

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 2024

Report Title	Cultural Strategy update			
Purpose of Report	This report is to provide an update on work to develop a cultural strategy for Stroud district. It presents details of consultation to date, identified core themes and opportunities. This work will provide the basis for the production of the strategy and delivery action plans later in the year.			
Decision(s)	<p>The Committee RESOLVES to:</p> <p>1) Note the contents of the report;</p> <p>2) Delegate responsibility to the Strategic Director of Communities in consultation with the Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee to progress this work to produce a final strategy with delivery proposals and resource implications and report back to Committee in due course.</p>			
Consultation and Feedback	<p>Consultation has taken place with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected members including through two all members briefing workshops and a cross party members panel which has met three times, • Cultural and voluntary sector organisations from across all parts of the districts through a number of consultation workshops and one to one meetings, • Approximately 150 individual residents in one to one and small groups sessions and through a community panel, which has met three times. 			
Report Author	Keith Gerrard, Strategic Director of Communities Email: keith.gerrard@stroud.gov.uk			
Options	An option to not provide this update was considered and discounted			
Background Papers	No background papers			
Appendices	Appendix A - Cultural Strategy Framework Document Appendix B – Cultural Strategy Timeline Appendix C – Equalities Impact Assessment			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	No	No	No	No

1. Introduction / Background

- 1.1 The Stroud Council Plan makes a commitment for the production of a Cultural Strategy for the Stroud District. This report provides an update on work to date and the emerging issues presented in the Framework Report at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 It is intended that the themes, issues and opportunities identified in the Framework Report will form the basis of the Cultural Strategy and inform the co-production of a delivery action plan, which will be brought forward for consideration in summer 2024.
- 1.3 In December 2021 specialist arts consultants, 64 Million Artists, were commissioned to undertake research and consultation to support the development of a cultural strategy for the Stroud District.
- 1.4 In commissioning this work the district council was clear that it was looking for a community-led cultural strategy that will build on the whole district's heritage and sense of local identity. The cultural strategy would seek to harness existing strengths and create a blueprint or route map which would help create a place where people feel confident and able to engage with cultural activities. It asked for consultants to help identify a strategy which would strengthen communities, inspire personal achievement, create happiness, a sense of well-being and facilitate community cohesion and local economic activity.
- 1.5 The procurement brief noted that the Council was looking for expert input to help produce a strategy which would act as catalyst for the district to harnesses the creativity of its diverse communities and generate more opportunities for people to connect, create and communicate. There was a particular emphasis on the opportunity to capitalise on Stroud's unique heritage, character and landscape. The Council was explicit that the final strategy should unlock ways for creativity to contribute to a greener, healthier, and more prosperous district for the generations to come. It should contribute to and enhance other work which the Council and its partners are doing and articulate a vision which will use culture to transform the district, making it more attractive to live, work, visit and invest in.

The brief identified seven outputs:

1. Drive growth in culture and creativity, making the case for investment.
2. Innovate and showcase cultural excellence
3. Reach out across the district, strengthen and celebrate links and relationships
4. Maximise the social benefits of investment in culture
5. Demonstrate the legacy of cultural activity, taking an evidence-based approach
6. Foster connectivity, capacity and collectiveness to deliver cultural activity
7. Embed environmental sustainability.

1.6 *Who are 64 Million Artists?*

The procured consultancy, 64 Million Artists, is one of the leaders in providing advice to the public and voluntary sector in the UK around Everyday Creativity. It is an organisation which believes that through creativity we can make positive change in our lives and the world around us. It has previously worked nationally on research and policy with Arts Council Wales, Arts Council England, King's College London and University College London and has led co-created community projects with Coventry and Hull as UK Cities of Culture and with Rotherham as the UK Children's Capital of Culture.

2. Main Points

2.1 *The Approach*

Since its commission, the research, consultation and production of the Framework Report has sought to engage with stakeholders, partners, those whose voices are not always heard, as well as alignment and connection with other work by the district, town and parish councils. The consultant's adopted the following steps.

- Understanding the challenges of the area (and SDC's related challenges)
- Formulate and develop a partnership approach.
- Asset mapping and literature review (including SDC, town & parish council and partners' strategies).
- Consultation & engagement.
- Develop a vision, priorities and themes. (This is the stage we are at now)
- Action plan development.

