

To: City Executive Board

Date: 12th September 2012

Report of: Head of Policy, Culture & Communications

**Title of Report: CULTURE STRATEGY 2012-16 CULTURE STRATEGY
2012-16**

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: This report provides background to the development of the revised Culture Strategy, feedback from the public consultation and an overview of the vision and priorities of the proposed Culture Strategy and Action Plan 2012-16.

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Councillor Bob Price

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan 2012-2016: Strong Active Communities and Vibrant, Sustainable Economy; Oxford City Regeneration Framework

Recommendation(s):

- 1. That the City Executive Board approves the new Culture strategy as set out at Appendix 2, and;**
- 2. That the City Executive Board recommends to Council the adoption of the new Culture strategy.**

Appendices to the Report

Appendices 1: Report on the Consultation on the Draft Culture Strategy for Oxford 2012-16

Appendices 2 Annex 2: Culture Strategy and Action Plan for Oxford 2012-16

Appendices 3: Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendices 4: Risk Assessment

Background

1. In 2007 the Audit Commission inspected culture in Oxford and concluded that the quality of cultural activities was 'good'. There was, however, a recognised need for a strategy which would help co-ordinate the work of cultural organisations, improve access to high quality arts activity, and increase community engagement. A three-year Culture Strategy was adopted by Full Council in September 2009 and a Cultural Action Plan was developed in consultation with the sector.
2. The 2009-2012 Culture Strategy played an important role in: developing partnerships; setting benchmarks for the evaluation of cultural provision to Oxford's communities; highlighting the Council's commitment to cultural regeneration through new projects; enhanced public realm activity; as well as supporting organisations to offer subsidised ticket schemes for young people in particular. In the past three years, Oxford has seen vast improvements in the quality of buildings delivering culture - Pegasus Theatre, Modern Art Oxford, the Ashmolean, plus the development of the Old Fire Station.
3. An evaluation of the Council's Culture Strategy 2009-12 has been completed and was reported to City Executive Board on 8th April 2012.
4. Since the publication of the last Culture Strategy there have been substantial changes to Government policies, restructuring of the national, regional and local development agencies, a downturn in the economy and reduced funding for arts and culture. Cultural organisations find themselves competing locally and externally for ever-decreasing pots of money.
5. It will become increasingly important to identify efficiencies and delivery models that encompass different partners, investors and agencies over the next three to five years. Our new Culture Strategy is ambitious and also realistic in its ability to support and innovate.
6. Also, what was not sufficiently explicit in the last strategy was the link between the vision and the city's demography. The levels of disadvantage in the city underpin the City Council's belief that access to high quality cultural experiences can play a significant role in social regeneration. We aim to work through partnerships to create a truly "joined-up" Oxford for our local communities.

Consultation

7. Oxford's draft Culture Strategy 2012 to 2016 was approved for consultation at the City Executive Board meeting of 8th April 2012. A summary of consultation responses is provided in Annex 1.

Consultation questions were live on the Council's consultation portal from 11th April 2012 to 11th June 2012 (just over 8 weeks).

8. Invitations to join the consultation were emailed to a comprehensive database of around 500 Oxford-based cultural, educational and community organisations. Organisations were invited to share the strategy with their members.
9. Those who responded to the consultation welcomed the focus on young people and the strong and "inspiring" vision it offered for culture in Oxford. Consultation comments also recognised that the Culture Strategy will play a major role in strengthening both the local economy and the quality of life of Oxford's residents.
10. Suggestions from the consultation included requests for a more explicit focus on diversity and tourism, a commitment to non-financial forms of support as well as funding, and clarity on how the Culture Strategy will be implemented with the widest range of communities and groups (including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender, students and older people), smaller organisations and the amateur arts sector.
11. Consultation feedback also included requests to support arts-led regeneration, relax restrictions to delivering arts activity and establish an arts trust to unite the wider cultural community. In terms of presentation, it was suggested that we reformat the document to make it easier to read and divide it between background and strategy.
12. All of the above suggestions have been taken into account in the revised draft Culture Strategy.

