

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	7 th February 2017
Report of:	Executive Director of Place – Frank Jordan
Subject/Title:	Cultural Framework
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr David Brown, Highways and Infrastructure

1. Report Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the Cultural Framework for consideration as being a key pillar in delivering the Council's strategic priority of 'Quality of Place'. Culture has a pivotal role in contributing to or achieving 'distinctiveness', creating and communicating the 'identity' of a place, nurturing creativity, supporting skills development and delivering wellbeing. The paper presents the Cultural Framework, the Council's priorities for the cultural sector and explains how the framework will be delivered.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The Cultural Framework (appendix 1) is designed to help achieve this and to be widely used by Cheshire East Council, the Council's partners, national agencies and stakeholders, the voluntary sector, commissioners of public services, cultural organisations and individuals in the cultural sector. For the purpose of the Cultural Framework, culture is defined as: arts, heritage, museums, festivals & events, creative media, creative and digital industries.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Cabinet adopt the Cultural Framework 2017-2020 for implementation from April 2017.
- 2.2 That the Cabinet delegate commissioning decisions (which shall include applying for and accepting grant funding) made within the Framework, to the Head of Rural and Cultural Economy in consultation

with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Culture, to be agreed on an annual basis and as required, in line with the Constitution.

- 2.3 That the Cabinet welcome the development of a Cultural Forum under the leadership of Cheshire East Council.

3. Other Options Considered

- 3.1 The Framework has been developed following consultation with the cultural sector, with other public sector commissioning bodies and the Council for Voluntary Services (Cheshire East). Amongst others, the consultation process included consideration of:

- Continuing with the current system ie 'do nothing'
- Operating a commissioning only system
- Operating a grants only system

None of these was favoured through the consultation to be as fair, equitable or impactful as the framework proposed.

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Adoption of the Framework will allow for:

- A set of clearly articulated Council priorities for Culture. This will enable major funding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England to understand our strategic priorities and how they match with their own.
- Efficient and effective commissioning and contracted cultural activity leading to improved delivery of the Council's outcomes.
- The ability to take a more flexible approach to supporting the development and sustainability of the Cultural Economy in Cheshire East.
- The Cultural Economy Team to communicate the Framework to the Cultural Sector and work towards implementation from April 2017.

- 4.2 Quality of Place is a key strategic priority for the Council. 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 helping to achieve each of these elements of Quality of Place.

- 4.3 Culture also has a significant contribution to make to improve outcomes for individuals and communities, for children and young people, older and vulnerable adults. Culture supports the delivery of outcomes across Quality of Place, Regeneration, Visitor Economy,

Health and Wellbeing, Children, Families, Skills and Community Development.

4.4 There are a number of factors driving the need for this work, we must consider how to maximise the impact of Culture by having clear priorities and through using different approaches to delivery and commissioning. To achieve the Council's outcomes, this will be done through a combination of:

- Commissioning activity as Lead Commissioners (eg Barnaby or Lyceum theatre)
- Sub-contracting commissioned activity (eg Early intervention programme)
- Stronger partnership working (eg Macclesfield Heritage & Culture strategy)
- Working through matrix management arrangements (eg public art commissioning)
- Direct provision of services (eg Cheshire East Youth theatre)

4.5 Benefits of the Framework:

- It provides a clearly articulated set of priorities for Culture. This will enable major funding bodies such as Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England (ACE) to understand our strategic priorities and how they match with their own. For example; cultural organisations with ACE National Portfolio Status will be expected to have matched funding from the appropriate Local Authority. The Framework will allow the Council to be flexible to enter into these arrangements when needed in order to boost the profile of Cheshire East and develop a strong cultural economy.
- Better value for money through commissioned and contracted cultural activity leading to improved delivery of Council outcomes.
- Ability to take a more flexible approach to supporting the development and sustainability of the Cultural Economy in the Borough.

5. Background/Chronology

5.1 Since November 2015, the Cultural Economy Team has been working with colleagues across the Council and with external stakeholders, to develop a Cultural Framework for the Council. Through working with consultants Arts Interlink, a report has now been produced from which a final framework has been developed.

- 5.2 The value of Culture can be considered in two different ways; the intrinsic – how our lives are enriched by culture; or, how Culture can impact on achieving wider objectives such as economic wellbeing, physical and mental health, education and social cohesion. The Cultural Economy Service is well placed to deliver strong outcomes on these wider objectives with a successful track record in some of these areas over a number of years. For example, working in partnership with Total People and Love Music Trust, leveraging in funding of around £160,000 from Youth Music to deliver music and drama training for young people at risk of being NEET; Working with a range of partners including Skills and Growth Company and Cultural organisations to secure £90,000 from Arts Council England to deliver a year long programme of digital commissions and skills development opportunities called 'Shift', in 2017.
- 5.3 The Cultural agenda is closely linked to the emerging Quality of Place agenda, culture being a significant contributor to developing quality places. 'Quality of Place' principles have been adopted to inform the future strategy for the council and inform a revised corporate plan. The contribution of Culture to this agenda is also borne out in the findings of the KPMG report on Quality of Place, which is set to inform the refresh or the LEP's economic strategy. The Cultural Framework will ensure that the Council is clear on its priorities for Culture in relation to Quality of Place.
- 5.4 During the consultation we have worked closely with colleagues from other commissioning areas and will continue to do so, to ensure the framework remains fit for purpose. We are also working closely with Cheshire East Voluntary Service.

