



CABINET

21 March 2012

Subject Heading:	Culture Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Andrew Curtin, Lead Member for Culture, Towns and Communities Cynthia Griffin
CMT Lead:	
Report Author and contact details:	Catherine Robinson x3604
Policy context:	Living Ambition
Financial summary:	This strategy will be delivered within existing resources
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Is this a Strategic Decision?	Yes
When should this matter be reviewed?	January 2015
Reviewing OSC:	Towns and Communities

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	[✓]
Championing education and learning for all	[✓]
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	[✓]
Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents	[✓]
Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	[✓]

SUMMARY

This report seeks cabinet approval of the new Culture Strategy, covering the period 2012 – 2014.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To agree the 2012-14 Culture Strategy.

REPORT DETAIL

- 1.1 In January 2007 Cabinet approved an over-arching 5 year Culture Strategy for the borough. The life of this strategy has now come to an end, and a new 3 year Culture Strategy has been produced to cover the period 2012-2014.
- 1.2 The core ambition of the Culture Strategy is *'to transform lives through participation in, and enjoyment of, culture'*. The strategy sets out 3 objectives and 4 underpinning principles which outline our priorities for achieving this (see section 3.0 below).
- 1.3 Primarily, the Culture Strategy provides a strategic direction for the Council, but it also provides a framework for the wider development of culture in the borough through partnership with agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The strategy also clearly demonstrates to external partners and funding agencies the key priorities for the Council and the community.
- 1.4 The strategy includes an analysis of the current service and identifies emerging opportunities and areas for development over the coming years. It also includes a high level action plan for Culture & Leisure. Both the analysis and action plan will be used to inform service planning on an annual basis and in turn be reflected in individual work programmes.
- 1.5 The strategy has been developed through consultation with both internal and external partners, and the content and priorities reflect the feedback from this engagement.
- 1.6 The Culture Strategy sets out how culture makes a vital contribution to the vision and priorities of the Council's 'Living Ambition' / Sustainable Communities Strategy, and to the priorities of the Shadow Health & Wellbeing Board.
- 1.7 The Culture Strategy links with wider policy agendas, including regeneration plans, tourism, economic development, the environment, children's, young people's and older people's services, lifelong learning, healthy living, community safety, community cohesion, and a number of other important areas, which all work together to improve the quality of life for residents of the borough.

1.8 As a 'high-level' strategy, the Culture Strategy brings together and informs the more detailed sub-strategies for the culture sector (i.e. the Libraries, Arts, Sports & Physical Activity, Parks & Open Spaces, Children's Play, and Heritage & History Strategy). These sub-strategies are currently being developed and are scheduled for Cabinet in Autumn 2012.

2.0 The intrinsic and instrumental value of Culture:-

2.1 **Intrinsic value:**

Both as participants and spectators, culture engages our emotions, senses, intellects and bodies, and is their greatest manifestation. Whether in the intellectual commitment required to succeed in sport, the physical dexterity needed to make great visual or performing arts, the emotions which we feel when reading, the emotional attachment which we feel to a drama group or a sports team which we support, or the sensory engagement which we gain when we experience the natural, historic and built environment.

Culture is important for its own sake and requires no further justification.

- The Arts are important because we can make great things - be they visual arts, performing arts or in new media, and because we enjoy looking at them.
- Sport is important because people can attain great achievements in team games or individual pursuits and enjoying watching others do so.
- History is important because people have lived and made significant contributions within communities of this borough in the past, and we want to preserve some of what they have done and learn about it.
- Libraries are important because we take delight in the world of fiction, poetry, academic writing and children's literature that they contain, as well as for their vital role as centres for information and new technology in every community.
- Our parks are important because of the joy which we get from seeing the changing seasons, from having space to rest and relax, to hear the sound of trees in the wind, birds singing, children laughing as they play, or the sense of a link with the past in their historic landscapes.

They are all worthy of public spending, and investment from a number of other sources, simply because we can do these things and experience these feelings which they engender in us.

They are a vital part of a well-balanced and enjoyable community, where all aspects of our lives are catered for.

