

REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER DISTRICT CULTURAL STRATEGY - SCOPING

TUESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2023

REPORT OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Cllr Lucille Thompson, Cabinet Member for Economy & Culture

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Winchester District Green Economic Development Strategy 2022 - 2032 (GEDS) identified the need to develop a new Cultural Strategy to provide an overarching and coordinated vision to ensure the district develops, promotes and celebrates its cultural offering. The development of this cultural strategy was an agreed action in the 2022/2024 GEDS Action Plan considered at the Policy Committee on 22 June 2022.

This paper and associated presentation introduces the work undertaken and planned to develop a Cultural Strategy for the Winchester district for a five-year period from 2023 to 2027. The strategy will provide insight into the scale of the task ahead to respond to the needs outlined in the GEDS along with a concise and achievable road map of practical steps and tangible outcomes that are collaboratively driven, aligned and shared.

The strategy will inform the content of the council's work programmes and it is intended to influence the work of its partners across the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Policy Committee is asked to

1. Review and comment on the anticipated policy direction of the strategy, as outlined in 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.21 and 2.22 and the approach outlined to deliver the Winchester District Cultural Strategy.

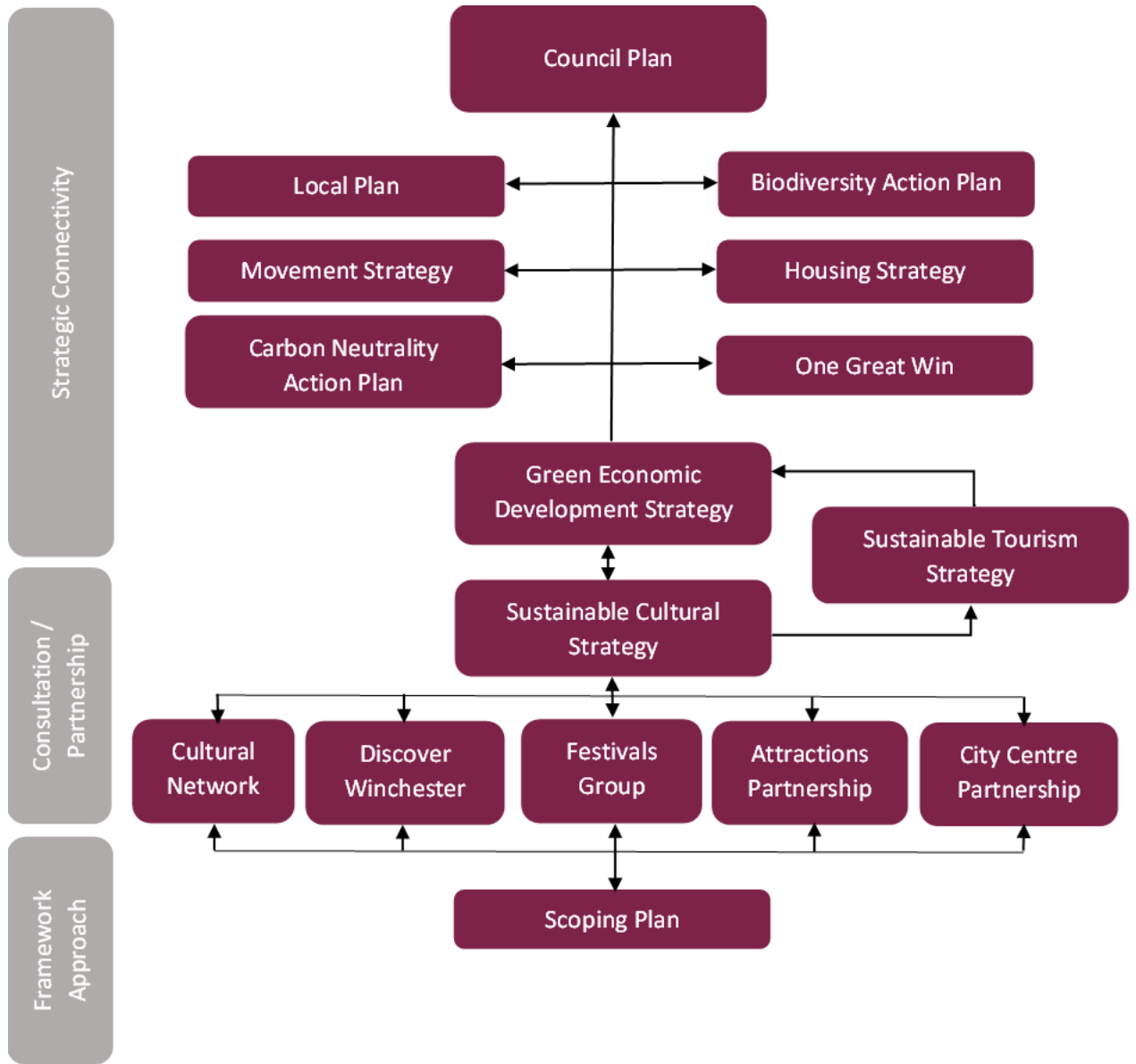
1 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 1.1 The Strategy will be delivered by existing staff resources. Internally the Service Lead: Economy & Tourism will be responsible for this programme of work, supported by the Tourism Marketing and Development Manager and Culture and Creative Sector Development Officer. Delivery of the strategy will require organisation wide support and will be dependent on embedding the Strategy findings and recommendations in the work programmes across a number of council services including Economic Development, Tourism and Marketing, Communities, Natural Environment and Recreation, Sustainability, Planning, with a specific relevance to Central Winchester Regeneration opportunities etc.
- 1.2 The council has engaged with Arts Council England (ACE) early in this process and they have agreed to work in partnership to develop and help create the Cultural Strategy. This will include providing resources, advice and facilitation with the opportunity for the Strategy to be considered for their endorsement when complete.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Strategy alignment and needs assessment