6. The Framework

- 6.1 The Cultural Framework (appendix 1) is of relevance to all Council services that are commissioning or delivering aspects of Culture or seeking outcomes through cultural activity. This ranges from Public Health, Children and Families, Community Grants and Community Engagement to Visitor Economy, Regeneration and indeed the Cultural Economy service itself.
- 6.2 The purpose of the framework is to:
- a) Inform a cohesive approach across the Council to engage with the cultural sector to ensure the 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 with the Cultural sector to maximise opportunities for investment for cultural activity in Cheshire East.
- 6.3 There are a number of mechanisms for generating outcomes from Cultural organisations, which are often small and voluntary. This includes grants, formal commissioning, open tenders and Service Level Agreements.
- 6.4 The Framework will enable appropriate arrangements to be in place that are 'fit for purpose', fair and targeted on the outcomes sought. It is also important to ensure that the funding mechanism is appropriate to the nature and scale of the local organisations involved in delivery of cultural activities and that a range of options are available other than just tendering. The type of activity and type of individual artists or organisations involved will necessitate consideration of this aspect to find an approach to commissioning or funding that meets legal obligations but still works for the sector.

7. Priorities

- 7.1 The Council's goal for Culture is to transform lives and places through access to great culture. The Council has a role as enabling the economy, communities and places of Cheshire East to benefit from engagement with culture, contributing to wellbeing, quality of place, creative skills and prosperity. We do this through the provision of support for individuals and organisations working in the arts, heritage, museums, creative media, festivals and events. A set of Cultural priorities for the Council have been developed as part of the Framework through the consultation process. These are included within the Framework at Appendix A.
- 7.2 The consultation process also identified commissioning priorities from other areas of the Council and external partners such as the Police and Crime commissioner and the Fire Service.

8. Delivering the Framework

- 8.1 The Framework is intended to be put into practice from April 2017 for a 5 year period. It will be reviewed annually during this time to monitor effectiveness and success. At the end of the 5 year period it will be evaluated.

- 8.2 The Council's priorities for Culture are intended to inform all instances where the Council will commission or directly provide cultural activity in order to deliver Quality of Place.
- 8.3 The Framework (appendix 1) describes how the Council can commission cultural services in line with its priorities for Cultural provision.
- 8.4 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 to develop the capacity of the cultural sector to take up the additional opportunities for procurement with the Framework.
- 8.5 The Framework describes how the Cultural Economy Team will utilise available funds, either from core budget or from leveraging in external funding, to deliver the Framework in line with the Cultural priorities. It is recommended that funding decisions resulting from any of these mechanisms are delegated to the Head of Cultural and Rural Economy in agreement with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Culture. This will ensure transparency in decision making.
- 8.6 In order to ensure quality, the Framework will adopt the Quality Benchmark criteria developed by Arts Council England to provide a consistent evaluation measure when commissioning or contracting services. These are set out in the Framework.

9. Supporting the Cultural Sector

- 9.1 Cultural organisations are well placed to deliver the outcomes that Cheshire East Council wants. At a time when preventing the need for expensive interventions further down the line is key, they can help build healthy and positive communities in ways that are both empowering and cost effective
- 9.2 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. It is proposed to establish a cultural forum for Cheshire East.
- 9.3 Support and co-ordination for this forum will be provided in the first year by the Cultural Economy Team. Following this period, members of the group will determine its own future, led by the sector.

10. 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.

11. Wards Affected and Local Ward Members

All Wards

12. Implications of Recommendation

12.1 Policy Implications

The Framework is in line with the Council's priorities and Quality of Place agenda.

12.2 Legal Implications

Contracts and partnership arrangements resulting from implementation of the Framework will be in lines with the Council's legal regulations.

12.3 Financial implications

The current available commissioning budget within the Cultural Economy Service is £40,000. The framework is designed to be implemented within current budgets. However, the Framework will also guide and enable the effective allocation of other service budgets across the Council where cultural activity supports delivery of council priorities and outcomes and will be flexible enough to respond to additional opportunities. Indeed, application of the framework also presents significant opportunities to lever in external funding; from both external funding bodies such as Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery Fund or indeed by pooling budgets with other public sector commissioners. Contracts and partnership arrangements resulting from implementation will be in line with the Council's financial and procurement regulations.

12.4 Equality implications

The Framework will provide opportunities to reduce inequalities.

12.5 Rural Community Implications

The Framework will provide opportunities for rural economy and community development

12.6 Human Resources Implications

None

12.7 Public Health Implications

The Framework will allow opportunities to reduce health inequalities and improve wellbeing

12.8 Implications for Children and Young People

The Framework will provide opportunities for children and young people to access culture and skills development

13. Risk Management

None

14. Access to Information/Bibliography

Cultural Development Framework April 2016 – March 2021
by Arts Interlink

15. Contact Information

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