

London Borough of Enfield

Cabinet

Meeting Date: 11th November 2020

Subject: Culture Strategy – “Culture Connects”

Cabinet Member: Cllr Barnes

Executive Director: Sarah Cary

Key Decision: 5165

Purpose of Report

1. To outline a new borough strategy for culture – “Culture Connects” – and seek Cabinet approval for the strategy to be adopted and its Action Plan delegated.

Proposal(s)

2. Adopt the ‘Culture Connects’ strategy for 2020 – 25.
3. Delegate the finalisation of minor amends, and the subsequent implementation of the ‘Culture Connects’ strategy to the Executive Director Place in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

Reason for Proposal(s)

4. The previous strategy, “Active Enfield”, Enfield Leisure and Culture Strategy 2015 – 2020, has now run its course. Sport and Leisure are now covered in other strategies: Health and Wellbeing, Parks and Open Spaces, Green and Blue (emerging).
5. This new strategy was commissioned in January 2020 for three reasons:
 - a. To gain a clear view of Enfield’s cultural strengths and weaknesses to enable strategic support and planning
 - b. To harness the power of culture to support key borough agendas across all policy areas
 - c. To make more of the borough’s cultural offer by providing a focus for prioritised projects and collaborative networks
6. 1 in 6 jobs in London are in the cultural and creative industries, which contribute £52 billion to London’s economy. This Cultural Strategy has been developed alongside the Economic Development Strategy to provide a framework for Enfield to seize the opportunities that culture and the creative industries present in growing our economy and providing opportunities for young people. [Economic Development Strategy KD 5088]

7. Enfield has historically had a very low level of active cultural participation (bottom 33% of local authorities, Active Lives survey 2017), and has limited cultural infrastructure in many areas (eg visual arts, cinema) compared to local authorities of similar population. It is in the 30% most deprived local authorities in England (IMD2015) and is the 14th most deprived borough in London. 60% of borough residents are non-White British and 38% are foreign born. The borough has a higher-than-average proportion of young people (0-15). There is a clear need to grow a proactive cultural offer that reaches out to and connects these diverse residents will improve individual and community wellbeing.
8. In recognition of the above and of the low levels of lottery grant-funded cultural activity in the borough, Enfield is now a priority area for both Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund. The creation and adoption of a Cultural Strategy will allow us to seize the opportunity that this presents, supporting close working relationships with these two key funding bodies for the cultural sector and leveraging these relationships to grow more.
9. The current pandemic has hit culture very hard: DCMS warns there is a risk of “permanent closure of our cultural infrastructure.”¹ For example, Nuffield Southampton Theatre has now shut with the loss of 86 jobs. It is therefore vital that the Council take a strategic, evidence-based and long-term view of the role of culture in the well-being of the Borough in order to protect and build on necessary cultural infrastructure in this time of crisis.

Relevance to the Council’s Plan

10. “Culture Connects” addresses the following priorities within “An economy that works for everyone”:
 - a. Craft a cultural offer for Enfield to support London’s status as a world class city; the Strategy emphasises the importance of culture to Enfield and the imperative to grow this offer. It lays out a cross-cutting priority to achieve “Culture Everyday,” ie culture woven into the borough’s fabric and identity, reaching more people in more ways. The Strategy also references the importance of culture to place-making and the role of raising the borough’s profile both to visitors and investors.
 - b. Develop town centres that are vibrant, safe and inclusive; one of the Strategy’s five focus areas – “On the ground” – is dedicated to supporting town centres come alive, from enabling more public art that makes areas feel welcoming, loved and safe to animating high streets with regular and one-off events.
 - c. Enhance skills and connect local people to opportunities; focus area “Support Growth” aims to scale up existing creative industries skills offers and connect young people with creative industries careers advice. Focus area “Right Mix” aims to create more enterprise opportunities for local people by filling in gaps in our current cultural infrastructure, e.g. enabling the creation of more artist studios.

