

## BARNSELY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT OF: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GROWTH & SUSTAINABILITY**

**TITLE: A CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR BARNSELY**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Purple 8 March White 22 March</b>
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio</b>	<b>Cllr Robert Frost</b>
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Public or Private</b>	<b>Public</b>

### **Purpose of report**

To outline the reasons why Barnsley needs a Cultural Strategy to ensure its work around participation and engagement with culture & heritage and its contribution to the visitor economy is strategically aligned to the Barnsley 2030 priorities of the borough and B2030 outcomes.

### **Council Plan priority**

This links to the Council's and borough's vision of Barnsley as a 'place of possibilities' and our ambitions to be a 'Creative Barnsley'

### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:-

1. That the Council adopt the proposed approach for the development of Barnsley's Cultural Strategy.
2. Advise on how the involvement process could be made more relevant to and representative of the diverse residents and communities of Barnsley.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Why a cultural strategy for Barnsley?**

- 1.1 We experience culture every day. It intersects across different parts of our lives in a myriad of ways. Through the food we prepare and eat. The language we speak and hear. The tables we gather around. The environment we encounter

and shape. The stories we share. The art we make or come into contact with. The faith or rituals we observe. Culture is nuanced and is constantly shifting. It has no singular source: it is not mine, it is not yours, it is ours.

- 1.2 Kathy McArdle, **Service Director for Regeneration and Culture** in Barnsley, has said “We’re huge supporters of Culture in Barnsley, we see the benefits and positive impacts on both wellbeing and the economy. There’s a real buzz around our borough as we continue to push boundaries and raise the bar when it comes to culture and heritage.” In recent years, while museums around the country have been struggling, Barnsley has been opening new museums to the public. It is not just people who live or work in Barnsley who recognise the cultural possibilities of the borough: Arts Council England has selected Barnsley as one of its 15 Priority Places in the North opening up the potential for new investment while the Cultural Development Fund recently awarded almost £4million to Barnsley to create new studios and galleries, foster cultural hubs and support creative networks across the borough.
- 1.3 In this context, Barnsley Council has an exceptional opportunity to use culture as a key driver to help deliver its Barnsley 2030 strategy. However, whilst culture is embedded into Barnsley’s future plans there is currently no distinct borough-wide strategy to illustrate how culture and creativity can contribute to a good life for everyone in the borough. Having a cultural strategy in place will open up new partnerships, both in and out of the borough, while strengthening existing ones. An effective cultural strategy will also increase investment and funding opportunities for Barnsley because the borough will be able to demonstrate its strategic commitment to culture.
- 1.4 Given the strength of Barnsley’s strategic framework (including Healthy Barnsley, Learning Barnsley, Growing Barnsley and Sustainable Barnsley) and the increased levels of support provided to the locality by Arts Council England (ACE) in the recent National Portfolio announcements the borough is well placed to facilitate the development of a cultural strategy that will not sit in its own silo but that will be an effective driver for positive change across the borough. A cultural strategy for Barnsley will create a shared vision and identity for the area which builds on its history, grows its economy, supports community led activities, improves health and wellbeing and which contributes to a good life for all Barnsley’s citizens.

### **What are the key questions for Barnsley’s cultural strategy to answer?**

- 1.5 The cultural strategy will need to explore and understand the creative and cultural ecology of Barnsley. The process of discovering and defining Barnsley’s homegrown creativity and culture will be essential if the strategy is to successfully use its cultural assets to create social and economic impact across the borough, as well as ensuring all parts of the community can access a high quality cultural offer. While there are multiple questions for the cultural strategy to explore, three core questions are fundamental and must be at the centre of the strategy:
  - a) What is the current creative and cultural ecology of Barnsley?
  - b) What are the ways in which culture can contribute to a good and healthy life in Barnsley?

c) What needs to happen to make this a reality for everyone in Barnsley?

**1.6** This proposal lays out in detail how we will engage with our residents and communities and Elected members to explore these questions in the Cultural Strategy Development process.

## **2. PROPOSAL**

### **Who should explore these questions and shape the strategy?**

2.1 In light of societal shifts that have taken place in recent years, in particular the covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis, it is important that the development and delivery of Barnsley's cultural strategy is a democratic and inclusive process. This is not just a political and moral imperative, it is also a strategic one. In order to create a high value and high impact strategy, that will enrich and strengthen Barnsley's 2030 plan, the process of creating the cultural strategy must draw from diverse experiences of culture from across the whole borough.

