

COUNCIL 9th February 2022

Cabinet 17th January 2022

76 CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR CALDERDALE

Councillor Lynn, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Services and Communities presented a written report of the Director, Public Services which provided information on the draft Cultural Strategy. This was a new strategy for the Borough and would enable people to come together, with greater impact to shout about the positive difference that culture makes in their everyday lives. While funding was important and securing investment would be essential to enable its delivery, this was also about finding new ways of working with and alongside our communities, using existing resources and capacity more imaginatively. Whilst there was no legal requirement to have a Cultural Strategy, it provided a clear statement of intent in terms of the role that culture had and would increasingly play in Calderdale being a place where we celebrate our distinctive enterprising and talented communities, welcome their kindness, and support their resilience.

At their meeting on 4th October 2021, Cabinet approved the draft Cultural Strategy and agreed that a further wider public consultation with our communities should be undertaken and the updated draft be brought back for consideration and for recommendation to Council. The Council recognises the value and crucial role that culture would play in the economic recovery of the Borough. Through building back our town centres and revitalising our tourist economy and in ensuring our citizens could live a larger life. It was recognised that the journey of public consultation, shared development and decision-making was as important as the end strategy. This would provide a key building block to stimulate an environment in which the cultural sector could contribute to assisting the council to deliver on their priorities.

The draft strategy provided a clear rationale and framework for the development of culture moving forward. Culture was the lifeblood of a vibrant society, expressed in the many ways we tell our stories, celebrate, remember the past, entertain ourselves and imagine the future. Our creative expression helps define who we are and helps us see the world through the eyes of others. Work was underway as we identify the priorities for Calderdale's 50th anniversary, amplified through a year of culture in 2024. The cultural strategy provided a strategic framework for longer-term development. It would encourage and support inward investment through culture into the borough, by linking the development of culture to our landscape, our heritage, and the needs of the area. It would act as an aide-memoire to local, regional, and national cultural agencies/organisations and individual practitioners/freelancers to stimulate/enable partnership working and greater collaboration. It would support the sector to grow, thrive and increase engagement and participation in cultural activities across all communities.

It provided an update on the work taking place with the West Yorkshire Mayor's office and West Yorkshire Combined Authority through her pledge to support the cultural and creative industries across West Yorkshire. A programme of activities was currently in development where a strong focus was to build capacity and expertise to support

businesses and communities across West Yorkshire to make sure that people from diverse backgrounds could participate in and benefit from the creative industries.

The report outlined background information, options considered, consultation, financial, legal, human resources and organisational development, environmental, health and economic implications.

Councillor Baker attended the meeting and addressed Cabinet in support of Cultural Strategy. He suggested that the focus should be on inclusivity of the culture of all areas of the Borough so that people could share their stories.

***RECOMMENDED AND RESOLVED that:**

(a) the wide public consultation that has taken place to inform the changes to the draft Cultural Strategy to incorporate the many voices of our communities be noted; and

(b) it be recommended to Council to approve the Cultural Strategy for Calderdale.

(Part 76 (b) only)