



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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COMMUNITY SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE OFFICER REPORT

NAME OF REPORT	Community Officers
BRIEF REPORT	
1	Purpose of this Briefing Note
1.1	The purpose of this briefing paper is to provide an update to members on the implementation of the Cultural Strategy which was adopted by Council on 24 October 2024.
2	Background
2.1	<p>The Stroud Council Plan makes a commitment for the production of a Cultural Strategy for the Stroud District. Following extensive consultation with community groups and sector organisations the Strategy was approved by Community Services and Licencing Committee on 26 September 2024 prior to its adoption by Council. The Strategy document comprises of a Strategic front piece providing an overview of the strong and dynamic cultural landscape in our district, as well as its challenges and opportunities for growth. It provides six sets of recommendations, which identify specific themes for development and support;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creativity, Climate and Nature• Communication and Connecting• Economy and Regeneration• Future Generations• Community and Wellbeing• Heritage and Place
2.2	This Strategy is supported by a more detailed action plan which identifies specific areas of work, timescales for delivery and measurement criteria. Committee approved the allocation of £250k to support this work.
3	Action Plan and Progress
3.1	Work on activity specified in the Action Plan is summarised as follows.
3.2	<i>Establish a community cultural panel</i>
3.3	The Action Plan identified the establishment of a community cultural panel to oversee the delivery of key Recommendations and the Action Plan programme. The Panel will provide a governance link into other networks, and work to ensure equity of access for all individuals and communities and particularly those with protected characteristics and those who are financially disadvantaged.

- 3.4 The initial meeting of 'The Panel' is scheduled for 14 March 2025. Its membership includes Stroud District Council elected members, representatives from Prema Arts, Dursley Creates, Hawkwood College, Under the Edge Arts and Stroud Valley Arts. Its first meeting will agree terms of reference and membership rotation and the assessment of allocation of support for projects and programmes. (para 4.5 below)
- 3.5 ***Identify cultural advocates within Stroud District Council***
- 3.6 There is an important role within the District Council in supporting and advocating on behalf of cultural activity and a cultural programme within the council. In practice this is not best placed sitting with one named individual but can be a responsibility shared across a number of officers and members. Elected members on the Community Panel will be important advocates. This includes the Chair of Council and Chair of the Community Services and Licensing Committee. The lead officer is the Strategic Director Communities.
- 3.7 ***Provide Coordination and support***
- 3.8 A coordination and support role has been identified, approximately 6 days per month for two years to support and coordinated work. This individual is employed directly by the council.
- 3.9 ***Organise and deliver a programme of Cultural Strategy launch events and promotion across the district***
- 3.10 The Community Cultural Panel will consider the detailed design and delivery of a programme of launch events at its first meeting on 14 March 2025. To initiate the work an exciting and cross sector initial launch event, a Cultural Symposium, is planned for 11 April 2025.
- 3.11 **Culture Shock - A Cultural Symposium - 11 April 2025**
- 3.12 A Cultural Symposium is scheduled for 11 April 2025. Its aim is to create new ways of thinking and open up new imaginative conversations about the cultural future of the Stroud district. It takes inspiration from the work of Charles Landry on the use of imagination and creativity in urban change. Charles helps districts and cities identify and make the most of their potential by triggering their inventiveness and thinking and by opening up new conversations about their future.
- 3.13 This launch event will seek to create a place to build new connections and imaginative conversations between councillors, council officers, community hubs, cultural venues, local activists, artists, creatives and cultural engagers.
- 3.14 The symposium will be an important part of a process across the next two years which will build a greater awareness the role art, creativity, culture can play in bringing about real and meaningful change to communities.
- 3.15 More details about the symposium are at the end of this Briefing Note. To register to attend follow this link: <https://www.sva.org.uk/events/cultureshock>

