



Report to: Place and Economic Development Committee, 31st October 2022

Report of: Deputy Director - Economic Development

Subject: ARTS AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Committee notes the feedback from the consultation and approves the final version of the Arts and Cultural Strategy set out at Appendix 1.

2. Background

2.1 Members agreed to commission an Arts and Cultural Strategy to acknowledge and champion the Worcester arts scene as well as identify opportunities that the Council can support to grow and develop the sector and its members and audiences for the future. The strategy has been further developed in response to the feedback received and is included at **Appendix 1**. This report presents the said strategy for adoption.

2.2 Consultancy firm Festivals and Events International (FEI) were commissioned in August 2021 to begin the process for development of the strategy. A total of 445 people were engaged in the consultation process for the Strategy through surveys, workshops, interviews, and discussion groups. The draft Strategy has since undergone a period of open consultation with comments invited from anyone interested. Officers are keen to ensure that the strategy is representative of the wide range of cultural activity in the city, so views have been sought from stakeholders, artists and arts organisations and the general public. (**Appendix 3**-Consultation responses). The primary findings from the feedback identified:

- A need to include all art forms, including visual arts
- Recognition and support for community art and cultural activity
- The need to engage young people in the arts through education and leisure opportunities
- Provision that meets the needs of local artists in providing work and display space

3. Preferred Option

3.1 In summary, the following changes have been made to the Strategy compared to the draft:

- The strategic approach has been developed further, following feedback from the consultations, confirming the need for the Council to act as a leader, enabler and coordinator, using our influence and the powers which are available to us.
- Reflecting feedback from the consultations we have produced an action plan to provide the priorities and timeline for delivery.

- 3.2 The four key aims and 12 objectives for the Council as an enabler and supporter of arts and culture in the city, are as follows:

To provide arts and cultural leadership for the city

To increase Worcester's influence within the wider region as a dynamic, innovative, and distinctive place, using the arts as a key placemaking tool
To encourage and empower the sector to deliver ambitious creative projects in and around the city. Nurturing local talent & giving Worcester communities the chance to shine & celebrate the ethnic & cultural diversity of our city.
To develop and nurture creative networks in the city and wider region, bringing together partners to facilitate ideas and developing a community of engaged and active collaborators

To develop capacity

Supporting the sector in securing funding to deliver strong and sustainable infrastructure, with a pipeline of projects and activities to be able to respond quickly and effectively to new funding opportunities
To provide advice and advocacy to encourage business ambitions and employment opportunities for the future and acknowledging the importance of our fantastic arts volunteers
Champion arts and culture, advocating for support and building strong and positive relationships with key stakeholders, including Arts Council England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery Fund and others.

To improve the lives of our communities and widen participation

To provide a range of opportunities so that more people, of all ages, can take part in arts and cultural activities within their community, making art and culture accessible to all.
To create the conditions for the arts and creativity to flourish, enriching the lives of our residents and visitors and celebrating Worcester's unique creative offer
To bring economic and social benefits, to create quality employment opportunities by supporting a strong and vibrant infrastructure

To grow our audiences

To promote creative and cultural activities to residents and visitors, and be recognised as a destination of choice for the arts by a greater number of people, through strong and wide-ranging marketing
To encourage and celebrate attendance at creative and artistic endeavours in the city
To develop a regional reputation for provision of quality arts and cultural activity, attracting visitors from outside the city to attend events and performances

- 3.3 An Action plan (**Appendix 2**-Action Plan) provides the detailed process and activities, short, medium and long-term, to achieve the identified objectives.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 The development of the Arts and Cultural Strategy was agreed by the Place and Economic Development committee in 2021. Alternative options for inclusion in the strategy were explored during the consultation process. The content and overall strategic approach have been developed following extensive feedback from many stakeholders.

- 4.2 To not adopt a strategy. This would limit the Council's ability to set out a range of actions to support and develop the Arts and Cultural agenda for Worcester.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications

There is no additional budget request at this time. It should be recognised that delivering the strategy over the next few years may take commitment of further funds. Part of our strategic approach is to apply for external funding where this is available, and this approach is already being actively applied.

5.2 Legal and Governance Implications

The strategy will need strong and close governance, with the Place and Economic Development committee providing this. A section on governance is included in the strategy for further detail. The implementation of specific actions and measures set out in the strategy will be subject to the Council's normal governance processes.

5.3 Risk Implications

The deliverability of the strategy depends on many of our partners and stakeholders across the city. The approach for continued engagement and strong partnership working with these businesses, organisations and residents is clearly set out in the strategy.

Any specific risks to the Council will be managed under the Council's risk management framework.

5.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The Strategy supports the Tourism Strategy, City Plan and Town Investment Plan with arts and culture acting as a placemaking tool to bring investment and visitor numbers and the associated economic impact that this brings

5.5 Equality Implications

Worcester City Council has an important role to play in helping to reduce inequalities in the City of Worcester and safeguard the rights of people protected by the Equality Act 2010. As a public body and a local organisation, we recognise that the Council has a special responsibility to show leadership through our actions and words on equality, diversity and inclusion. We will promote the message that equality is everyone's business and that doing things better and more inclusively can benefit everyone.

Activities to deliver the strategy will be subject to the Council's standard project management framework and require approval on detailed project plans and equality impact assessments. In this way, the Council can ensure that impacts on equality in the city are fully considered.

5.6 Human Resources Implications

No significant implications arise from the content of this report. Any implications arising from projects to deliver the strategy will be considered on a case by case basis.

5.7 Health and Safety Implications

No significant health and safety implications from the proposed draft strategy have been identified. All major proposals will be delivered using the councils existing project management framework, allowing opportunity for any health and safety implications to be identified.

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Background Papers: Appendix 1 Arts and Cultural Strategy
Appendix 2 Action plan
Appendix 3 Consultation responses