



CABINET

Subject Heading:

A Good Life – Draft Culture Strategy

Cabinet Member:

Councillor Gillian Ford

ELT Lead:

Patrick Odling-Smee

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

People – things that matter to residents

Financial summary:

To deliver all the individual projects within the draft culture strategy, A Good Life, it is estimated there will be a total cost of £1.5m. Strategic funding partners are encouraging funding applications to deliver A Good Life following the unsuccessful application to be Borough of Culture. An Expression of Interest (EOI) has been submitted to Arts Council England and subject to passing through the EOI stage a full application will be submitted for a grant of £500k. Other applications are expected to be submitted to reach as close to the amount required. The balance of funding required will be met by re-purposing existing budgets as match funding from the Council.

Is this a Key Decision?

- (a) Expenditure or saving (including anticipated income) of £500,000 or more
- (b) Significant effect on two or more Wards

When should this matter be reviewed?

March 2025

Reviewing OSC:

Overview and Scrutiny Board

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

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well X

Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy X
Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

SUMMARY

A draft cultural strategy, A Good Life (Appendix A), has been written based on the LBOC application. Projects from the LBOC application have formed the focus of the strategy. This was following consultation with over a thousand people and over fifty groups and organisations.

In order to deliver the projects within 'A Good Life', external funding applications need to be made to external funding partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft Culture Strategy for 2025-2028, 'A Good Life' as attached at appendix A.
2. Delegate to the Head of Leisure and Culture, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources and the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing the ability to amend and update the Culture Strategy from time to time, provided that such changes do not contravene the principles detailed in this report.
3. Delegate to the Head of Leisure Culture, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources and the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing the ability to take all steps necessary to deliver the Culture Strategy including (but not limited to) applications for, acceptance of and spending of external funding.

REPORT DETAIL

Background

1. On 13 March 2024, Cabinet agreed to the incorporation of a company limited by guarantee wholly owned by the Council for the purpose of delivering the LBOC year (if awarded) and/or realising and delivering other cultural and place making opportunities. The application to be LBOC was unsuccessful.
2. During the application process for the LBOC, there were positive conversations with external funders who have expressed a desire to reverse the Borough's lower investment through external funding per head compared to other London Boroughs. These conversations have continued since the outcome for the LBOC.

Current Situation

3. A draft cultural strategy, A Good Life (Appendix A), has been written based on the LBOC application. Projects from the LBOC application have formed the focus of the strategy. This was following consultation with over a thousand people and over fifty groups and organisations.
4. The strategy has been developed by the public, private and voluntary sector in Havering, and represents the planned strategic work of a broad range of organisations and groups. It is a consortium strategy designed to act as a three -year catalyst for nurturing and growing the cultural life of a rapidly changing place. It is designed to be used by anyone developing, making and building cultural activity in Havering. It supports a shared vision across a networked borough.
5. A Good Life has the following vision:

A Good Life is a transformational approach to the long-term wellbeing of Havering's residents within a radically changing place. Empowering communities, nurturing social connectivity, addressing inequality, building a sustainable creative ecology, and promoting good physical and mental health are foundations of the strategy.

6. A Good Life has five principles:

Developing a creative health borough;

Intricately weaving the concept of long-term wellbeing through cultural activity.

Transforming the cultural ecology;

Capacity building to benefit from growth and seeking a levelling up in investment.

Redefining heritage for the 21st Century;

Rebalancing the widest definition of heritage, to better include the borough's new population.

Every child and young person engaging in culture;

Uniting education and arts partners to empower young people and make them feel proud.

Addressing social and environmental justice;

Helping lead the way in dismantling inequalities and addressing the climate emergency.

7. The principles are followed by a number of objectives:

- A bold new identity for Havering that celebrates all our people, places, and heritage.
- Harness culture to embrace and champion the fast changing nature of Havering's communities ensuring representation for all.
- Transform our cultural ecology, addressing structural inequalities, building new artistic legacies for Havering.
- Engage all people in culture, enabling access physically and digitally across every part of the borough.
- Empower talent and provide new opportunities for underserved and underrepresented communities, prioritising social justice and equity.
- Address health inequalities and the physical and mental wellbeing of all our residents.

8. It is recommended that progress with drafting a cultural strategy involving extensive consultation is noted and that the Council 'signs up' to endorsing the draft strategy.

Delivering A Good Life

9. There have been positive conversations with a number of strategic funding partners following the outcome of the LBOC application. One such conversation with Arts Council England (ACE) has resulted in an expression of interest being submitted. Subject to a successful outcome of the expression of interest, a full funding application will be submitted to ACE to part fund the delivery of A Good Life.

10. Arts Council England expect other funding to be secured as match funding for their contribution if successful. As such, other funding applications to a range of funders are also being prepared to raise sufficient funding to deliver all of the projects within A Good Life. It is expected funding applications will be submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England, National Lottery Communities Fund, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, City Bridge Trust amongst others.

11. By delivering these projects subject to successful funding applications, the Council will be adhering to the Vision: The Havering You Want to be Part Of,

and the principle, Place – a great place to live, work and enjoy. Outcome – Improve Havering’s art, history, leisure and culture offer.

12. This decision is required as external funding applications and the acceptance of the terms and conditions of any grants if successful require the sign off from the S151 Officer.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

A decision is required to demonstrate the Council are signed up to the draft culture strategy, ‘A Good Life’ and to then submit external funding applications to realise the delivery of the strategy.