¹ DCMS, Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report, July 2020.

11. The Strategy also addresses two priorities under “Safe, healthy and confident communities”:
 - a. Inspire and empower young Enfielders to achieve their full potential; a cross-cutting priority for the Strategy is “Opportunities for young people”, whether in formal or informal settings.
 - b. Create healthy streets, parks and community spaces; the “Celebration” focus area encourages greater use of our streets, parks and community spaces for festivals and events that capture our amazing diversity and use culture to connect communities.

Background

12. This new Cultural Strategy for Enfield was commissioned from boutique consultancy DPQ in January 2020. DPQ have created cultural strategies for a range of similar-scale authorities (Peterborough, Watford) and have a specialism in public art and urban design.
13. A new role, Head of Cultural Services Development, was appointed in June 2020 for two years to take forward the Strategy.
14. The framework for the Strategy was created following visits to select borough sites and town centres, review of key policy and evidence documents, guidance from an internal steering group (Cllr Barnes, Sarah Cary, Mark Bradbury, Christine White, Rebekah Polding) and semi-structured interviews with 40+ internal and external stakeholders. The framework contains a vision statement, definition of culture, three cross-cutting priorities and five focus areas.
15. The Culture Strategy has clear connectivity with other Council strategies, notably the Heritage Strategy, Economic Development Strategy, Parks Strategy and Children and Young People’s Strategy. Owners of these strategies have been consulted individually to ensure full alignment.
16. In August and September 2020, consultative workshops (x4) were held with council staff and with cultural and creative organisations from across the borough. These workshops reviewed the framework and worked in depth on creating a shared governance model for the Strategy and a prioritised Action Plan. The workshops emphasised that the Strategy is owned by everyone in the borough, not just the Council, and that responsibility for delivery is shared. Many actions are owned and will be delivered by external organisations, and responsibility for action within the council is shared with different departments. Economic Development and Culture, for example, will work collaboratively to deliver on skills and career paths in the creative industries.
17. The “Enjoy Enfield Summer” festival was delivered as a first proof-of-concept of the new strategy. This was the UK’s first outdoor arts festival since COVID-19 and delivered 71 free, socially distanced arts and culture events/installations over 17 days, reaching over 5,000 residents in real life. It was led by the Council with the expertise of the cultural services team at its heart but was a collaboration with 25 different cultural organisations and 28 individual

local artists. Press included Enfield Independent, Enfield Dispatch and the Mayor of London Culture News email.

The strategic drivers of the project were to help revive town centres post-lockdown, to support community well-being and provide an opportunity for the cultural sector to re-connect with audiences.

The Enfield Town Traders Association wrote to the Leader following the Festival to say: *“I just wanted to make you aware of the success of the community events held on Library Green last week . . . There was a much needed increase in footfall at the western end of Church Street ... all Enfield Town appeared to benefit.”*

Feedback from festival attendees was most typically *“Thank you – this is just what we needed – we love this, and we need more stuff happening like this!”*

18. Following early discussion of the draft Culture Strategy and with strong support via the existing Heritage Strategy, the National Lottery Heritage Fund granted Enfield Council £200k in September 2020 for a two-year project to develop the borough’s capacity for cultural heritage activity.

Main Considerations for the Council

19. The new strategy is entitled “Culture Connects.” It is intended to run 2020 – 2025.

20. “Culture” is defined broadly. At its heart is the Arts Council England definition of culture as “all those areas of activity associated with collections, combined arts, dance, libraries, literature, museums, music, theatre and the visual arts.” It also extends to include creative industries – e.g. film, graphic design, fashion – which rely on individual creativity and cultural networks. But more importantly the strategy embraces the wider definition of culture as “a shared sense of belonging often rooted in a place, ethnicity, language, beliefs, food or music, frequently celebrated through cultural events and festivals.” This understanding of ‘culture’ is reflected in the vision statement.