A new Culture Strategy for Oxford

13. A copy of the revised draft Cultural Strategy is provided at Annex 2.
14. The Culture Strategy 2012-16 is being led by Oxford City Council in conjunction with the Cultural Action Group, a partnership involving Oxford Inspires and the following organisations in Oxford funded by Arts Council England: Oxford Playhouse, Pegasus Theatre, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford Contemporary Music and the University Museums. Arts at the Old Fire Station, Film Oxford, the Story Museum and Arts Council England, who were invited to join the group from September 2012.

Vision and priorities

15. Our shared vision for culture is:
to work in partnership with Oxford's key stakeholders to support, develop and deliver cultural activities that enhance and leave a legacy in the lives of individuals and communities, offer affordable,

excellent experiences, encourage attainment amongst young people and promote cultural ambition.

16. Our three key priorities are to:
- Facilitate a partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the City.
 - Improve opportunities for young people to access and actively participate in high quality cultural activities.
 - Improve opportunities for the diverse range of communities and faith groups in the City to actively participate in high quality cultural activities that reflect their own identities and can be shared with the whole community.

Underpinning each of these priorities is a commitment to explore the barriers to participation in cultural activities faced by different sectors of the community and to find ways of removing them.

The Culture Strategy and Action Plan sets out agreed objectives for each of these three priorities from 2012-16.

Notable additions to the Culture Strategy in response to the consultation include the following objectives:

- Work with Visit Oxfordshire and the County Council to maximise the role of culture in the city's and county's tourism offer.
- Support collaborative projects which enhance awareness of the diversity of Oxford's cultural tourism offer.
- Convene Culture Forums to share best practice and collaborative working opportunities for arts and cultural organisations, the thriving amateur sector, student companies, and individual artists on specific topics of shared interest, for example models of philanthropy for small scale arts organisations, marketing, audience development, enhancing digital skills and engagement.
- Identify locally-focused projects which academic departments at the two universities can support and work collaboratively to deliver.
- Work with the City Council Planning department to embed cultural infrastructure and activity in physical regeneration schemes.

Equalities implications

17. An initial Equalities Impact Assessment is provided at Annex 3. The City Council's overriding concern in formulating its Culture Strategy has been to engage communities currently excluded from participation in the city's cultural life.

Financial Implications

18. The draft Culture Strategy can be delivered through existing financial resources and through partnership agreements.

Legal Implications

19. The Council must ensure that the consultation is effective and that responses are properly evaluated, considered and taken into account when finalising the strategy
20. Issues relating to governance and/or contractual matters may arise where cultural partners assist with delivery of objectives within the strategy.
21. There are no other current legal implications.

Risk Management

22. The Culture Strategy is low risk, although its non-adoption might result in the reduction or loss of funding to arts partners. A summary risk assessment is set out in Annex 4.

Climate Change/Environmental impact

23. The strategy adheres to the City Council's policy on climate change.

Name and contact details of author:-

Name: Dr Ceri Gorton
Job title: Cultural Development Manager
Service Area / Department: Policy, Culture & Communications
Tel: 01865 252829 e-mail: cgorton@oxford.gov.uk
Tel: 01865 252209 e-mail: vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers:

Summary Evaluation Report Cultural Strategy 2009-12
Evaluation of Cultural Strategy Action Plan 2009-12
Report on the Consultation on the Draft Culture Strategy for Oxford 2012 to 2016

Version number: 3.0

Report on the Consultation on the Draft Culture Strategy for Oxford 2012 to 2016

Date of this report: 27th July 2012

By: Margaret Melling, Consultation Officer

Introduction

Oxford's draft Culture Strategy 2012 - 2016 was approved for consultation at the City Executive Board meeting of 8th April 2012. The draft document and consultation questions were live on the City Council's consultation portal from 11th April 2012 to 20th June 2012 (10 weeks). Invitations to join the consultation were emailed to a comprehensive database of around 500 Oxford-based cultural, educational and community organisations. Organisations were invited to share the strategy with their members.