2.2 This means that while it is important to incorporate strong input from Barnsley's existing and visible cultural organisations and practitioners, the strategy must go further. It must include input from less visible, recognised or celebrated aspects of the borough's creative and cultural ecology. This is because the strategy will be more meaningful if it encompasses the whole of Barnsley's story, not just the aspects that we are already good at telling. This means we need to engage and involve people of all ages, those from our BME communities, those who are disabled or have special needs, vulnerable people, our LGBTQI communities and people from various parts of the borough, urban and rural.

2.3 A democratic and inclusive approach would also be a good fit with ACE's new ten-year strategy, [Let's Create](#). Like Barnsley's overall strategy, this new ACE funding plan runs to 2030. It was developed through conversations with more than 5,000 people nationwide and marks a significant shift in funding policy for culture. *Let's Create* sets out a more inclusive and relevant model for the cultural sector; representing a move away from the provision of a cultural offer towards more collaborative and co-created ways of working. *Let's Create* is not just about putting on a show and hoping people come; it is about everyone's creativity and culture and how we can all contribute towards a more place-based and inclusive model for culture.

2.4 This new national policy and funding framework is relevant to consider in terms of how best to shape and develop local cultural strategies. The time is ripe for co-developing and co-creating plans in partnership with citizens. A cultural strategy that is co-created by citizens will position Barnsley at the forefront of this practice nationally. The approach would follow in the footsteps of Barnsley Council's democratic opening up of the Town Hall as a new museum for everyone to share and would align with the idea that, in Barnsley, we want everyone to have a good life.

2.4.1 The proposed project approach, the process and activities we use to develop the cultural strategy in Barnsley, are as important as the cultural strategy we

end up with. If the cultural strategy development process is done well and is really inclusive handing power to our communities, we can create new and powerful links with a wider range of our communities, empowering them and ensuring local people are at the heart of what we do across the cultural and creative sector in the future. Barnsley is very well positioned to begin this work. Barnsley MBC already has in place an innovative democratic system which enables local communities and Councillors to work together. The development phase of the cultural strategy will engage with Area Council and Ward Alliance members (local residents) as a starting point for engaging with communities, members and partners across the Borough. Area Councils and Ward Alliances will help identify who needs to be involved and how we can best engage them. Once the existing structures have been tapped into, we will then deliver targeted and creative engagement will be undertaken with parts of the local community that have been identified as requiring further consultation or being underrepresented within these existing structures.

2.4.2 Below we have mapped out the timeline for the Strategy Development process.

Arts Council England are supportive of the process but have also advised that it may end up being delivered across a shorter timeframe to concentrate and focus the engagement work. This timeline will therefore have some built-in flexibility to enable it to respond to the themes and ideas coming through the engagement process. The timeline might also change if some of the phases are delivered in parallel.

## 2.7 Phase One – Development and research (c.10 - 12 weeks)

When considering a democratic approach to the development of a cultural strategy, it is good practice for the first step to be a period of development and research; exploring options and engaging in dialogue with stakeholders. This process will be led by Barnsley MBC, working with local creative practitioners. The creative practitioners will lead the engagement and consultative aspects of this phase and will be appointed early in Phase 1.

There will be four key areas of work, these are described below

### One: Project Governance

A project Board will be put into place to oversee the development of the cultural strategy. The board will consist of representatives of the cultural sector in the Borough, relevant Council officers, key funders, members of the Youth Council and the community and voluntary sector.

The Project Board will ensure that Senior officers and members with Barnsley MBC are kept briefed on progress, and it will also take a lead in ensuring there is an effective communication plan in place.

Key aspects of the communications and engagement plan here in Barnsley would include:

Stakeholder communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing a regular and updated narrative about the process which illustrates its legitimacy</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shared online space for keeping records of meetings, tracking the development of ideas</li> </ul>
Cultural sector communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a regular news bulletin for cultural sector organisations and practitioners to encourage feedback and dialogue</li> <li>• An invitation for the sector to submit ideas or evidence for the strategy</li> </ul>

## **Two: Creative Engagement with Members, Area Councils and Ward Alliances**

This is a crucial aspect of the development of the strategy. An introductory workshop will be held with Members and key partners (such as Arts Council England) to help shape the engagement process and the areas of focus.

