

CABINET

20 June 2017

Title: Culture Everywhere: The Culture Strategy for Barking and Dagenham	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Accountable Strategic Director: John East, Strategic Director: Growth and Homes	
Summary <p>The Culture Strategy is the result of extensive conversations with a range of stakeholders including cultural organisations, the Council, developers, local business and schools.</p> <p>It provides a timely and meaningful response to the recent Growth Commission report “No-one left behind: in pursuit of growth for the benefit of everyone” which rightly recognised that culture can support diverse and cohesive communities and an active and ambitious civic realm.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the strategy will be the key strategic framework to enable the funds to be secured to deliver the culture related recommendations set out in No-one left behind and which are incorporated into the strategy action and project plan.</p> <p>The strategy also outlines our ambitions for culture for the next five years and will support the work of everyone working in the cultural sector across the Borough.</p>	
Recommendation(s) <p>The Cabinet is recommended to adopt “Culture Everywhere”, the Borough Culture Strategy for 2017 - 2022, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.</p>	
Reason(s) <p>To assist the Council in achieving its corporate priorities in relation to: Encouraging civic pride, Enabling social responsibility, and Growing the borough.</p>	

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This Culture Strategy (*Culture Everywhere*) outlines our ambitions for culture for the next five years. This new vision has been developed to support the work of everyone working across the Borough including the Council, cultural organisations, voluntary and business organisations.
- 1.2 *Culture Everywhere* connects with a raft of strategic initiatives and research so that this vision for culture is joined up with national and local thinking. Included is a set of commitments, deliverables and actions.
- 1.3 The strategy has been informed by the remarkable narrative of Barking and Dagenham, which is different to that of any other London Borough. It is an incredible story of social ambition, political strength, rapid transition from rural to urban, sporting victory, women's rights, the industrial powerbase for London, visionary housing and the success of migrant communities.
- 1.4 London is moving east for housing, work and culture. The Centre is moving outwards. Not for the first time in its history the Borough is strategically crucial to the growth of London. We have a diverse and youthful population with a vast amount of expertise and cultural knowledge to be shared and celebrated.
- 1.5 Today we have much to be proud of including a Cultural Partnership, Creative Barking and Dagenham, a Cultural Education Partnership, the Cultural Connectors and dynamic partnerships with cultural organisations outside of the Borough such as Create, the Barbican, and A New Direction, and a map of cultural activity that reflects decades of pioneering work around art and community.
- 1.6 However, the cultural sector also face several challenges. Some sections of our community rarely get involved, cuts in funding are affecting what we can do and there is scope for better co-ordination of the work of all partners. We need to be more ambitious and better focused on what can be achieved by working more closely together. Our residents need to get more out of living in the greatest cultural capital in the world.

Current context

- 1.7 The time is right for Barking and Dagenham to make a commitment to the role of culture in every aspect of life in the Borough. The 2013-16 Arts Strategy set out the benefits of art and cultural opportunities for residents and established new infrastructures for the governance of culture - we now need to build on this.
- 1.8 The cultural output of the Borough since 2013 has been seminal. Of particular note has been: GLOW festival; The Idol; The Merchant of Venice; INSPIRE young people's festival; DagFest; The Mobile Museum; Company; Pen to Print and Readfest; Movements, Deals and Drinks; Summer of Festivals; This Used to be Fields; Big Deal, Pause, Rewind, Play; The White House; Open Estate; the creation of the Icehouse creative quarter; and the establishment of a cultural centre at the Galleon Centre, which is home to Creative Barking and Dagenham and Studio 3 Arts.

Future opportunities

1.9 And there are huge opportunities coming our way including:

- London's first Youth Zone in Parsloes Park
- a new live music venue for Barking Town Centre
- the Participatory City initiative that will continue to build on community-led cultural activity
- the new Cultural Citizens programme led by A New Direction and Studio 3 Arts which goes further to underpin a cultural entitlement for all young people
- a new base for the film industry in Dagenham resulting in more local jobs and opportunities
- a new residential development in Barking led by Create London for artists who are invited to lead on new cultural activity in the locality
- Barking Riverside Healthy New Town and Barking Town Centre both present major opportunities for cultural services and programming
- plans for a major new cultural and heritage space in Dagenham, inspired by the industrial history of east London and located at the site of the former Ford Stamping Plant.

1.10 *No-one Left Behind, Barking Riverside Healthy New Town, Participatory City, Cultural Citizens* and new strategies for Libraries, Heritage and Parks and Open Spaces are all evidence of an unprecedented spirit of change and ambition. We have a leadership who are determined to make positive changes in the Borough for existing and new communities and are advocates for culture in the future of the Borough.

1.11 The next decade will be characterised by major physical change most notably in Barking Town Centre and Barking Riverside. There is a collective ambition to ensure that new developments create a more prosperous, liveable place whilst setting a model for sympathetic regeneration. Our challenge is to ensure that *all* communities benefit from the new opportunities this presents and culture has a critical part to play.