Participants in the consultation

In total we received 24 detailed responses to the consultation including from:

- The University of Oxford
- Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground
- Oxfordshire Somali Forum
- Blenheim Palace
- African School
- Oxford Friend
- HALT (Oxfordshire Homophobia Awareness Liaison Team)
- Folk Arts Oxford
- Oxford Playhouse
- Oxford Castle Quarter
- Arts at the Old Fire Station
- Cowley Road Works
- Oxford Theatre Guild
- Oxford City Councillor

This number of responses is fairly typical of consultations on strategy documents where respondents have to read a lengthy document and give written (free text) comments.

The Vision

1. What people welcomed in the vision:

- Like the mention of young people;
- Strong and "inspiring" vision.

2. Suggested changes to the vision:

- **Diversity –**
 - *Strategy should be explicit about reaching groups who do not normally participate in cultural activities.*
 - *Will it be really implemented, across the widest range of communities?*
 - *the Council needs to work, not only with the large cultural partners in the City, but also with the smaller, community based organisations which connect directly with, and address the interests of 'all our citizens'.*
- **Role of the City Council –**
 - Address the possibility of the city council “enabling and encouraging cultural activities” – not financially but through licensing, walls for street art etc
 - *We believe that the City Council's primary contribution is to support the professional development of local artists in order to create a vibrant cultural contribution to the economic and social fabric of the city and to enable as many people as possible to participate in cultural activity.*
 - *show how the wider arts and cultural community is to be involved and consulted in delivering these objectives, and indicate ways in which the City Council may be able to support.*
- **Synergy between culture and tourism -**
 - Unite cultural partners and showcase Oxford
- **Music -**
 - *Something more specific like ensuring there is a decent music venue in the city would be welcome.*
 - Recognise Oxfordshire's long history of traditional dance and song as well as a very active folk scene.
- **Theatre -**
 - *makes no reference to the vast contribution made by the local theatre community in bringing a wide range of performances and opportunities to the people of the city.*

The four key priorities

Suggested changes to and comments on the priorities:

- **Target groups -**
 - No mention of LGBT community.
 - *The key priorities name young people and faith-based groups. It should also name older people*
 - Carry out research into cultural participation.

- The contribution of students should be highlighted.
- **Communities and regeneration –**
 - *Lots of initiatives to engage sectors of communities to develop cultural interaction, interpersonal friendships and bonds.*
 - *Suggestion of a *Joined up celebration of culture... a truly community focused event.. working towards breaking down barriers to participation.**
 - *more emphasis could be placed upon arts-led regeneration of areas such as the West End through the development of arts based business activity.*
 - *Gloucester Green is the largest open traffic free municipal space in Oxford and with vision and investment could become a hub for accessible cultural activity.*
- **Arts, music and performance space -**
 - Recognise value of the arts “for their own sake” rather than value in achieving outcomes.
 - *Important that needless restrictions on the playing of live folk music be relaxed or prevented.*
 - *Oxford seems to have only tiny spaces or large performing spaces, and urgently needs a properly equipped and supported mid scale performance venue that could accommodate local companies and community arts and cultural events; a local arts centre.*
- **Contribution to the local economy -**
 - *Suggestion of a *New Priority Five: The development of cultural activity as a major contributor to the local economy.**
- **Include all cultural sectors -**
 - *The priorities are laudable but I have no faith that they will be applied equally across all sectors of the creative community.*

Overall comments

- **Presentation -**
 - Simplify and clarify language. More “artistic” language.
 - *Would benefit from being shorter. Would be helpful to have a summary.*
 - Reformat into “scene setting” and “strategy”.
- **Include and unite all forms of Art and Culture**
 - Name the different art forms (dance, ballet, film etc)
 - Recognise contribution of local theatre community - Am-Dram is *a vital part of our heritage and contributes to the emotional well-*

being of those involved. Tens of thousands of people attend non-professional theatre productions each year in the city.