The appointed creative practitioners, working with the Council's Communities team, will engage with all the Area Councils and a representative sample of the Ward Alliances, as well as other key representative fora associated with BMBC such as the Youth Council. The exact detail of the consultation will be shaped by the creative practitioners appointed but will focus on discussing the three broad questions outlined in the introduction.

- A) What is the current creative and cultural ecology of Barnsley?
- B) What are the ways in which culture can contribute to a good and healthy life in Barnsley?
- C) What needs to happen to make this a reality for everyone in Barnsley?

## **Three: Stakeholder Engagement**

The engagement with stakeholders as part of Step one and future phases will be driven by the four headline themes in Barnsley 2030: Barnsley A Place of Possibilities. These are:

- Healthy Barnsley
- Learning Barnsley
- Growing Barnsley
- Sustainable Barnsley

During Step One initial conversations will take place with the Chairs and a small number of key members of each of the theme boards.

The fifth area of stakeholder engagement will be with the cultural and creative sector across Barnsley. Naturally this will include ACE funded National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), including those organisations recently added to the portfolio and the larger organisations in the Borough such as Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the Civic, well as Fusion the Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP). However the consultation will focus on the many individual artists and makers that are such a crucial part of the creative ecology in the Borough.

## **Four: Sector Mapping**

The scale and size of the existing culture and creative sector in the borough needs to be understood if the strategy is to be developed and delivered successfully.

Some progress has been made in this area recently at both a Borough and regional level. The SYMCA Cultural and Creative Industries Data research and mapping project completed earlier this year by Fifth Sector, provides a range of useful information concerning the size and scale of the sector across the region.

However further work needs to be done in phases one and two to drill down and develop a thorough understanding of what cultural activity is already going on across Barnsley. The feedback from SYMCA's parallel piece of work the Culture, Arts & Heritage Engagement Report demonstrates that the sector perceives that there is a distinct lack of knowledge at a Local Authority level, particularly about the self-employed and small businesses that make up much of the cultural and creative sector in South Yorkshire.

The Forging Elsecar Cultural Development Fund (CDF) project Principal Towns strand also includes a focus, and some available resource for sector mapping. This has been aligned with the Cultural Strategy development process to maximise the impact of the work and mapping has begun. It will consider the outputs of the SYMCA funded Bounceback programme and what that has initiated in the Borough - <https://www.barnsley-museums.com/projects/supporting-artists-the-covid-bounce-back-programme>

## **2.8 Phase two – Review and identification of next steps (c. 4-6 weeks)**

Once the results of Phase One have been gathered, a review process will take place led by the Project Board. A summary note outlining the key findings from the initial work will be produced for key stakeholders. This note will consider the work undertaken with Area councils and Ward Alliances, identifying the key themes emerging, and will also identify the preferred way forward for the development of the Cultural Strategy.

There will be a particular focus on assessing whether Phase One has been able to engage with a representative sample of Barnsley's communities and identify any gaps for further engagement.

When agreement is reached on the further work required, we will then move onto Phase Three.

## **2.9 Phase three: Further Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders (c10 – 12 weeks)**

Whilst the exact content of Phase three will only be decided once Phases One and Two have been undertaken, it is likely that further conversations with key stakeholders will be required, as well as targeted engagement with key parts of the community. Therefore, the phase will include at least the two areas of work outlined below which again will be facilitated and delivered by cultural organisations and creative practitioners.

## **One: Further Stakeholder Engagement**

The engagement with stakeholders as part of Phase Three will again be driven by the four headline themes in Barnsley 2030: Barnsley A Place of Possibilities. These are:

- Healthy Barnsley
- Learning Barnsley
- Growing Barnsley
- Sustainable Barnsley

During Phase Three Focus groups will be held for each of the Barnsley 2030, the Focus Groups will be facilitated by local cultural organisations and creative practitioners. themes, we will ensure a broad representation of key voluntary and community groups and organisations.