2.2 *Consultation and Engagement*

2.3 Throughout the consultation process, there has been a close working relationship between the Chair of Community Services and Licensing Committee, council officers, and the consultants. This has particularly referenced the Council's ongoing work in communities supporting health and wellbeing and investing in sustainable neighbourhoods through community grants. It has particularly noted work with community hubs, and with partners such as the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, The Stroud and Berkeley Vale Integrated Locality Partnership Integrated Care System and The Stroud District Community Safety Panel. Drawing on the cultural sector's expertise to achieve the 2030 strategy has been identified as critical and the work the Council's 2030 team has helped inform the work and shape emerging opportunities.

2.4 The consultant process has also noted and cross-referenced work which is underway to identify Community Engagement and Community and Voluntary Sector Principles for the district council.

2.5 Since its commission, 64 Million Artists has undertaken one to one and group meetings with cultural and arts organisations across the district, including Prema, Stroud Valleys Artspace, The Sub Rooms, Hawkwood College, Create Gloucestershire, Good on Paper and established community based organisations including The Door in Dursley, The Door in Stonehouse, All Pulling Together Stonehouse, The Painswick Centre, Three Storeys Nailsworth, Cam and Dursley Creatives, Stroud Town Council.

2.6 These community based voluntary sector organisations also facilitated over 150 individual resident meetings one to one and in small groups and tried to reflect the geographical spread of the district.

2.7 Two Elected Member Briefing Workshops were held on 24 October 2023 and 19 February 2024. Two open community and stakeholder events were held at Stroud Brewery 6 June 2023 and two cultural organisations workshop events were held at The Museum in the Park on 27 November 2023 and 1 March 2024.

2.8 In addition, three Community Panel meetings, involving 10 independent individuals from across the district, representing a broad range of ages and experiences, have taken place.

3. Emerging Issues and Opportunities

3.1 Building on the requirements of the procurement brief, the consultation process outlined above has identified a series of emerging issues and opportunities, these are summarised below and detailed in the Framework Report at Appendix A:

- Creativity and climate – Working across generations and communities to be creative in tackling climate change.
- Communicating and connecting – creating a culture of advocacy - a cross cutting view to value culture's contribution
- Economy and regeneration - Fostering an eco-system which is supporting the creative/cultural sector to help them become better networked and connected in the broadest sense.
- Future Generations – Ensuring equal access to creative activity, co-creating youth led activities and enabling young people to become good ancestors.
- Community and Wellbeing – Maximizing the districts strong identity with creative health and there is the potential for creativity to connect to issues of loneliness, social isolation, an ageing population and adolescent mental health.
- Heritage and Place – Building on the district's heritage alongside commitments such as the canal restoration project linking communities together and magnifying the role of culture as a key driver for the cohesion, ownership and involvement.

3.2 Under all issues is Stroud's distinctive geography, its nature, its farmland and its history. Within this, it is to also recognise the challenges this presents including transport, environmental impacts, hidden deprivation and access issues. Geographic reach and ownership by all of the district and joining up what we already do with a sense of purpose and inclusivity has been identified as essential in the final strategy. This needs to be a strategy which encourages confidence, a senses of fulfilment, belonging and, in this, fosters happiness and empowerment. We should not be shy from being proud.

4. Next steps

4.1 The Framework Report is intended to inform ongoing consultation and the co-production of a delivery action plan in collaboration with community stakeholders and arts and cultural organisations. It is anticipated that the strategy will be brought forward for consideration for adoption and launch during summer 2024.

4.2 The timeline graphic at Appendix B illustrates an indicative timeline, which is subject to change but is helpful to explain potential approvals and sequencing.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no direct implications in this report as it provides an update on work to develop a cultural strategy for Stroud district and to outline the basis to produce the strategy and delivery action plans later in the year. Any potential costs associated with future funding (p15, appendix 1) would have to be brought back to this Committee in a separate report.

Adele Rudkin, Accountant

Tel: 01453 754109 Email: adele.rudkin@stroud.gov.uk

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications as result of this report. One Legal will be able to provide legal advice and assistance where appropriate to support delivery of the strategy, particularly regarding funding agreements and joint working arrangements.

One Legal Email: legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

5.3 Equality Implications

An EIA has been carried out by Officers in relation to the decision made in this report and due regard will be given to any implications identified in it.

5.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.