

CABINET – SIGN OFF APPROVAL



Report subject	Culture Strategy
Meeting date	Cabinet 8 th March
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>This report brings forward for adoption the first 'whole place' Cultural Strategy for the BCP region. It sets out key actions, owned by and consulted across the cultural and creative sector. This is underpinned by three key development goals covering talent, infrastructure and place. Central to the strategy is a clear vision to establish a leading cultural destination, home to a world class arts and cultural scene by 2032. This will be achieved by nurturing a <i>wealth of creative organisations with high levels of graduate retention: a thriving hub for creative talent, community participation, social enterprise and entrepreneurship. The region will be renowned for our inclusive, diverse and accessible approach to participation and audience development, helping to define a great place to live, work, visit and invest.</i></p> <p><i>Additionally, it will strengthen high levels of cultural connectivity, promoting year-round programmes of activity that are sustainable, cumulative and make the most of this transformational moment.</i></p> <p>The Cultural Strategy will be delivered by the sector, owned and enabled by the Cultural Compact and supported by the Council and embodies a key moment in the changing relationship between the Council and the community.</p> <p>Hosting of the Cultural Compact will transfer from BCP Council to Arts University Bournemouth from the 1st April 2023.</p> <p>A Tourism Strategy has also been developed and is being brought forward for adoption by the Council in parallel with the Culture Strategy. Both strategies feature a number of cross-cutting actions and are set out to be interdependent.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Cabinet approves the adoption of the Cultural Strategy (b) Delegates approval to the relevant Director for the Cultural Service to lead the further collaboration, development and implementation of a detailed delivery plan with the Cultural Compact

	<p>(c) Approve transfer of hosting the Cultural Compact from BCP Council to Arts University Bournemouth (AUB)</p> <p>(d) Agree transfer of £35k identified reserve and £14.8k Arts Council funding to AUB to support delivery of the Cultural Compact</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>To support the BIG plan objective to deliver on the recommendations of the 2019 Cultural Enquiry, working alongside the Cultural Compact to develop a Cultural Strategy and Delivery Plan</p> <p>And meet the Corporate Strategy objective: Connected Communities: Strengthen the cultural identity of our towns and places: support the newly formed Cultural Compact to build on the findings of the Cultural Enquiry to develop a Cultural Strategy that supports community arts and culture</p>

Portfolio Holder(s):	Beverley Dunlop, Cabinet Member for Tourism, Culture & Vibrant Places
Corporate Director	Amanda Barrie
Report Authors	Andrew Emery
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation

Background

1. The 2019 Cultural Cities Enquiry¹, sponsored by the Arts Council and UK Core Cities group set out a new model to help culture flourish at a time of diminishing public funding by bringing business and cultural sectors together based on shared interests in promoting creative and digital innovation. It recommended the formation of Cultural Compacts and set out the role culture can play to promote thriving communities and enable communities to compete successfully for talent, tourism and investment.
2. The Arts Council defines Cultural Compacts as partnerships designed to support and give voice to the cultural and creative sector, with a special emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector itself and the local authority.
3. Also in 2019, BCP Council, Dorset LEP and the Arts Council launched the Cultural Enquiry led by Tom Fleming Associates and engaged locally with over 1,000 stakeholders to understand the opportunities for arts and culture. This report forms the baseline evidence for the Cultural Strategy.
4. In 2020, responding to the outcomes of the Cultural Enquiry, BCP Council and the Arts Council co-funded the foundation of an independent BCP Cultural Compact, with a remit to link the Cultural Sector across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole with other sectors like Business, Healthcare, Education and charities. This multi-partner approach seeks to develop and lead the cultural offering across the three towns, supporting efforts to attract investment and enable more people from all backgrounds to actively participate in cultural activity. The key activities, outcomes and impacts informing the business plan for the Cultural Compact is set out below at (fig 1)

¹ [Cultural Cities Enquiry \[web\].pdf \(corecities.com\)](#)