The fifth area of stakeholder engagement will be with the cultural and creative sector across Barnsley. We will consult widely with the cultural sector throughout the development of the strategy and actively use creative practitioners to support and help deliver the citizens led approach.

## **Two: Creative Community Engagement**

This phase of the work will take place after the workshops with Area Councils and Ward Alliances. From their input, a gap analysis will be undertaken to assess which parts of the Borough's community needs further engagement. This analysis will look at several factors including:

- Age
- Geography
- Background
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Socio-economic status

Once priorities for further engagement have been identified, local cultural and creative practitioners will be commissioned to seek out, approach and work with relevant parts of the community to gather their ideas of culture and where it should sit in their lives.

The particular engagement approach will be explored and agreed during Phase 3 and will be influenced by the nature of the community group we are looking to engage with, and the creative practitioner involved. However, it will be important to ensure that the process is suitably in depth and iterative. It is vital that groups, community members and creative practitioners with different kinds of perspective and lived experience feed into the conversations about Barnsley's cultural strategy. A 'Creative Barnsley' is a diverse Barnsley and the rich fabric of our creative communities will underpin the future cultural life of the borough

This phase will also include further conversations with Project Board and key partners to test the themes emerging from the wider community engagement.

## 2.10 Phase Four – Strategy Development

Once Phase 3 has been completed and broad and deep wider community and stakeholder engagement has been progressed, the findings of that work will be gathered together in a creative report. The emerging priorities identified in the summary note produced in Phase two will be reviewed.

The Project Board will work together to draft a short and focussed strategy based on the feedback and contributions received from the discussions with Area Councils, Ward Alliances, local communities and stakeholders.

Prior to finalising the outline strategy, a session between key participants in the strategy development process, key funders, creative organisations and relevant Councillors will be held to explore and discuss the report. This meeting will also cover the final composition of the cultural strategy and agreeing follow-up actions.

Suitable resources will be allocation for a small print run of the finalised strategy so that it can be distributed to key stakeholders.

## 2.9 Timetable for Barnsley’s Cultural Strategy Development

A suggested timetable for the delivery of the above steps is outlined below.

	Apr- July 23	July – August 23	Sept – November 23	November - December 23
<b>Phase 1 – research and development</b>				
<b>Phase 2 – Review and identification of next steps</b>				
<b>Phase 3 – Further Engagement with communities and stakeholders</b>				
<b>Phase 4 – strategy development</b>				

This will be subject to change with the potential for some phases to overlap, but illustrates the direction of travel.

