

Report to Cabinet

Title:	Cultural Strategy
Date:	Monday 10 September 2018
Date can be implemented:	Tuesday 18 September 2018
Author:	Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Public Health
Contact officer:	Ruth Page 01296 383009
Local members affected:	All
Portfolio areas affected:	Communities, Health and Adult Social Care.

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

The county of Buckinghamshire has a significant and substantial cultural heritage. In particular our many and varied historic houses and heritage sites are amongst our most significant cultural assets. We have a significant number of National Trust properties including the sumptuous Rothschild chateau at Waddesdon, Prime Minister Disraeli's country retreat at Hughenden and the magnificent landscape gardens at Stowe. Together with our strong tradition of innovation and excellence in sports and recognition as the birthplace of the Paralympic movement, and our strong literary heritage including John Milton and Roald Dahl, the county has much to offer.

However, our assets are dispersed and not well connected, which means that Buckinghamshire is not currently maximising the economic potential that its culture offers. There are a number of challenges which need to be addressed including the need to build better links and networking, develop the county's hotel and accommodation offer and improve accessibility, including sustainable transport.

By developing a more cohesive approach to the cultural heritage of Buckinghamshire, the potential economic and wellbeing benefits of the cultural sector could be maximised.

As part of its duty to promote the economic and social wellbeing of Buckinghamshire, and recognising the exciting opportunity to strengthen this area of the economy, the County Council has worked with organisations within the cultural sector to develop a Cultural Strategy for the county (Appendix A). The strategy has been created through detailed discussions and

engagement, including a successful multi-agency event, and aims to contribute to the following outcomes for the county:

- A thriving economy and the development of high quality jobs
- Equality of access to cultural activities and opportunities
- Improved health and wellbeing of the population
- Re-vitalised heritage and transformed places

Through engagement work, a stronger cultural partnership has emerged which will champion the strategy on behalf of Buckinghamshire. The Council has been a facilitator in the process and the strategy will be owned and delivered by a partnership of cultural sector organisations.

Having a strong, sector-led partnership will benefit the county's economy by opening access to a wide range of funding opportunities and will increase visitors to the county by raising awareness of Buckinghamshire's cultural heritage.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to endorse the new Cultural Strategy and support the development of a new Cultural Partnership for Buckinghamshire to oversee the delivery of the strategy.

1. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

The county of Buckinghamshire has a significant heritage in terms of built and natural environment, sports and literature. However, Buckinghamshire does not currently have a Cultural Strategy which means that current provision of culture, leisure and tourism is fragmented across the county. The new Cultural Strategy will:

- articulate a shared ambition and priorities
- provide a vehicle that drives collaboration
- help cultural organisations and creative practitioners increase visibility, reach and engagement
- help build capacity and enhance the sustainability of our cultural sector
- increase inward investment, with culture increasing the attractiveness of the county
- ensure culture enhances the quality of all our places – from reinvigorated town centres to major new housing developments; from our rural landscapes to our villages.

There is an opportunity to develop a stronger partnership approach to culture which will result in greater impact and will potentially open up access to a wide range of funding opportunities. Arts organisations, heritage organisations, education, local authorities and national agencies such as the Arts Council could all work together more effectively to enrich quality of life.

In addition, culture, heritage and sport have the potential to make a significant contribution to the Council's wider Strategic Plan priorities and the development of a new Cultural Strategy brings a multitude of opportunities, for example a re-imagined library service providing local digital hubs and cultural spaces.

2. Other options available, and their pros and cons

The alternative option is not to develop a Cultural Strategy for Buckinghamshire. However this would risk the opportunities provided by the sector, particularly its potential contribution to Buckinghamshire's economy.

3. Resource implications

There are currently budgets for Museum, Libraries and Archives, but no budget for cultural development. Funding opportunities for the partnership locally, regionally and nationally are currently being explored and 'Task and Finish' groups would be set up to fund-raise for specific projects.

As much as increasing inward investment, the strategy would enable increased partnership working and collaboration across organisations in Buckinghamshire.

4. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

The Cultural Strategy would be led and delivered by a partnership of cultural sector organisations and there are no financial implications for the County Council.

5. Legal implications

The County Council has facilitated the development of the Cultural Strategy under powers to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area through the Local Government Act 2000.

6. Property implications

There are no property implications

7. Other implications/issues

N/a

8. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

In early 2018 a summary of the draft strategy and the opportunity for input and feedback was offered to all Local Area Forums, either through information in their agenda pack or distribution to Members. As a result of the offer presentations were made to two Forums, Amersham and High Wycombe. At the meetings, local priorities for culture and desired outcomes from the strategy were identified.

Initial consultation with cultural sector organisations has been through fourteen one-to-one in depth discussions with key stakeholders. The stakeholders were identified through consideration of the cultural strengths of our County and the desired outcomes for the strategy. The discussions resulted in qualitative evidence of sector strengths and opportunities.

In addition, a successful cultural strategy workshop was held at Pinewood Studios in May with over 60 delegates attending from education, tourism, economy, green environment, and health and wellbeing as well as the cultural and creative sector.

Outputs from the consultation activity included overall endorsement of the draft strategy and its aims and outcomes, as well as some further suggestions for enhancement.

Comments from members on earlier drafts have also been taken into consideration.

9. Communication issues

In order to deliver on the agreed outcomes of the strategy, a long term partnership approach needs to be adopted. The strategy will be owned by the cultural sector, as a result of being developed in conjunction with the sector. Integral to the work developing the Cultural Strategy is the development of a new Cultural Partnership for Buckinghamshire and all stages of the ongoing work will continue to be communicated with our stakeholders.

10. Progress Monitoring

Delivery of the strategy will be monitored by the Partnership as it will be sector led.

11. Review

N/a

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on Friday 7 September 2018. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 382343), or e-mail to democracy@buckscc.gov.uk