

Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee

28 June 2022

Present: Councillor J Cruddas (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, D Drummond, L Ferasin, G Madden,
L Marshall, P McIntyre, A Newman, J O'Shea and J Shaw

In attendance: Iain Watson OBE (former Director of Tyne & Wear Archives and
Museums) and Catherine Hearne (former CEO of Helix Arts)

Apologies: Councillors K Barrie and J Kirwin

C&L1/22 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution, the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor J Kirwin.

C&L2/22 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

C&L3/22 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 March 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

C&L4/22 Cultural Strategy Consultation

The Sub-Committee received an update report on the progress of the consultation on a Cultural Strategy for North Tyneside.

Following the report to the Culture and Leisure Sub Committee of 2 November 2021 in which the following next steps were endorsed: -

- A consultation process to be initiated by the Council with partners across the cultural sector, businesses, and the community, with a view to establishing a cultural compact for North Tyneside;
- A steering group to be initiated to develop the compact as part of the process of developing a Cultural Strategy for the period to 2030, in line with the strategy timescale of Arts Council England.

A consultation strategy had been developed in order to engage those within the cultural sector and beyond in the shaping of a strategy for the Borough.

In conjunction with the Authority's Head of Culture, work had been undertaken by Iain Watson OBE (former Director of TWAM) and Catherine Hearne (former CEO Helix Arts) in order to gain feedback on the key issues for cultural activity as seen by a range of partners from across the Borough, in the light of new developments and new challenges within the sector.

The presentation provided an indication of themes emerging from the conversations to date with a selection of Creatives in Whitley Bay, North Shields, Wallsend and Longbenton. These included Equal access and confidence, Local identify, Discomfort and Invigorating cultural ambition.

The Centre for Cultural Value Report: Culture in Crisis (May 2022), set out the research findings of a project that had been shared with policymakers and more widely, so that cultural sector policy and practice could be informed by evidence emerging from the project, with recommendations to:

- Improve equality, diversity, and inclusion comprehensively
- Provide skills training to employees and management
- Establish “Creatives Connect”
- Culture Forums to be established in LAs and CAs
- “Mission orientated” funding mechanism for culture
- Audience and participant led approach to creative and cultural policy interventions

A research briefing on the impact of digital technology on arts and culture in the UK was published in May 2022. In relation to digital solutions – North Tyneside was at the forefront.

The North Tyneside challenges included:

1. Facilitating the development of networks to support and bring together the creative, cultural and heritage communities – with economic, social, health and wellbeing, educational and intrinsic value. Some supporting infrastructure would be required to do this.
2. Recognising supper-localism – for some people cultural engagement may be a gig in their neighbourhood pub, for others it may be travelling to see opera or panto or it is their children’s tap-dancing lessons?
3. Supporting independent creatives and cultural organisations to access funding – whilst overall arts engagement was not in the lowest bands across the country (43.07%, national average 44.25%) it is a mixed picture, a need to bring investment at that supra-local level.

The sub-committee was invited to put forward comments/suggestions as part of the cultural strategy consultation process: -

- Networking, sharing expertise and activities could help with equalities for those living in outreach areas and small villages within the borough: Work was being done on this by going out to a wider audience via policy teams with support from the Head of Culture.
- Pop-up shops could be considered in utilising empty premises e.g., via the North Shields Masterplan to help engage people and potentially lead to viable businesses as this could have a positive impact on the community.
- Expanding access to people from different areas to those parts of the borough where artists already provided activities.
- Accessibility, networking, equalities, disabilities and social capital as part of the culture considerations was important.

- Culture at grass roots level so that access to e.g., children and other groups to make it inclusive so there was no gap was essential: The Authority was committed to people being involved in the day-to-day things in bringing their valuable contributions to a cultural strategy.
- Access to funding streams via the North of the Tyne Combined Authority (NoTCA) could be explored: A pitch to NoTCA and The Arts Council had already been made (informally) – it was suggested that the more bids done via networking for funding at the right level of engagement and inclusion, the better.
- The key to getting support was via networking: The culture and creative sector structure could consider this with a view to help in the processing of bids.

A member of the sub-committee asked if Members could also be asked to be engaged in the consultation process on e.g., levelling-up and health and well-being?

The Chair, on behalf of the sub-committee, thanked Iain Watson OBE, Catherine Hearne and the Head of Culture for the report and presentation.

It was **agreed** to note the report, presentation and comments/suggestions made by the sub-committee on the Cultural Strategy Consultation

C&L5/22 Work Programme

The Sub-committee received a report which presented Members with potential topics for inclusion in the 2022/23 work programme.

As part of the process for establishing the 2022/23 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, suggestions had been sought for potential topics that the Sub-committee could look at. As in previous years, the focus of overview and scrutiny would be on policy development. Following discussions with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Culture and Leisure Sub-committee, the Head of Culture, the Head of Sport, Leisure & Libraries, and senior officers, a number of topics as set out in Appendix A to the report had been identified as areas for the sub-committee to consider over the coming year.

The report highlighted that the sub-committee was able to establish a sub-group to carry out an in-depth investigation into a particular area but that due to resource constraints only one sub-group could operate at any one time.

In discussing the sub-committee's work programme, the Chair informed Members that a meeting of the scrutiny Chairs and Deputy Chairs was due to take place on 30 June 2022 to consider amongst other matters, topics that had been put forward by Members for potential inclusion in the work programmes' of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and its sub-committees; and that any potential items of business arising from the meeting relevant to this sub-committee's terms of reference, would be considered for inclusion in the work programme

Members were given the opportunity to raise other topics relevant to the remit of the Sub-committee for inclusion in the work programme by contacting the Democratic Services Officer and/or the Chair direct.

It was **agreed** that (1) the proposed work programme for 2022/23 be approved; and (2) suggestions put forward by Members of the Culture and Leisure Sub-Committee and any further potential items of business arising from the meeting of the scrutiny Chairs and Deputy Chairs meeting be considered by the Chair for inclusion in the work programme relevant to this sub-committee's terms of reference.

C&L6/22 Date and Time Next Meeting

It was **agreed** that the next meeting scheduled for 6.00pm on the 31 August 2022 be re-arranged for a date in mid-September in consultation with the Chair.

It was proposed that the venue for the above meeting would (provisionally) be held at 'The Exchange', North Shields, and that a progress report on the development of a Cultural Quarter in North Shields be received as part of the wider Masterplan for the regeneration of the town, with the option for a walk around Howard Street to help members visualise what was planned.