## 2.10 Potential priorities for the Cultural Strategy

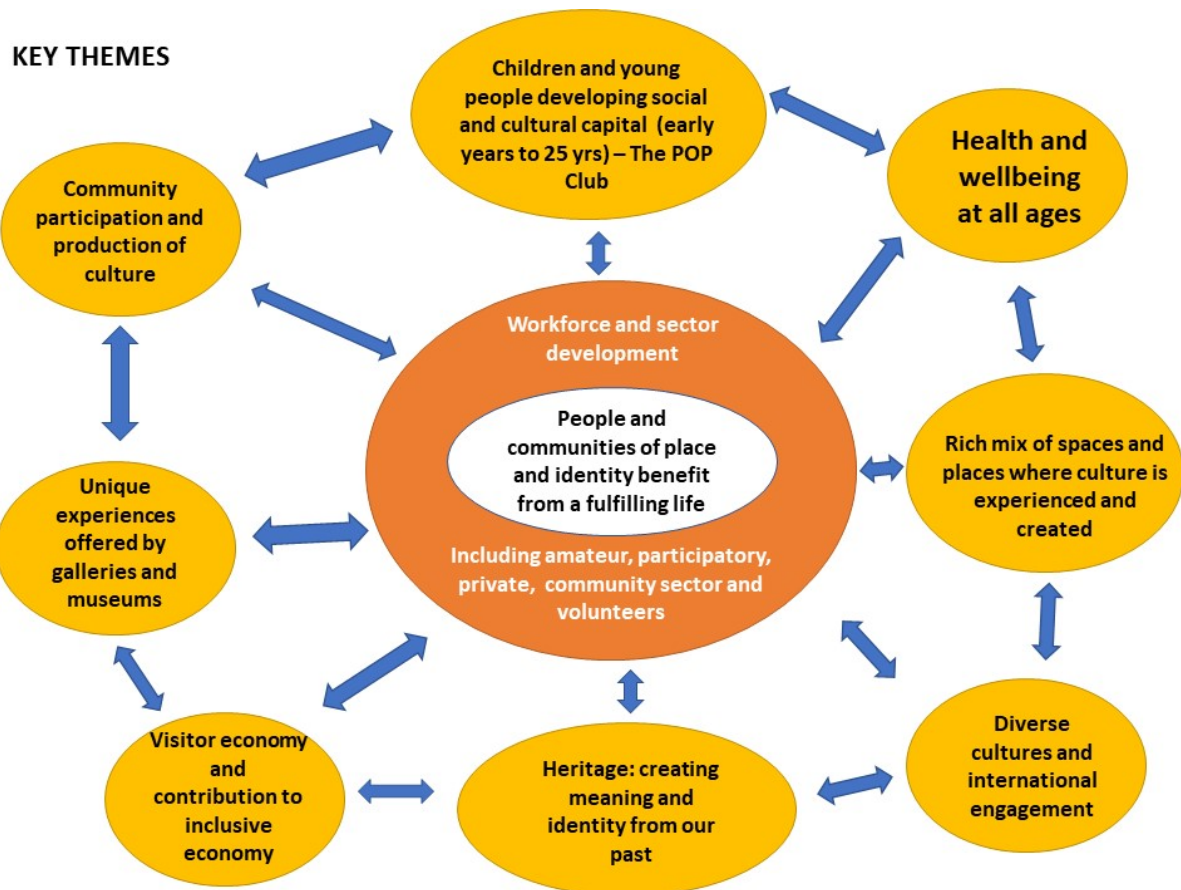
Whilst the priorities and ambitions for Barnsley’s cultural strategy will be shaped by the engagement with the borough’s communities, cultural sector and other partners, the current understanding of the sector, previous research and conversations have indicated that some or all of the following areas may well



be represented as the research progresses:

- Community participation and production of culture
- Children and young people developing social and cultural capital
- Tackling health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing outcomes
- Developing and using a rich mix of spaces and places where culture is experienced and created
- Embracing diverse cultures and international engagement
- Heritage: creating meaning and identity from our past
- Visitor economy and its contribution to inclusive economy
- Creating unique experiences offered by galleries, museums and engagement with culture in our outdoor and public spaces

When a creative ecology is working successfully these themes interact together to ensure people and communities of place and identity benefit from a fulfilling life. The diagram on the next page illustrates how this could happen.



## 2.11 What would Barnsley's Cultural sector's role be?

It is essential that people and organisations which will be set to gain from the existence of a dynamic cultural strategy are involved in its development. This includes people and organisations who already count themselves as part of Barnsley's cultural ecology. This could include cultural organisations and venues, creative practitioners, artists and creative businesses, faith groups, privately run organisations, e.g. dance schools, youth services, local charities, voluntary sector, health care organisations, sports and other relevant interest groups, schools and colleges.

Cultural organisations and creative practitioners will be front and centre of the development of the strategy. They will lead the consultation and engagement process in all phases of the strategy development.

As well as encouraging the participation of specific individuals and organisations from the sector in Barnsley, there are also project collaborations and work streams that need to connect with the cultural strategy development process. These include:

- SYMCA's Culture, Arts & Heritage Engagement Report
- Barnsley MBC Community Listening work
- Barnsley MBC Principal Towns work
- The development of a Borough Creativity and Wellbeing plan
- South Yorkshire Integrated Care Strategy

The Barnsley Connects network development strand of the Cultural Development Fund project currently being delivered in the Borough is a timely opportunity to broaden the reach of the development of the cultural strategy. Barnsley Connects is planned as an impactful programme of activities, connections and exchange, through face-to-face interaction and digital engagement. The first phase, which will draw on the skills and energy of emerging creative practitioners and place-leaders and is described below, is planned to run during the same period as the cultural strategy development, so this work will be closely aligned to help the development of the strategy. Key strands of the work include:

- Identify existing creative activity taking place and spaces
- ‘Storying Barnsley’: creative place-based story-telling workshops, facilitated by University of Sheffield
- Conversations with businesses, community leaders & voluntary sector organisations engaged in cultural activity to understand barriers and the role culture plays in their work
- Map existing creative industries businesses at a Borough level.
- Bring together practitioners, creative industries businesses & place-leader locally to nurture an informal borough-wide Creative Barnsley Network

We will ensure close connection with the Barnsley Connects creative network to add value to each other’s work and closely coordinate our research to ensure best value from both programmes.