Rationale	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
The Cultural Compact will create a step change to enable greater cultural participation across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.	Cultural Enquiry and Report	Focus on connecting Talent, Infrastructure and Place	A cultural ecosystem which is visible and accessible	Culture works for all communities and sectors	Improved quality of life
		Lead creation of a 10 year Cultural Strategy	Co-ordinated strategy development across multiple stakeholders	Increased and sustained investment in cultural life and participation	Vibrant economy with increased inward investment and visitor spend
Building active collaboration and partnerships to empower Producers, Investment and Audiences	Enabling support from BCP Council	Develop a cultural infrastructure plan including new Gallery and Production Spaces	Prioritised action plan to create cultural infrastructure, accessible to all communities within Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Growing ecosystem with access to quality cultural participation across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	Improved educational attainment
Making high quality cultural activity and infrastructure more viable, diverse and geographically spread					
Supporting a wide pool of talent to develop and locate here	Volunteer Board reaching across sectors	Establish forums to connect and champion diverse communities, cultures and talent	Co-ordinated stakeholder action to build inclusion and talent development pathways	Talent from all communities have access to high quality development opportunities	greater graduate retention
	Time and space from Partners	Facilitate a cultural consortium to build collaboration, impact, inclusivity and full year schedule of events	Stronger and inclusive ecosystem building cohesion and investment for wider range of events	Increased opportunities for audience and talent, growing cultural diversity, excellence and participation	growing community cohesion with improved wellbeing
Co-ordinating a year-round offer for local, national and international audiences		Support creative networks to build knowledge, capacity and viability	Increased talent retention and attraction	Growing creative community based in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	growing sense of Place, Profile, Inclusion and Identity
Connecting through culture to build a shared sense of Place					

Fig.1 BCP Cultural Compact Business Plan

- Through 2021 and 2022 the Cultural Compact commissioned a series of insight and engagement reports to further inform the development of a Cultural Strategy. These have included the 'Your Shout' diversity research by Natasha Player & Co to uncover the hidden and under-represented voices of our community and explore how they can be further engaged and celebrated as part of the development of the arts and cultural offer across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.
- Further research was commissioned from EL Deane to map the creative networks currently operating across the region and uncover what the Council and the Compact could do to further nurture and develop these networks.

7. At a national level, the Commission on Culture and Local Government was established in 2022 to explore the important contribution local culture can make toward the Government's 'levelling up' agenda and its role in responding to the ongoing impact of COVID-19. Following wide-ranging consultation with national, regional and local publicly funded culture, the Commission Chair, Baroness Lola Young of Hornsey, published the consultation findings and recommendations in 'Cornerstones of culture: Commission on Culture and Local Government' in December 2022.²
8. Bringing these strands of research and engagement together, the BCP Cultural Compact has recently commissioned the development of a Cultural Strategy, which has been facilitated by Officers from the Council's Destination & Culture team.
9. Engagement and testing of key ideas contained within the emerging draft Cultural Strategy took place across a series of workshops with stakeholders from across the cultural and creative community at The Old School House in Boscombe in October. Council teams across planning, environment, tourism, economic development, transport, communities have also been engaged, providing input in December. Further engagement and input from Future Places has also taken place, ensuring alignment with a series of emerging studies commissioned by them into Place Branding, Movement & Wellbeing and Art & Culture, supporting the wider regeneration programme. The draft Cultural Strategy has also been tested at key points with the Cultural Compact Board, whose members represent stakeholders across the cultural and creative sectors as well as health and the NHS.
10. Finally, a series of online presentations on the draft Cultural Strategy to Members of the Council took place on the 13th & 14th December 2022.
11. The development of the Culture Strategy has gone hand-in-hand with the parallel development of a Strategy for Tourism, commissioned by the Destination Management Board and also drafted by the Council's Destination Development Manager. Both the Culture and Tourism Strategies contain a series of cross-referencing goals and activities.
12. The Cultural Strategy represents a landmark first 'whole place' approach toward cultural development for the BCP region and comes at a pivotal time for Local Government and the cultural and creative sector.
13. Local Government public funding for culture is under increasing pressure as the Council works to develop and implement a financial strategy to deliver its Transformation Agenda and respond to the Government's Autumn Statement and the wider impacts of rising inflation, energy costs and cost of living. Further clarity on the Council's budget commitment to cultural activity and service provision will be confirmed toward the end of January 2023, off the back of the Government's Local Authority Settlement in late December 2022.
14. In early December, the Arts Council demonstrated significant financial commitment to regional culture with a three-year funding settlement (2023-26) for seven National Portfolio Organisations operating in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, to which BCP Council provides a level of contributory funding support. These organisations are: Activate Performing Arts (Inside Out Dorset

² [Cornerstone of culture: Commission on Culture and Local Government, 2022](#)

Festival); BCP Council (Arts by the Sea Festival); Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; Hampshire Cultural Trust (Red House Museum); Poole Arts Trust (Lighthouse Poole); Pavilion Dance Southwest; Wessex Museums Trust (Poole Museum).