- 2.1 The council's previous cultural strategy expired in 2019. Since then tactical support of the cultural sector has been delivered through the COVID-19 Recovery Plans with support from the Return to the High Street and Welcome Back funding programmes.
- 2.2 Developing a Cultural Strategy aligns directly with Council Plan priorities of Living Well through offering and supporting a wide range of inclusive and accessible activities across the district; and Vibrant Local Economy through working with partners to promote and develop our unique cultural, heritage and natural environment assets and working with businesses, local universities and colleges to position Winchester as a centre for digital, creative and knowledge-based industries. It further supports the council's enhanced focus on greener faster through the implementation of GED Strategy to deliver green growth and pride of place, ensuring the special aspects of the district's heritage, open spaces and public realm are cared for and available for everyone to enjoy.
- 2.3 The diagram below illustrates the connectivity between the Cultural Strategy and other council strategies and its flow of production from scoping via consultation groups to delivery.

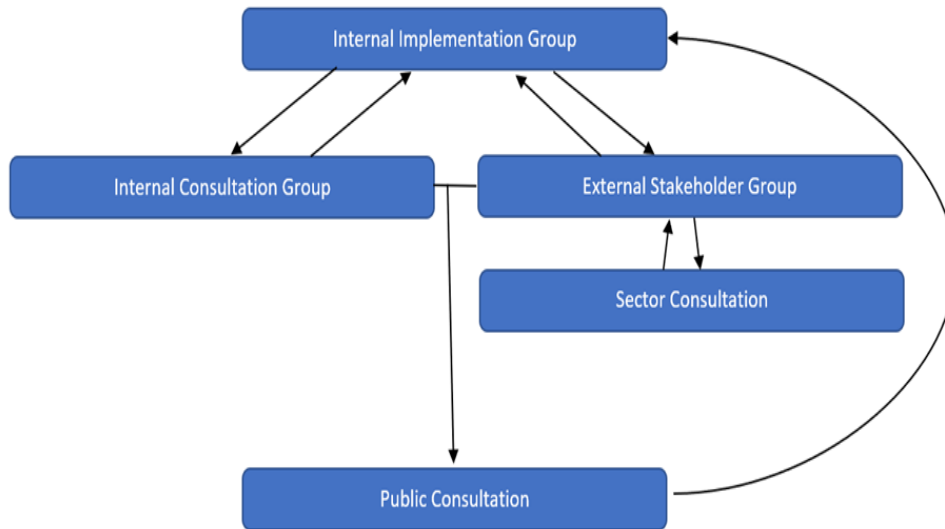


- 2.4 Subject to consultation, it is anticipated that the Cultural Strategy will seek to:
- a) Support and develop the growth of the cultural sector,
 - b) Ensure that the cultural offer is current, allowing the district to compete effectively,
 - c) Encourage the exploration, conservation and re-purposing of our heritage sites,
 - d) Improve access to arts, regardless of personal circumstance,
 - e) Empower communities to celebrate their culture and creativity in a way they choose,
 - f) Inspire people to celebrate and protect our green spaces and reduce their carbon footprint,
 - g) Bring the sector together and work towards unified aims.
- 2.5 The strategy will be underpinned by:
- a) collaboratively driven development of a vision, strategic aims and objectives and deliverable actions,
 - b) a set of realistic indicators to measure and monitor progress.
- 2.6 The purpose of the strategy will:
- a) build on what is already a well-established and recognised culture and creative sector, delivering for both visitors and residents,
 - b) act as a lever to attract investment,
 - c) embolden the sector to work collaboratively towards shared aims.

Consultation Process

- 2.7 The purpose of scoping the approach to developing the Cultural Strategy is to encourage input from members and stakeholders in order to ensure the correct framework is developed to bring about a comprehensive, fully informed, dynamic strategy. This will ensure a strategy that is owned and delivered by all stakeholders in the cultural sector operating across the Winchester district and beyond.