Other options considered:

1. Do nothing – without endorsing A Good Life and applying for external funding, there will be no grants received enabling the delivery of many elements of the LBOC application as captured within a new draft Cultural Strategy for Havering, A Good Life. The estimated total funding required is £1.5m. This has been rejected as the impact and benefits to the borough of inward investment, engagement and legacy through making funding applications are considered to be too significant to miss the opportunity if any bid is successful.
2. Do not identify existing budgets that can be re-purposed towards cultural activity as evidence of Council support to external funders. This has been rejected, as without an element of a Council contribution, bids are not likely to be successful and will fail at the first hurdle.
3. Limit the number of funding applications submitted. This has been rejected as it decreases the number of projects that can be delivered if successful and the associated outputs and outcomes. Also, funders have made it clear they would like to discuss possible funding bids with Havering as the profile of the borough has increased significantly through the application to be LBOC.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

External funding applications to a range of strategic partners and other funding organisations are proposed to be made to deliver the projects as set out in the draft cultural strategy, A Good Life. If successful, funding up to an estimated £1.5m in total could be achieved to deliver the projects.

The cost of the preparation and submission of the external funding bids is approximately £18k which is being contained within existing budgets.

There will be a requirement to commit some partnership funding towards the overall costs. For the LBOC application, Council officers were circulated a funding template to identify existing budgets that are expected to be available in 2025/2026 that could be realigned to contribute towards delivering the projects within A Good Life. It is expected that any match funding requirement can be met from using existing budgets.

Where match funding or residual liabilities cannot be met from existing budgets as envisaged, section 3.3.3 para 5 of the constitution shall be followed.

The amount of expenditure that will be incurred delivering the cultural strategy, A Good life will be dependent on the level of partnership funding that is received following successful applications of funding and will not result in additional budget pressure for Havering.

Legal implications and risks:

The Council has a general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do, subject to any statutory constraints on the Council's powers. None of the constraints on the Council's Section 1 power are engaged by the recommendations within this report.

The Council's Contract Procedure Rules state:

25.1 Where the council receives Grant Funding and is named as the accountable body for the expenditure of monies, and where the terms of the grant permits the council to directly carry out Works, or buy Services or Supplies, any procurement will be conducted in line with CPR.

25.2 Where the funding received exceeds £500,000 a report will be presented to the SLT for approval to enter into the Grant Agreement (or other funding arrangement) and to record the availability of funding subject to the terms of the grant.

25.4 Where the funding is for use by a third party, the obligation to account for the funding contained in the grant terms will be included in the agreement with the third party. Furthermore, the terms of making the grant shall include a clause to competitively tender for Services, Supplies or Works and reflect the Council's

strategies, policies and objectives in so much as they apply to, or are compatible with, the funding objectives as set out in the grant terms imposed on the Council and CPR.

In the event that the Grant application is successful, the Grant funding agreement will have to be reviewed by Legal Services. It will be the responsibility of the Council to comply with the relevant funding conditions under the Grant Agreement.

Human Resources implications and risks:

There are no human resource implications or risks associated with submitting external funding bids to deliver the projects outlined within A Good Life. Officers have been involved in the process of submitting the bids but this has all been contained within 'business as usual'.

Should Havering be successful with external funding bids, it is expected that project management and the delivery of projects will be costed and funded through these external funding bids. Any posts would be 'fixed term' for the time required to commission and deliver the projects. The post/s would be created and recruited to in accordance with the Council's HR policies and procedures.

There will be a requirement to provide some officer support, however this is expected to be managed through 'business as usual'.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

In all situations, urgent or not, the Council will seek to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all.

Should Havering be successful with the external funding bids to deliver all or part of elements of A Good Life, one of the guiding principles of delivery is equality, diversity, inclusivity and access. This principle will be applied to delivery of all the programmes.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

There are no health and wellbeing implications or risks associated with applying for external funding to deliver the draft cultural Strategy - A Good Life.

However, if Havering is awarded external funding, there are many positive health and wellbeing implications. This will be in the form of employment opportunity, skills, social connectedness, mental wellbeing, improved nutritional knowledge and physical activity. Participation, whether as a direct participant in the activity, a volunteer or as a spectator can bring mental and physical health and wellbeing.

As part of the proposed programme of activity there is a desire to provide education, training and development opportunities for cultural activity to positively impact people to progress their careers within the borough – talent retention.

Activities will provide access either physically or digitally through hyper-local activity so everyone has access to culture activity within 15 minutes of their home or business. This will include encouraging access to outdoor spaces within the borough.

A key part of the overall programme as outlined in A Good Life is to grow the cultural ecology in Havering through developing spaces for creative industries to thrive. This would provide a big benefit to the local economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no implications or risks associated with applying for external funding to deliver a number of projects from the LBOC application and subsequently within the draft cultural strategy, A Good Life.

However, if Havering is awarded external funding, the team will acknowledge best practice regarding climate change and environmental needs in line with the Havering Climate Change Action Plan.

The team will consider the environmental impact of materials, sourcing, construction and transportation associated with the proposed programme of activity. The total amount of waste produced will follow the principles of the waste hierarchy: prevention, reuse, recycling, and energy recovery, with disposal as a last resort.

All event organisers will be signposted to a free set of carbon calculators developed by Julie's Bicycle (<https://juliesbicycle.com/our-work/creative-green/creative-climate-tools/>), for the creative industries to understand the environmental impacts of events, tours and productions. They allow users to track a range of different impact areas including

energy use, water consumption, waste, travel, freight and materials.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None