest
- Support a sustainable cultural ecology which contributes to local and regional economies
- Ensure stimulating and aspirational experiences for residents and visitors
- Enhance the quality of life and wellbeing of local people

We Will Prioritise: *(Overarching)*

- Activities targeted at young people, older people and people with a disability
- Activities in deprived areas of the Borough
- Activities which support economic growth and regeneration

(Specific)

- Activities which support priority regeneration areas of Crewe and Macclesfield
- Activities which provide pathways into work and development for young people
- Activities which support our creative and digital media agenda
- Activities which are sustainable
- Activities which are innovative or ground breaking and of high quality
- Activities which are focused on prevention rather than cure
- Activities that support Community Cohesion

Nb ¹ Culture: arts, heritage, museums, festivals & events, creative media, Creative and digital industries

Appendix B - Other Public Sector Commissioning Priorities

As part of the consultation process in 2015 the cultural economy team and its consultants (Arts Interlink) met the members of the Joint Commissioning Forum and invited the commissioning managers to describe their current priorities. Every public service commissioner produces a detailed strategy document that would normally be the basis for discussion when a service is designed or redesigned. These are the principal commissioning bodies and their priorities that were described at the time:

Adult Social Care: The emphasis is on helping people over 18 to live well for longer. As the population includes a substantial number of older people this means a focus on independent living, helping people to stay active and to avoid loneliness. Service delivery is increasingly likely to be through personalised budgets.

Public Health: In April 2013, responsibility for local public health functions transferred to Cheshire East Council. Alongside mandatory responsibilities such as providing public health advice to local NHS commissioners and information and advice to address health protection threats, responsibility for the commissioning of a number of public health services was also transferred. Public Health has commissioned an Integrated Wellness and Lifestyle Support System (Passport 2 Health), assessing individual need for access to primary prevention, lifestyle services, information and advice. Other preventative services such as the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme, Substance Misuse Services and Infection Control services are also commissioned.

Children and Young People: The emphasis is on respecting the voice of the child in planning and delivery stages of service provision. Services provided are often statutory, but communication and advocacy are important factors in successful implementation.

Police and Crime: The emphasis is on helping people to feel safer, addressing re-offending rates and undertaking early intervention through engagement with schools.

Partnerships and Communities: The emphasis is working on inequalities in wards of Cheshire East through community hubs that provide access to a wide range of services e.g. community grants, improving disaster resilience and empowerment.

Regeneration: The emphasis is on place shaping as an approach with the aim of increasing footfall in town centres through the strategic use of assets. Eventual outcomes include increased and better quality employment in e.g. science, rail and creative industries. Geographical regeneration priorities for the Council are Macclesfield and Crewe.

Visitor Economy: The emphasis is on developing the distinct identity of Cheshire East for the visitor, building on local assets and addressing skills weaknesses in the hospitality sector. Festivals are seen as an important tool in engaging communities, creative practitioners, volunteers and visitors in raising the profile of the area.