2.8 The diagram below demonstrates how consultation with internal teams, external stakeholders, sector experts and the public will be undertaken throughout the development process.



2.9 Membership of Consultation Groups

Internal	External
<p>Implementation Group <i>Members & Officers</i> <i>Purpose: Strategic overview and decision making</i></p>	<p>Stakeholder Group <i>Representative Bodies and individual specialists</i> <i>Purpose: To ensure engagement to influence development and adoption of the cultural strategy</i></p>
<p>Susan Robbins Corporate Head of Service: Economy & Communities Andrew Gostelow Service Lead: Economy & Tourism Rachel Gander: Tourism Marketing & Development Manager Emalene Hickman Culture & Creative Sector Development Officer Cllr Lucille Thompson: Cabinet Member for Business and Culture</p>	<p>Sector Agencies: National, Regional, Local Regional Development Agencies, County and Parish Councils Education Health Community Younger and older population Sustainability Key operators and businesses Representation from sectors beyond culture and creative</p>

Internal	External
Internal Consultation Group <i>Members & Officers</i> <i>Purpose: To ensure organisation wide engagement and adoption</i>	Sector Consultation <i>Representative organisations operating in the cultural sector</i> <i>Purpose: To ensure sector wide engagement to influence direction and adoption of the cultural strategy</i>
Communities (incl Sport) Housing Transport Events (Environmental Health / Licensing) Economic Development Tourism Marketing & Development Sustainability Corporate Communications	Representatives from national delivery partners Creative and Cultural organisations, businesses and operators Members of: The City Centre Partnership The Cultural Network Group Discover Winchester The Attractions Partnership The Winchester & District Business Strategy Group The Festivals Group
	Public Consultation <i>Members of the public</i> <i>Purpose: To provide feedback on strategic key themes</i>
	Online surveys, e-communications, drop-in events

Strategy Development Process

2.10 The strategy will be developed and delivered in four distinct stages:

Workstream one: establishing a baseline and evidence base Winter/Spring 2022/23
Build an evidence base, examples include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audit of current cultural product across the district 2. Audience profile 3. Best practice assessment 4. Local issues assessment 5. Gap and demand analysis 6. Economic, social, community, wellbeing, equality & inclusion impact of the cultural offer across Winchester 7. The investment requirement