2.2 Instrumental value:

Culture is a central part of a balanced life, and has important benefits for our health, our education, our development as individuals at different stages of our lives, our sense of community and identity, and the degree to which we are inclusive as a society.

Aside from its own intrinsic value, culture also has an important instrumental role to play in broader social policy because of the ways in which it can effect behaviour change and have beneficial impacts on quality of life for everyone.

Evidence, from the local to the international level, shows how culture improves physical and mental health and emotional well-being, helps address crime and community safety issues, contributes to the regeneration of specific areas, promotes community cohesion, provides jobs through the expanding cultural industries sector and can help boost educational attainment.

Culture facilities, such as libraries, museums, arts space, theatre, parks and historical buildings, also make a major contribution to the development of attractive and sustainable towns, which in turn has an impact on people's sense of pride in their area, whether they feel safe, and whether they have the space to access and engage in activities they enjoy.

The objectives of this strategy focus on the instrumental benefits under the headings of: 1) Health & Wellbeing; 2) Learning & Personal Development; and 3) Towns and Communities.

These priorities have been chosen because, as well as accurately reflecting the views of the service and wider sector, they also reflect the priorities of the Sustainable Communities Strategy i.e. 'Learning' and 'Towns & Communities', and the priorities of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.

3.0 Summary of the Objectives and Principles of the Culture Strategy:-

3.1 Objective 1 : Health and Wellbeing

Support a high standard of mental, physical and emotional health for all by increasing the number of people engaging with libraries, parks and open spaces, sport and physical activity, arts and historic environment.

3.2 Objective 2 : Learning and Personal Development

Support learning outcomes and personal development for all age groups through our innovative library service, rich historic environment, broad arts offer, sports coaching and apprenticeships.

3.3 Objective 3 : Towns and Communities

Enrich our towns and communities, through investment and engagement in culture, and delivering a high quality, safe, pleasant, visually interesting landscape and townscape for our residents.

3.4 Principle 1 : Community Engagement

Promote more active engagement in service delivery, from consultation, to volunteering, to devolving services to the local community.

3.5 Principle 2 : Work in Partnership

Continue to work with our partners, internal and external, and regionally across borough boundaries, to achieve shared objectives.

3.6 Principle 3 : Inclusion and Cohesion

Be smarter about collecting information on our customers and communities. Target new audiences and broaden access to our services, breaking down barriers to engagement where these exist, facilitating social progress and improved quality of life.

3.7 Principle 4 : Good Value Services

Continue to develop innovative, modern and efficient methods of service delivery, thereby maintaining the high quality of our services against a backdrop of reduced budgets, and ensure that activities are evaluated effectively to retain a focus on outcomes for local people.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

The approval and formal adoption of the Culture Strategy will provide a context and focus for the work of culture services in Havering over the next three years. The approval of the document will support the service and wider culture sector to i) access external funding, ii) influence other strategies and agendas, iii) communicate our priorities to the wider public, and iv) provide strategic direction for annual service planning.

Other options considered:

No alternatives have been considered. Without these strategies the Council would be disadvantaged by not having a defined focus and strategy for improving the provision of culture in Havering.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Legal implications and risks:

There are no direct legal implications from the adoption of the strategy. There may be implications for the implementation of projects to meet the aims of the strategy. They will be dealt with on an individual project basis.

Ian Burns

Financial implications and risks:

Cabinet is being asked to agree a new Culture Strategy. The aim is to provide strategic direction to the service. Clearly, the strategy will need to be delivered within existing revenue and capital resources, resources which are subject to review.

Conway Mulcahy

Human Resources implications and risks:

Assuming the strategy will be delivered within existing resources, there are no direct HR implications/risks arising from this report.

Samantha Doggett

Equalities implications and risks:

Culture makes a significant positive contribution to equality and cohesion issues. Cultural activity is based on values of inclusiveness, access and opportunity. Participation in arts, sports and other culturally related community projects provide a focus for social activity, reducing isolation, and bringing together people of diverse backgrounds in a context of mutual understanding and sharing.

The Culture Strategy has undergone an Equality Analysis.

BACKGROUND PAPERS