1.12 This new strategy places emphasis on cutting across sectors, services and organisational divisions to support a more coherent infrastructure with the goal to enable more ambitious and far-reaching programming.

1.13 Most of us agree that the Borough will benefit from having more cultural practitioners and organisations operating in tandem reflecting a multitude of approaches and greater diversity of opinion. There is a case to be made (amplified by the Growth Commission report) for the cultural landscape in this Borough to be more complex with more voices shaping the terrain.

1.14 To make this work we must build on the important work begun in the 2013 Arts Strategy - to support better communication between organisations, services and sectors, rationalise commissioning opportunities across the Borough, support organisations to be more resilient and make it easier for people to understand what the cultural opportunities are in the Borough.

Strategic context

1.15 The strategy is closely aligned to the leadership's vision and aspirations for the Borough:

- **Encouraging civic pride:** build pride, respect and cohesion across our borough; promote and protect our green and public spaces; build civic responsibility and help residents to shape their quality of life.
- **Enabling social responsibility:** ensure children and young people are well-educated and realise their potential.
- **Growing the borough:** support investment in housing, leisure, the creative industries and public spaces to enhance our environment; enhance the borough's image to attract investment and business growth.

1.16 The strategy provides a timely and meaningful response to the Growth Commission report: *No-one left behind: in pursuit of growth for the benefit of everyone*. It is anticipated that the strategy will be the key strategic framework that will enable the delivery of several of the recommendations set out in the Growth Commission report and which have been incorporated into the strategy action plan.

2. Proposal and Issues

2.1 The Culture Strategy is built around ten core commitments which set the overarching ethos for culture in the Borough:

2.2 Commitment One – community inspired

Of all the recommendations made by the Growth Commission, perhaps the most emphatic was the need to empower people in the Borough to play a greater role in its future through civic activity.

We will encourage new cultural activity led by local people because we want to build confidence and invite innovation from individuals and for the Borough as a whole. This will support existing and new sustainable cultural activity and reflect the many distinct and diverse cultures of the Borough.

2.3 Commitment Two – culture everywhere

We will promote a vision of 'culture everywhere' for its intrinsic value and its social and economic impact. Culture should be on the agenda for every service and sector in the Borough from housing to social care, private enterprise and the voluntary sector.

If we can achieve a far-reaching courageous approach to culture in the Borough, we will see an increase in civic and cultural activity, levels of engagement and participation and significant changes in how it feels to live here and how we are perceived beyond.

2.4 Commitment Three – at the centre of culture

We will work together to build our reputation for being bold, intelligent, talented and informed by a unique, important history. We must embrace our place as a London Borough to benefit from the resources, opportunities and potential new visitors this brings.

As London moves east we will seize this opportunity to create our own confident cultural centre becoming recognised as the cultural hub for east London. Cultural

activity will lead to new social networks that cut across traditional demographic divisions around ethnicity, class, geography, education, faith and wealth.

2.5 Commitment Four – setting standards

It is important that cultural opportunities in the Borough are high quality and achieve the outcomes we aspire to. To achieve this, we must create a methodology for evaluating our work.

Our aim is to encourage experimentation and ambition in the cultural output of the Borough, but this must be underpinned by robust evaluation to ensure excellence in everything we do.

2.6 Commitment Five – partnership

As we work with our partners to deliver the cultural offer we will be clearer about our expectations for partnership working. We will launch a framework to guide all new partnerships with cultural organisations. This will set out clear expectations for how new activity should contribute to the ambitions for the Borough. Our aim is for creative opportunities to be more diverse and so we are keen to develop new relationships with artists and organisations to enable this.

2.7 Commitment Six – new connections

As new homes are built and house prices continue to rise we will see new communities and organisations settling permanently in the Borough. Our ambition is for them to contribute to the social, cultural and economic well-being of the Borough.

Our aim is not to see new Cultural Quarters but to see a Cultural Borough with new and existing residents living alongside each other. If we manage this well, we will see existing communities benefiting from change and not left behind.

2.8 Commitment Seven – communication

We need a more ambitious approach for communicating the cultural offer to people living in the Borough and beyond. We need an agile multi-platform methodology for sharing opportunities that can communicate to younger and older audiences and people with a range of skills and expectations. Our cultural voice needs to be less Big Brother and more Do It Yourself.

2.9 Commitment Eight – new talent

By providing more training and volunteering opportunities in the cultural sector and communicating these opportunities better we can maximise the social impact of cultural activity in the Borough. We want to see higher levels of engagement and participation culture and increased levels of learning and employment.

2.10 Commitment Nine – culture in place

There are currently major changes to the built environment taking place across the borough with unprecedented levels of new house building and infrastructure. We

need to ensure that the Culture Strategy is embraced by those stakeholders including architects and developers leading on the huge programme of place-making occurring in the Borough.

2.11 Commitment Ten – building capacity

The future success of art and culture in the Borough is dependent on a raft of resilient, ambitious and autonomous cultural organisations based here. Added to this, coherent processes are needed for communication and collaboration between organisations and across sectors including voluntary, business and council services.

