

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	15 October 2012
Report of:	Strategic Director – Places and Organisational Capacity
Subject/Title:	Culture Policy –Notice of Motion
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor R Bailey

1.0 Report Summary

1.1 This report considers the Notice of Motion on Cultural Policy (proposed by Councillors K Edwards and D Flude) sent to Cabinet for determination.

1.2 The Motion is : -

“As Unitary Councils can and should be a powerful support to the sense of community in the area for which they have responsibility, Cheshire East Council will develop a cultural policy, that will support the rich ancient and industrial heritage of the borough, encourage the enjoyment of and the participation in the creative and performing arts and ensure a full range of facilities to enable residents to experience and enjoy a rich cultural life”.

2.0 Decision Requested

2.1 That Cabinet note the proposals for the production of a Cultural Policy to guide Council support to this area of work in the future.

2.2 That Cabinet note the work currently being undertaken to support the delivery of a strong cultural sector within Cheshire East .

2.3 That Cabinet note the response to the Notice of Motion.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Through the work of the Council’s Arts Heritage and Cultural Services team either in direct service provision or through partnership working with local cultural groups and organisations arts and culture continue to play a

key role in supporting a range of policies to improve the health and wellbeing of the local communities of Cheshire East. The production of a cultural policy will ensure that this support remains focussed.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 N/A

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 N/A

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 The production of a Cultural Policy Statement and Action Plan will lead to an efficient use of resources and give a clear direction for service delivery.

7.0 Financial Implications (Authorised by the Director of Finance and Business Services)

7.1 The recommendation does not have a financial implication.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

8.1 This is a discretionary area of work for the Council. Legal implications may arise from the activities proposed as part of the development of a policy. These will need to be considered as part of the policy development process.

9.0 Risk Management

9.1 There are no associated risks with the recommendation.

10.0 Background and Options

10.1 It is widely acknowledged that Cultural activity brings communities together whether this is in theatres, our community halls, on the streets or in our rural villages. Furthermore culture in its widest definition offers local people and visitors the chance to explore and express the distinctiveness and diversity of the Borough. Within Cheshire East there is already a year round wide programme of events and festivals, most of them being community led that supports this. Most recently this was seen in the successful contribution of the arts to the Olympic Torch Relay as it passed through Cheshire East.

10.2 In order to maximise the contribution that the arts and culture can bring to both sustaining and improving the quality of life in Cheshire East the Portfolio Holder has initiated the development of a Cultural Policy Statement and Action Plan to take into review a range of service areas and key outcomes within the Council to ensure that there is a focus on their contribution. The key outcomes will include : -

Participation – more opportunities to take an active part in arts and cultural activities both in local communities and as a mechanism to support other Council priorities including working with older people and improving health and wellbeing.

Conservation of the natural and built heritage of Cheshire East and its use for cultural activities.

Sustainable infrastructure, including strong partnerships that can help develop our cultural offer.

Promotion of the Borough as a place where arts and culture are valued and can be enjoyed.

Employment opportunities through inward investment and in the culture sector.

It is intended that this piece of work will be brought back to Cabinet for approval in due course with an implementation date of April 2013.

- 10.3 One of the key outcomes of the policy will be to ensure the future sustainability of facilities used for the production and enjoyment of arts and cultural activity that are currently owned and managed by the Council. This currently includes Knutsford Civic Centre including the Studio Cinema, and Crewe Lyceum Theatre. Following previous Council decisions, the aim for both buildings has been in recent months to seek suitable commercial partners to undertake their management on a long term lease arrangement. Cabinet will be aware that the Knutsford Civic Centre and Studio Cinema has recently transferred to Curzon Cinemas who will be looking to invest in updating the projection facility at the Centre which will hopefully protect its future for cinema exhibition. Cabinet approval is also being sought to confirm a preferred bidder for the management of the Crewe Lyceum Theatre on a 15 year lease. It is considered that both arrangements will ensure the future of the facilities and the contributions that they make both to their local communities and more widely to Cheshire East residents.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

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