<p>Workstream two: establishing strategy and direction – consultation/partnership led Spring 2023</p>
<p>WCC in partnership with established industry groups will consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brainstorming: SWOT/PEST/USPs – Winchester’s definition of Culture/challenges and barriers 2. Identifying the principles and aims of the strategy 3. Shaping the strategic direction and priorities 4. Alignment and mapping to existing strategies and policies
<p>Workstream three: vision & strategy development – consultation/partnership led Summer 2023</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing the vision statement 2. Identifying strategic objectives and targets 3. Establishing the actions and prioritisation 4. Establishing roles & responsibilities 5. Adoption of the Cultural Strategy
<p>Workstream four: measuring progress & maintaining direction Consultation/partnership led Autumn 2023 onwards</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Embed the findings and recommendations of the strategy 2. Deliver actions through existing groups and forums and develop new ones as required 3. Set indicators and undertake monitoring

- 2.11 A ‘live’ and agile approach will be adopted throughout the development and delivery of the Cultural Strategy. This will steer content along with appropriate delivery whilst simultaneously allowing findings to be included as they became apparent.

Work stream one - Evidence base

Product Audit

- 2.12 An audit of Winchester’s cultural product has begun, identifying the groups, organisations and businesses where creativity flourishes. In the city centre opportunity is plentiful with numerous theatres, museums and galleries as well as a beautiful heritage landscape and numerous venues for cultural consumption. However, in the wider district, much of the creative activity takes place in the home or local village hall, with dance classes, gardening, yoga and craft sessions proving popular.

Audience Profile

- 2.13 Audience data from Arts Council England's 'Active Lives' survey, the Audience Agency national data and everyday participation survey have been analysed and demonstrate that Winchester's cultural engagement is good. Ranked 15th of 335 Local Authority areas for 'spent time doing a creative, artistic, theatrical or music activity or a craft' and 6th for 'used a public library service'. Winchester consistently performed better than local and national averages, with 39% of residents falling into 'highly engaged' segments on Audience Agency and a further 48% coming under 'medium engaged'.
- 2.14 According to data on the Beauhurst platform, Winchester District is home to 11,751 businesses, of which 1,987 are registered with a SIC code falling within the culture and creative sector. This ranges from the traditional museums, theatres and galleries, through to design, marketing and architecture. It also includes video production and editing, games creation and book publishing. Creative businesses therefore represent 16% of all Winchester businesses, indicating the area is attractive to the creative and cultural industries.

Best Practice Assessment

- 2.15 To date, a review of 26 Local / Combined Authority Cultural Strategies has been undertaken, contributing to the scoping plan for the development of the Cultural Strategy. Cultural strategies have been researched including destinations both with similar and contrasting competitive offers as well as best in class strategies recommended by Arts Council England.
- 2.16 A place-led Cultural Strategy is considered essential. However, it is anticipated that it will be influenced by the Arts Council England's 'Let's Create' 10-year strategy. It states a "vision of a country in which everyone can explore their own creativity and enjoy outstanding culture". Their key priorities are focusing on innovation and collaboration, celebrating everyday creativity and thriving creative communities. Their funding priorities are: Inclusivity and Relevance, Environmental Responsibility, Ambition & Quality and Dynamism.

Local Issues Assessment

- 2.17 In 2020, Winchester City Council jointly commissioned 'One Great Win', a city vision for Winchester. Culture was a focus area for the consultation and its findings will be taken into consideration as the Cultural Strategy is developed. One key theme prevailed: "Translating existing ideas for change into workable action plans is a significant challenge for Winchester." It was felt that Winchester has a strong cultural sector with estimable resources and a will to collaborate. However, it sometimes lacks coordinated action.
- 2.18 A Festivals Review was undertaken in 2021, funded from the Welcome Back/Return to the High Street fund. The purpose of the study was to provide a better understanding of the economic impact of festivals in the Winchester District and their potential for future development. Its findings will inform the development of the Cultural Strategy. The findings of the study were considered at the committee meeting on 29 November 2022. (Please refer to BHP38 and Other Background Documents below. Response rates within the review were limited but it clearly established the growth of the festivals and

events programme in the past twelve years, going from six to more than thirty festivals across the district. Challenges around funding and financial sustainability, sourcing and retention of suitable volunteers were highlighted. The risk of an over-crowded calendar was identified and will be resolved through the development and adoption of an Events and Festivals Programming Framework. The research showed that, in general, businesses recognised the benefit that festivals and events offer. However it also indicated a limited financial impact and that very few businesses engaged in any focussed marketing or promotions to capitalise on planned festivals and events.