15. One key outcome of the Council's Financial Strategy will be the need for the Council to reposition its relationship with the cultural sector and move away from direct funding models and focus more on enabling the sector to deliver outcomes for itself. The Cultural Strategy, for which the Council is a principal stakeholder and partner, will be central to setting a roadmap to a more financially sustainable future. To achieve this, there is a need for ongoing commitment and support to the activities of the Cultural Compact as the emerging lead champion for the sector.
16. In February 2023 the Council approved a revised budget for 2023/24, within which funding for the Cultural Compact has been withdrawn for one year as part of a wider package of financial savings. The Council and Arts University Bournemouth have agreed arrangements to support the ongoing delivery of the Cultural Compact with AUB offering to host the Compact from 1st April and the Council transferring £35k identified reserve and £14.8k Arts Council funding to AUB to help enable this.
17. The Culture Strategy sets out a compelling vision for Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole to become a regional powerhouse for the arts, a leading cultural destination and a great place to host and nurture creative talent. The Strategy establishes a series of actions across 3 the key themes of talent, infrastructure and place. The Culture Strategy is owned by the creative and cultural sector, facilitated by the Cultural Compact and enabled by BCP Council.

Options Appraisal

18. The action to establish a Cultural Strategy was set out in the funding remit for the Cultural Compact in 2020 and has subsequently been incorporated into the Council's Big Plan and Corporate Strategy as clear goals to achieve by the end of 2022/23, by which performance will be measured. Alternative options: Do nothing: BCP Council has no existing Cultural Strategy to roll over and in the absence of a clear strategic plan, opportunities for the cultural sector to collaborate, nurture local talent, retain graduates and attract funding will not be realised. This will result in the continued relative underinvestment in culture (per head of population) in comparison to similar population sized conurbations: for example: Arts Council England investment in BCP equates to £9.82 per head of population, in comparison to £15.05 in Brighton & Hove and £19.51 in Bristol). The economic impact of cultural activity is significant. In 2019/20, BCP Council investment of £1.1m leveraged a further £5.4m in external funding, sponsorship and donations and £6.9m of earned income: a return on investment of £11 for every £1 of Council support.

Summary of financial implications

19. The Strategy assumes that the work of the Cultural Compact will continue into 2023 and beyond, playing a core role enabling the Cultural Strategy to be delivered through brokering connections and partnerships across the cultural sector; facilitating investment; championing the work of the sector; and connecting talent, investment and audiences. Also critical to the role of delivering

on the strategy will be the continued support of the Council's Arts Development Team who provide much of the capacity and resource to support the sector alongside the Council's Events Team for supporting and delivering cultural events. Clarity on the Council's ongoing financial commitment to Culture should become clear by the end of January, enabling more detailed action plan setting around the Strategy.

Summary of legal implications

20. There are no legal implications for the Council from the adoption of the Cultural Strategy

Summary of human resources implications

21. There are no human resources implications from the adoption of the Cultural Strategy

Summary of sustainability impact

22. The drive toward greater environmental sustainability within the cultural sector is a key action within the Cultural Strategy. This will be achieved through development of environmental pathfinder projects within which the cultural and creative sectors will be supported to collaborate with other key economic sectors to support the drive to net zero.

Summary of public health implications

23. Contribution to improving public health and wellbeing outcomes and reducing inequalities for the local community form a central theme within the Cultural Strategy. A key action will see the strengthening of partnerships between the creative and cultural sectors and the NHS and health care sectors through the development of an arts and health social prescribing delivery plan.

Summary of equality implications

24. An EIA screening document has been completed and has been submitted for EIA panel review. Key to the strategic vision is a focus on inclusive, diverse and accessible approaches to increasing participation in cultural and creative activities and audience development. The Strategy sets out a series of key actions to help achieve this around talent development, infrastructure investment and establishing place making and regeneration through culture to improve social cohesion and deliver improved urban mobility and health and wellbeing outcomes. A key action focuses on better data collection to understand the diversity of our communities and then use this to underpin leadership and talent development to increase diverse participation and engagement with cultural activity programming. This includes nurturing the 'next generation' of cultural programmers, representing our hard to reach and hidden communities. A key action around infrastructure seeks to work with cultural venues including meanwhile spaces to improve physical accessibility. A further key action around attracting investment in accessible infrastructure and cultural services, linking to key policies and action planning within Highways and Transport teams to improve public and sustainable transport connectivity with key cultural sites.

Background papers

Draft Our Strategy for Culture 2023 – 32

Cultural Enquiry

Appendices

There are no further appendices to this report