2.12 The full version of the strategy and action plan is attached at Appendix one.

3. Options Appraisal

3.1 The options available to the Cabinet are to approve the strategy and action plan (with any direction on amendments to be made) or to reject it.

3.2 Not to approve the strategy would mean that there is no strategic framework to drive improvements in cultural provision in the borough, which would also impact on our ability to lever in external funding to support service delivery and capital developments.

3.3 Therefore, the Cabinet is recommended to adopt the strategy and improvement action plan with any amendments, removals, or additions they consider appropriate.

4. Consultation

4.1 The development of the strategy has been informed by extensive consultation with key council officers and important external stakeholders including: the B&D cultural partnership, Creative Barking and Dagenham, Studio 3 Arts and other local arts organisations, local housing developers, the Cultural Education Partnership, Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England.

4.2 We have taken into account the views of the wider community gathered from surveys undertaken at activities held in library and heritage settings as well as at outdoor events organised by the Council and Creative Barking and Dagenham.

5. Financial Implications

Financial implications completed by Katherine Heffernan, Group Manager - Finance

5.1 The strategy set out in the report would be delivered using funding received from the council's general fund and any other funding secured during the period covered by this strategy. Year on year the funding will be reviewed as this may fluctuate if cuts are required or if any of the grants cease. Any major variation in the funding may impact on the delivery of the strategy. Funding streams will be regularly reviewed to minimise this risk.

6. Legal Implications

Legal implications completed by Dr. Paul Field, Senior Governance Lawyer

- 6.1 As set out in the report the Council will best develop and administer its cultural provision through the means of a forward-looking strategy reviewed on a timely and periodic basis to ensure it reflects local needs and the resources available to deliver it.
- 6.2 Where the strategy identifies a requirement for change in services particularly where there may be closure(s) or discontinuance of a service or services, appropriate consultation will need to be carried out. Any savings proposals that affect staff will require consultation with Unions and staff.
- 6.3 In addition, Members will need to be satisfied that Equality Impact Assessments have been carried out. In relation to the impact on different groups it should be noted that the Equality Act 2010 provides that a public authority must in the exercise of its functions have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to advance equality of opportunity between persons who do and those who do not share a relevant 'protected characteristic'.
- 6.4 If at any point resort to constricting expenditure is required, it is important that due regard is given to statutory duties and responsibilities. In particular the Council must have regard to:
- any existing contractual obligations covering current service provision. Such
 - contractual obligations where they exist must be fulfilled or varied with agreement of current providers;
 - any legitimate expectations that persons already receiving a service (due to be cut) may have to either continue to receive the service or to be consulted directly before the service is withdrawn;
 - any rights which statute may have conferred on individuals and as a result of which the council may be bound to continue its provision;
 - the impact on different groups affected by any changes to service provision as informed by relevant equality impact assessments;
 - having due regard to any consultation undertaken.

7. Other Implications

- 7.1 **Corporate Policy and Customer Impact** - It is expected that there will be a marked increase in the number and range of people who will be engaging with the arts over the life of the strategy. We will be supporting people of all ages and backgrounds to access education, training, voluntary experience, apprenticeships, and employment through cultural activities.

The strategy specifically highlights the need to improve outcomes by integrating cultural programming into a range of services, including mental health and wellbeing, older people's services and place-based commissioning.

It includes a priority to encourage greater engagement in culture by young people as there is considerable evidence to show that this increases the likelihood of young people going on to further and higher education.

Also there will be an emphasis on using cultural participation to contribute to social relationships, community cohesion, and making communities feel safer and stronger. Linked to this is the desire to encourage more diverse and representative cultural events across the Borough being delivered by a range of organisations including faith, LGBT and disability groups.

- 7.2 **Safeguarding Children** - A clear focus for the strategy is to improve access to the arts by children and families and to support the delivery of a creative education for every child in the Borough. There will also be an extensive programme of positive and diversionary activities provided for young people.

All arts provision delivered directly or commissioned by the Culture and Recreation service will be covered by its safeguarding policy framework for children and vulnerable adults.

- 7.3 **Health Issues** - One of the priorities identified in the strategy is to harness the untapped potential of the arts to improve the health and well-being of local people. The strategy proposes to develop more opportunities for people to come together to socialise and to take an active part in the community through volunteering.

Targeted programmes will also be developed to support local people to lead healthy lives by improving self-confidence and reducing isolation as well as promoting fitness and good mental health.

- 7.4 **Crime and Disorder Issues** – Research has found positive links between cultural participation and improved social skills and engagement with the wider community, and evidence that culture can play a role in tackling crime.

The Council has a statutory duty to consider crime and disorder implications in all its decision making. In delivering this strategy and action plan, the Council will be providing quality facilities and activities, which will provide positive activities for all residents and, in particular, opportunities for families to enjoy their leisure time together.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices:

- Appendix 1 Culture Everywhere: The Culture Strategy for Barking and Dagenham (2017 to 2021)