- Establish an Arts Trust
- Unite cultural partners
- **Strategy is welcome and important –**
 - *The City Council should be applauded for supporting culture in the current climate and for driving forward a cultural agenda .. Very important for both the public and private sectors to continue their support and funding for both tourism and culture.*
 - *There is no doubt in our minds that a bold commitment to cultural activity in the heart of the city which explicitly enables everyone to participate and benefit will play a major role in strengthening both the local economy and the quality of life of Oxford's residents.*
- **Widen consultation drawing on experiences of local artists**

Detailed submissions from Oxford Playhouse and others are provided in the Background Papers

Culture Strategy and Action Plan for Oxford – 2012-2016

Introduction

The Culture Strategy and Action Plan resulted from a consultation process which generated responses from the wide range of cultural bodies, faith groups, and community groups in our city, all of which have a role to play in Oxford's diverse cultural life.

The Culture Strategy is being led by Oxford City Council in conjunction with the Cultural Action Group, a partnership involving Oxford Inspires and the following organisations in Oxford funded by Arts Council England: Oxford Playhouse, Pegasus Theatre, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford Contemporary Music and the University Museums. Arts at the Old Fire Station, Film Oxford, the Story Museum, and Arts Council England have been invited to join the group from September 2012.

The Culture Strategy and Action Plan 2012-16:

- Provides demographic and other contextual information about Oxford and the role that culture and the arts play in the city
- Outlines the City Council's priorities for culture and the arts over the next three years
- Sets out agreed objectives for each of the priorities

Monitoring and Evaluation

The delivery framework, including detailed annual schedule and KPIs to measure success linked to the objectives of individual Culture staff and Cultural Action Group members, will be completed by October 2012. Delivery will be monitored quarterly by the Cultural Action Group and by the City Executive Board on a six-monthly basis. The Cultural Development Manager will undertake an Annual Review of activity to evaluate performance against the Action Plan. In this way our aspirations for culture in our city will translate into reality.

Our vision for culture and the arts

The City Council's ambition – developed with our partners, including business, community organisations, the health and education sectors and the County Council – is to make Oxford a world-class city for everyone.

The City Council and its partners believe that culture – whether it takes the form of the architecture that surround us, the museums that reflect our past and present, or the literature and performing and visual arts through which we celebrate our experiences – plays a profound role in shaping people's

experiences and attitudes. We believe that access to high quality cultural experiences is the right of all our citizens.

Our shared vision for culture is:

To work in partnership with Oxford's key stakeholders to support, develop and deliver cultural activities that enhance and leave a legacy in the lives of individuals and communities, offer affordable, excellent experiences, encourage attainment amongst young people and promote cultural ambition.

Strong and Active Communities

Culture and the arts contribute to building strong and active communities. Culture has the potential to bring people together from all areas of life, breaking down barriers and adding to our overall quality of life. It also increases our sense of local identity and belonging. Culture can highlight those things that we care about – through public art, for example – as well as providing opportunities for people to come together and form bonds through community events and festivals.

Vibrant and sustainable economy

The cultural sector contributes significantly to building a vibrant and sustainable economy. The city's dazzling architectural heritage, and the rich offerings of the Ashmolean and other museums, means that tourism also plays a key part in the local economy. It is estimated that over nine million tourists visit the city each year, spending £602million and supporting around 13,000 jobs. We would like visitors to stay longer in the city and to explore areas beyond the city as well. In order to facilitate this we have worked with partners to set up Visit Oxfordshire, an organisation working to improve the management and marketing of our tourism offer in Oxford and throughout Oxfordshire. One of the key aims of Visit Oxfordshire is to support culture and the arts by maximising the role that culture can play in Oxford's tourism offer.

Between 2012 and 2016, Arts Council England will invest £5.3m in its National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) in Oxford and a further £4.5m in the Oxford ASPIRE museum consortium, to support world-class art and cultural activity. This investment will make a significant contribution to Oxford's vibrant and sustainable economy and would not have been possible without the City Council's support for many of these organisations. Indeed, Arts Council England explicitly state that they will not enter a position where they become the sole public funder in a local authority area. It is positive to see City Council funding enabling Oxford's cultural organisations to leverage in such significant investment, providing jobs as well as high quality cultural activity for our residents and visitors.