21. Vision statement:

“Our ambition is to connect Enfield through culture. We want to connect our rich history of cultivation and industry with creative activity throughout our green spaces and town centres, our young people with opportunity and our different communities with shared celebrations. As culture connects us we will see the borough grow its economy and promote its identity more widely as a bright and diverse mix of city, countryside and creativity. We will connect organisations and ambitions across the borough to achieve our vision for Enfield: Culture Connects.”

22. The Strategy lays out three cross-cutting priorities:

- a. Culture Everyday – culture as part of the borough’s fabric, reaching more people in more ways
- b. Opportunity for Young People

- c. Sustainable Culture – understood both as financial sustainability, seeking more funding from a wider range of sources for the borough’s cultural sector, but also sustainability through improved stakeholder relationships, support and recognition

23. The Strategy lays out five priority areas on which activity will focus over the next five years. These are titled:

- a. On the ground
- b. Right mix
- c. Celebration
- d. Supporting growth
- e. Cultural capacity

24. “On the ground” aims to ensure:

- a. Visible culture in all town centres
- b. Integration of culture within major regeneration programmes
- c. Facilitation of more cultural and creative activity in parks and open spaces
- d. A culture and leisure offer through the northern landscape of the borough

25. “Right Mix” will:

- a. Fill culture gaps (e.g. independent cinema, grassroots and larger music venues, visible LGBTQ+ spaces and activity)
- b. Focus on developing Creative Enterprise
- c. Support new creative workspace, including artists and makers

26. “Supporting growth” will:

- a. Support access to culture and pathways to creative employment
- b. Grow creative industries skills, training and employment

27. “Celebration” will focus on:

- a. Increasing community celebration through shared interests – international dance, music and food
- b. Increasing borough wide access to heritage and diversity of local culture
- c. Improving cultural promotion and strengthen Enfield’s cultural narrative
- d. Nurturing community and volunteering skills and capacity to deliver diverse creative activity

28. The “Cultural Capacity” priority will deliver:

- a. New strategic borough expertise and capacity (including the new Head of Cultural Services Development role)
- b. Support the cultural sector through Covid-19 challenges
- c. Build cultural partnership and secure strategic funding

- d. Harness development and planning to contribute to culture provision and secure investment
29. The cultural activity delivered via Millfield Theatre, the Dugdale Centre, Forty Hall and the Museum of Enfield are important to the delivery of “Culture Connects” – but in consort with a wide range of external partners including cultural organisations, creative enterprises, community groups and funders.
30. As a collaborative enterprise, “Culture Connects” will therefore be jointly owned with the borough’s cultural and creative sector. We hope to work in a collaborative manner with cultural and creative organisations coming up with ideas and action plans. This will include a sectoral e-newsletter, working groups and forums.
31. Reporting on the Strategy’s progress will be delivered no less than annually by the Council and shared both internally and externally.

Safeguarding Implications

32. All organisations working directly or indirectly with the Council in delivering this strategy with or around young people will be required to have appropriate safeguarding policies and measures in place.

Public Health Implications

33. Cultural activity enhances wellbeing both at individual and community level. “Culture Connects” aims to deliver significant public health benefits to Enfield residents through greater social connectedness and community cohesion delivered via shared cultural events and increased cultural opportunity. By connecting to a shared sense of local identity – often grounded in heritage – residents will increase their connection to the borough and to each other. Addressing social isolation is a key component of the Enfield Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Cultural Strategy supports activity in this area.
34. As demonstrated in the “Enjoy Enfield Summer” festival and the programming and pricing of Millfield Theatre and the Dugdale Centre, the Strategy will support inclusion in the borough by prioritising the need for an accessible and representative cultural offer that welcomes everyone.
35. The Dugdale Centre will continue to grow and develop its “EnFood” offer of locally sourced, healthy food at affordable prices. This also supports the Enfield Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy to support healthier food choices locally.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