### 3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

#### 3.1 Financial and Risk

##### 3.1.1 Costs for the development of Barnsley’s Cultural Strategy

The costs for developing the cultural strategy depend very much on the level of engagement with local communities. An initial budget has been developed based on a model that assumes engagement with all Area Councils and a selection of Ward Alliances in Phase one, as well as other key networks such as Barnsley’s Youth Council. It also assumes up to four in depth pieces of engagement in phase three. This would provide sufficient resource for a robust community led development process and gives an overall cost to the strategy development process of in the region of £50k.

Phase	Cost
Phase One – Development and research	£15k
Phase two – Review and identification of next steps	£5k
Phase three – Further Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders	£20k

Phase 4 – Strategy Development	£5k
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>£50k</b>

3.1.2 Arts Council England has already committed £10K towards this process, with a matched contribution coming from the Culture team’s own resources. ACE have also indicated that they would be comfortable with the additional resource required coming from the Cultural Development Fund resources already secured.

3.1.3 ACE have also indicated that the development of a Cultural Strategy would be a requirement for a future bid to the Place Partnership Funding pot. Together we have identified that this would be a positive funding programme to bid to in order to progress some of the work involved in delivering the Cultural Strategy. We see this as a key element of our ‘Priority Place’ work with ACE.

3.1.4 Cabinet are asked to approve the BMBC £10K contribution to the Cultural Strategy Development process and the use of £30K CDF funds for this purpose

## **3.2 Legal**

3.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **3.3 Equality**

3.3.1 The principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be at the heart of the Cultural Strategy Development process. A Full Equality Impact Assessment would be completed in advance of any public consultation and before the final Strategy is produced to ensure the Strategy genuinely engages diverse communities and populations, is equitable and inclusive and recognises the value of diversity as a creative force in the cultural life of the borough

## **3.4 Sustainability**

3.4.1 The zero carbon Decision-making wheel will be completed once the consultation on the strategy has been concluded

## **3.5 Employee**

3.5.1 There are no employee implications associated with this work

## **3.6 Communications**

3.6.1 A comprehensive communications strategy and plan will be developed to support the wide and deep engagement that will contribute to and shape the cultural strategy with the Comms lead in Culture and Visitor Economy, working collaboratively with all Comms officers working across the Council and with Comms partners across the borough.

3.6.2 Digital engagement, which was a key feature of the work of our CVE team, will

also feature heavily.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with Growth and Sustainability DMT, SMT Executive members, Cabinet spokesperson for Regeneration and Culture and Cabinet spokesperson for Transport and Environment. We have also consulted our Partners Arts Council England on the development process as they would be a key partner in supporting the strategy development process.

#### **5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The option of not to develop a Cultural strategy was considered but this has been identified as a significant strategic gap for Barnsley by Arts Council England through our work as a priority place. It is therefore essential we get this in place as it will enable us to have a more strategic relationship with our residents, communities and funders

#### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 Our Culture and Visitor Economy work has been hugely successful in the last ten years and seen extraordinary growth and achievements in that period. In order to build on this, it is essential to develop a more strategic framework for the work of the service, moving from a more citizen and community led model, which focusses on the Council having a key role in supporting workforce development and sector development as well as offering a high-quality museums, heritage and archive service.

#### **7. GLOSSARY**

Not required


#### **8. LIST OF APPENDICES**

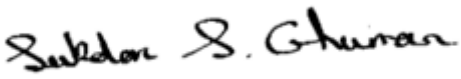
Not applicable

#### **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

#### **10. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Financial consultation &amp; sign off</b>	Senior Financial Services officer consulted and date  Steve Loach, 16 Feb 2023
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<b>Legal consultation &amp; sign off</b>	Legal Services officer consulted and date  16/02/2023
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**Report Author: Jon Finch**  
**Post: Head of Culture and Visitor Economy**  
**Date: 10 March 2023**