- 2.19 Winchester's Local Plan acknowledges the existing strengths in the education and creative sectors, and notes they are an important part of the district economy, adding to the vibrancy and attractiveness of town centres. Alignment with and interdependencies between the Local Plan and the Cultural Strategy will be taken into consideration. The plan also focuses on the Historic Environment and the need to preserve and enhance our nationally regarded, iconic heritage. The historic environment is an irreplaceable resource that needs to be protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

Further information can be found in Appendix 1.

Work stream two - Consultation activity undertaken

- 2.20 The Cultural Strategy scoping plan has been tested in principle and has been positively received by stakeholders across the cultural sector. Stakeholders were engaged in a series of one-to-one, group sector and the Cultural Network meetings and a Cultural Stakeholder meeting was established.
- 2.21 The first meeting of the Cultural Stakeholder Group took place on 1 February 2023. The group gave its full support to continue to work in partnership to develop and deliver the cultural strategy and beyond. The key themes emerging from the first meeting of the stakeholder group are as follows:-
- A clear vision, collaboratively developed and owned, that illustrates the change required, how it looks and supporting it with a bold and brave, action orientated approach,
 - Culture and creativity is defined and accepted as a tool for place-making, a baseline priority embedded in Winchester District's DNA, acting as a lens from which to view all major decisions,
 - A strategy which promotes collaboration and fosters ownership within and beyond the cultural and creative sectors,
 - A strategy which embraces city and district, resident and visitor, heritage and contemporary and older and younger audiences
 - Capitalise on what already exists exploring options for collaborative marketing and communications to position the district's cultural and

creative offer, strengthening its reputation within and beyond the district,

- Create a narrative, influenced by hard data and intelligence to support funding and investment leverage.

2.22 SWOT analysis raised by the Cultural Stakeholder group and had support by two or more members included:

Strengths: history/heritage, range and number of festivals & events, transport connectivity from beyond the district, number of venues, skilled workforce, international reputation, strong partnerships along with a willingness to work together

Weaknesses: Perception of place and events skewed toward the affluent, lack of visibility, brand awareness, collective marketing and communications offer

Opportunities: strengthen partnership working, engage more diverse communities

Threats: proximity to London attracting outbound culture seekers, cost of living in Winchester district, and lack of sustainable transport routes across the district

Next Steps

2.23 Complete work stream one, as outlined in 2.10. This includes establishing the evidence base including a Gap and Demand Analysis as well as developing a better understanding of the economic, social, community, wellbeing, and equality and inclusion impact of the cultural sector across the district. Subject to the vision and priorities agreed within the strategy, the evidence base will also tackle the investment challenge required.

2.24 Continue work stream two and commence work stream three during the spring and summer of 2023.

3. **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

The following options were considered:

3.1 Do nothing: The production of a Cultural Strategy, whilst an action in the Green Economic Development Strategy, is a discretionary function and the council could adopt not to publish a new strategy. This option has been rejected:

- a) the risk the lack of strategic direction might have in retaining and developing the volume and value the sector represents as part of the wider district's economy,
 - b) the risk that the lack of a strategy might have in encouraging the sector to work together in delivering a co-ordinated compelling offer to visitors and residents.
- 3.2 Develop a short-term cultural sector management and recovery plan in response the COVID-19 pandemic and current economic conditions including the cost-of-living crisis: This option was rejected as the recovery from the pandemic and the challenges emerging from the current economic conditions need to be embedded in a longer-term strategy which will bring about a more effective change.
- 3.3 Employ an agency to develop strategy on the council's behalf: This option was rejected due to budgetary limitations, the opportunity to access expertise at the council, Arts Council England and across the district. The latter approach was thought more likely to deliver a locally driven, collaborative strategy, specific to Winchester District.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

[BHP38, Business & Housing Policy Committee](#)

Other Background Documents:-

[Arts Council England: "Let's Create"](#)

[Winchester Festivals Economic Impact Research](#)

One Great Win 'Culture Handbooks'

[Part 1.](#) [Part 2.](#)

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Early Findings - presentation