Culture in Oxford

Oxford has a long history of cultural innovation including the country's first Botanic Garden, the world's first public museum (the Ashmolean in 1682) and the world's first music room (Holywell). Oxford's contemporary cultural sector

is rich and diverse. It includes national museums and world-famous heritage sites, a commercial creative sector including a vibrant contemporary music scene, voluntary arts organisations, Literary, Folk and Dance festivals, community events including the Cowley Road Carnival, and much more. The combination of prestigious, world-famous institutions alongside a more informal, but still high quality network of smaller venues and organisations is key to Oxford's cultural identity and strength.

Oxford continues to be at the forefront of trends and ideas, with the first open studios programme in England, founded in 1987. It has a world-class and highly innovative music scene and thriving contemporary art and theatre produced through nationally-recognised organisations such as Oxford Playhouse, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford Contemporary Music, and Oxford Philomusica.

Recent initiatives

In the last twelve months alone, the range of achievements has been impressive. The Old Fire Station (OFS) opened in November 2011, bringing together a new Crisis Skylight Centre and Arts at The Old Fire Station. Arts at the Old Fire Station is a new organisation, created by the City Council to support the development of the creative industries and help to regenerate the west end of the city. The OFS offers a unique model of social inclusion by bringing artists, homeless people and the public into the same space. The facility combines a range of flexible spaces and facilities, a gallery and shop selling local artists' work, as well as providing training and support for employment in the creative and hospitality industries. The Story Museum is making exciting progress leading up to its official opening in 2014, the Year of the Book.

Oxford's Town Hall continues to make its own contribution to the city's cultural offer. This iconic Victorian Grade II* listed building is being successfully remarketed and is now a popular venue for concerts from a diverse range of performers, and events, including the annual Beer Festival. Oxford Philomusica's regular concerts for children have become sell-out events. In 2011, the Town Hall was the main site for Oxford's internationally acclaimed Jazz Festival. Exciting improvements to the Town Hall are planned over the next twelve months: the City Council is investing in improvements to the Town Hall infrastructure, including an upgrade to the acoustics in the Main Hall. We are planning to enhance the role of the Town Hall as a primary community facility for the city and also to provide facilities for the conference and concert markets. The Town Hall café has been refurbished and reopened with an upgraded offer in May 2012. The Town Hall's high quality gift shop, focusing on products related to the Museum and Town Hall collection, opened in early November 2011.

We have also upgraded the Museum of Oxford. Our plans for the Museum attracted over £80k in grant support from external funders, and the Museum reopened in June 2012. The City Council is working with the University of Oxford and the County Council to secure funding to improve public access to Oxfordshire's museums and to train museum staff. Oxford ASPIRE, the

University/County/City museums partnership has received £4.5m subsidy from Arts Council England through Renaissance funding and we are committed to working with them as a major partner in both heritage and culture through our support for Arts Council England's Achieving Great Art for Everyone and Culture, Knowledge and Understanding strategic frameworks.

The University of Oxford has continued to make a strong contribution to the cultural life of the city and the region. The Bodleian and University libraries receive over 100,000 visitors annually and take part in events such as World Book Day. The four designated University Museums offer free access to 2 million visitors each year and have worked directly with every primary and secondary state school in Oxford in the last year. As part of Oxford ASPIRE they will actively reach into schools and communities across Oxfordshire, raising aspirations and supporting educational attainment across the curriculum and across all ages. Oxford University Press has partnered with the National Literacy Trust to develop innovative schools programmes aimed at raising boys' literacy levels and improving behaviour and engagement. The city also benefits from a range of educational outreach activities in the city, organised through the widening participation teams at The University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

The University of Oxford's recent collaborations have also included the Music Faculty working with Pegasus Theatre and Theatre Hullabaloo to put on '*My mother told me not to stare*' and an Arts Council England funded public art project between the Ruskin School, Modern Art Oxford and the University Sports Department. Modern Art Oxford continues to stage exhibitions of international standing as well as taking contemporary art to estates such as Rose Hill through its strong outreach programme.

Pegasus Theatre, Oxford's youth theatre in East Oxford – consolidated by a £4m rebuild - goes from strength to strength. In 2011, Pegasus initiated *Mesh*, Oxford's first International Youth Arts Festival. *Mesh* was co-planned, run and hosted by and for young people from Oxford, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Croatia, Palestine and Russia. This project complemented the work done through the City Council's own international links programme which offers opportunities for exchange projects involving young people from our twin cities.