4 Next steps, new ideas and the role of the panel

- 4.1 The Community Cultural Panel meeting will confirm membership and its forward meeting schedule. Alongside this it will agree a work programme and a framework for the management of the investment in initiatives and programmes aligned to the action plan. It will consider establishment of a consistent and cohesive communication process and the scheduling of the first in a series of wider cultural forum meetings and information sharing events.
- 4.2 Contact has been made with Arts Council England which is advising on mechanisms to amplify the District Council's funding allocation.
- 4.3 Dialogue is underway with Gloucester County Council/The Integrated Care Partnership to ensure work in our district is in collaboration with the emerging County-wide health and culture commission framework.
- 4.4 Representatives of The Panel are in contact with the University of Gloucestershire which is supporting research into the impact of cultural activity in our communities. We are at the same time reaching out to neighbouring Gloucestershire local authorities which are themselves actively developing cultural programmes. This will specifically include Gloucester City, Cheltenham Borough and Forest of Dean district councils.
- 4.5 Prior to its first meeting the panel has received a number of unsolicited ideas and suggestions for the development of activity and publications. These are wide ranging and all in line with the aims and recommendations of the Strategy framework.
- 4.6 These proposals are thought provoking and exciting, but it is important to note that The Panel's role is to provide oversight and direction. It will therefore seek, initiate and solicit activity to ensure a coherent and transparent network of support, advice and where appropriate, some investment from the Council's £250,000 funding pot. Its role is not as a grant awarding body. The Panel will be reaching out to work in partnership across the sector and to build on existing initiatives as well as helping to identify and spark new thinking and partnerships.

Ends

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Culture Shock

A day of inspirational talks, creative discussions and collective thinking

Friday 11th April 10am - 5pm

Brunel Goods Shed, Stroud, GL5 3AP

A one-day symposium investigating the powerful role art, creativity, culture can play in bringing about real and meaningful change to our communities across the Stroud district.

We invite you to join us for a day of inspirational talks, creative discussions and collective thinking. This symposium is an opportunity to engage in a day of creative thinking, of reimagining, of shifting perspectives about how we can all connect as diverse communities across the Stroud district through taking culture and creativity seriously as powerful tools for change.

How do we move from talk to action?

“How do you move from a ‘no, because...’ culture to a ‘yes, if...’ culture?” Charles Landry

The symposium will be launching the Stroud District Council’s Cultural Strategy and will be a catalyst for ensuring Culture and Creativity is placed centre stage within council’s strategic plans and the available funding is spent imaginatively, strategically, resourcefully and fairly.

We are operating a Pay What You Can system to cover the lunch costs. All other costs are covered by Stroud District Council Cultural Strategy fund. The speakers will be announced by 10th March

Who is it for?

This day is for everyone who is interested in being part of making positive change in their community.

If you are an artist, creative thinker, local activist, cultural engager, councillor, council officer, community group volunteer, cultural venue organiser, studio provider, local retailer or business owner, planner or architect we’d love you to register.

If you don't identify with any of these categories but you are a curious imaginative individual, or you feel like you've got skills and ideas to share, or you are just keen to connect with others to talk about what culture means to you then we'd love you to come along.

More information about the aims of the day

This symposium will be launching the Cultural Strategy and be a catalyst for ensuring Culture and Creativity is placed centre stage within Stroud District Council's strategic plans and ensure the available funding for the Cultural Strategy Action Plan is spent imaginatively, strategically, resourcefully and fairly.

We want to build a greater awareness of the role art, creativity, and culture can play in bringing about real and meaningful change to communities.

The aim is to create new ways of thinking and open up new imaginative conversations about the cultural future of the Stroud district, taking our inspiration from the work of Charles Landry on the use of imagination and creativity in urban change. Charles helps cities identify and make the most of their potential by triggering their inventiveness and thinking and by opening up new conversations about their future.

We want to create a place to build new connections and imaginative conversations between councillors, council officers, community hubs, cultural venues, local activists, artists, creatives and cultural engagers.

How to register and book a place

Once you have registered we will send you confirmation of the programme and a link to Pay What You Can £6/£8/£10

Register Here: <https://www.sva.org.uk/events/cultureshock>

REPORT SUBMITTED BY	Kieth Gerrard
DATE	5 March 2025