36. Shared cultural activity works to remove barriers between people and to remove inequality. Through the “Right Mix” focus area the Strategy will particularly focus on ensuring that Enfield residents have access to the widest possible range of cultural services, whether by artform, genre, or community of representation.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

37. This is a wide-ranging strategy which will involve the development of a number of strands of work and the related assessment of specific impacts on climate change and carbon emissions. However, at a strategic level the principles underpinning the strategy should support the Council's stated aim of being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. Opportunities include:
- Supporting people to love local by delivering a culture everywhere, including on your doorstep, approach.
 - Encouraging people to access events using active and sustainable modes of transport.
 - At various venues continuing to provide locally sourced, healthy food at affordable prices.
 - Procuring goods and services with sustainability as a consideration.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

38. If the proposed decision is not taken, Enfield risks having too little cultural infrastructure for a borough of its size with a concomitant loss of community well-being and economic development. The borough's cultural capacity will remain low and existing cultural infrastructure will remain unsustainable without a network of partnerships, supporters and funders.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

39. "Culture Connects" lays out the importance of culture to the borough and an ambition for culture-lead development. Culture will therefore become more visible and will require more capacity to respond to increased levels of interest internally and externally. This risk has been mitigated by the creation of a new senior level post – Head of Cultural Services Development.

Financial Implications

40. The Strategy embodies an ambition for greater levels of cultural activity and an improved cultural infrastructure. This will require funding in addition to that which can be met by the Council. The Strategy is explicit that the Council cannot deliver this work alone and that the borough will work together to grow capacity and improve the sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors. Addressing sustainability and capacity are identified as priorities by the strategy.
41. The strategy will be met within this existing budget and in the context of Covid19, the aim to ensure focussed on areas of maximum impact as set out in the Strategy. Recognising the current financial pressures re Covid19, team working hard to secure grants to enhance the cultural offer.
42. Culture Strategy "Culture Connects" will have a longer term indirect positive impact on the budget through place-making.
43. The Head of Cultural Services Development will work with cultural and community organisations to leverage new funding for the borough. For

example, the successful bid to NLHF for £200k to grow capacity for cultural heritage work and two successful bids to the DCMS Culture Recovery Funds (£672,245). We are also supporting a borough-wide bid to the Arts Council England to the Creative People and Places fund, for which we are a priority.

44. The global pandemic has impacted particularly harshly on the cultural industries. The strategy recognises this and the need for ambition to match available budget and for resources to be carefully targeted towards ensuring survival for the long-term of Enfield's cultural sector. This will include review of existing Cultural Services activity.

Legal Implications

Legal implications were provided by ZS on 16.10.2020 based on report version circulated on 14.09.2020 timed at 18.11

44. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives a local authority power to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions.

The Council also has a general power of competence in section 1(1) of the Localism Act 2011. This states that a local authority has the power to do anything that individuals generally may do provided it is not prohibited by legislation.

As this is a Key Decision the Council must comply with the Key Decision procedure in accordance with the Constitution.

The Council must ensure that any legal agreements required to be entered into must be approved by the Director of law and Governance.

Workforce Implications

45. Nil.

Property Implications

46. There are no specific property implications arising directly from this report however it is anticipated that there may be future Property Imps as the Culture Strategy is implemented. Any future reports arising as a result of these proposals will need to be further reviewed, and when property transactions are included, Strategic Property Services will comment on those individual deals and reports at that time.

Other Implications

47. Not applicable.

Options Considered

48. The option to not create a new Culture Strategy was considered. This was rejected as it entailed risk to the borough's cultural sector, community well-being and economic development.

Conclusions

49. “Culture Connects” lays out a framework for prioritised action to connect and grow the borough’s cultural and creative sectors to support key agendas including social inclusion, youth opportunity and economic development. It capitalises on the opportunity to obtain external investment and on a collaborative approach with Economic Development. The strategy has the potential to be a key tool in achieving the vision of a lifetime of opportunities for everyone in Enfield.
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Appendices

Culture Strategy

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None