Oxford Playhouse's world class programme is seen by over 140,000 people each year, with free and subsidised tickets available to those least able to afford it. 15,000 people engage with the Oxford Playhouse outreach programme each year, with a particular focus on schools, disadvantaged communities, children and young people. In 2012, Oxford Playhouse launched a digital poetry walk, which is enjoying great success amongst locals and visitors, and The Four Minute Mile, a participatory piece of theatre on the running track in East Oxford, which played to 1,000 people. Playhouse Plays Out continued to provide off-site events across the county while the Playhouse Tent toured to Oxford locations including East Oxford and Blackbird Leys, with free performances and activity aimed at families with little or no cultural engagement.

The City Council also continues to work in productive partnership with Oxford Inspires, Oxfordshire's cultural development agency. Together, we are working to build on the momentum and planning initiated by the UNESCO World Book Capital bid to make 2014 a flagship year for culture in the city. Oxford Inspires delivers the Arts & Events in Oxfordshire brochure which benefits residents and tourists alike.

Our successful annual festival Dancin' Oxford continues to receive enthusiastic support from the citizens of Oxford and has just received over £55k in grant support from Arts Council England. Get Moving! – a dance project for the over-50's in Oxford has proved to be very popular. In partnership with the Poetry Centre from Oxford Brookes University, the City Council has appointed Oxford's first City Poet, Kate Clanchy. Kate is aiming to visit all schools across the city and to establish partnerships and projects with community groups.

Large scale outdoor and site specific events play an important role in building cohesion and celebrating life in our city. Around 20,000 people attended this year's successful May Morning celebration, organised for the first time by the City Council. Christmas Light Night – where the City Council, Oxford Inspires and other cultural organisations from across the city work together to organise a celebration of the festive season - has become so popular that last year's main outdoor celebrations were relocated from Broad Street to St. Giles. Around 29,000 people attended events across the city. The Olympic Torch relay and Tree of Light event, which took place on July 9th 2012, gave people across the city the opportunity to savour the Olympic spirit. The 2012 Jubilee celebrations provided an excellent opportunity for people to organise street parties and other neighbourhood events. The Lord Mayor hosted a Jubilee street party involving representatives from the city's different faith and ethnic communities to celebrate his inauguration.

Funding

Oxford City Council believes that it is important to continue to subsidise the cultural sector. Subsidy helps to encourage innovation and new initiatives at the grass-roots level and to ensure that engagement with and participation in cultural activities is available to everyone, not just the wealthy.

Oxford City Council core-funded 9 organisations in 09/10 and 10/11 at a total cost of £326,430 each year. As a result, these organisations have attracted leverage of £3.4m (09/10) and £3.6m (10/11) from external Trusts, national funding bodies and other regional funds. 2011/12 results are currently being collated.

Art projects/activities funded through Oxford City Council's open bidding, small grants and area committees in 2009/10 totalled £12,900. In 2010/11 the total was £36,858. Oxford City Council also allocated £10,000 to arts projects in 2009/10 and £5,000 in 10/11 aimed at supporting emerging talent and individual artists.

In the past two years, the Government has cut funding to the cultural sector, despite highlighting its ability to deliver economic and social benefits and the ability of artists to engage and inspire. Indeed, ministers speak enthusiastically about the positive social role that culture and the arts can play (and have played in their own lives). In spite of this, the Government has significantly reduced public subsidy. At the same time, the Government is promoting philanthropy on the American model, through the introduction of schemes such as the Arts Council England's Catalyst endowments, fundraising and capacity building fund. The major London institutions are enjoying a revival of philanthropic interest through the staging of blockbuster exhibitions such as Da Vinci and David Hockney. However, the amount of private giving for less high-profile activity has significantly reduced in the past 12 months. Despite this current context of reduced national subsidy for culture, the City Council remains committed to funding arts and cultural organisations in Oxford, as well as supporting them to diversify their income streams and enhance their sustainability.

In Oxford, three members of the Cultural Action Group have been awarded a total of £548,793 through Arts Council England's Catalyst capacity building and match funding strand; Pegasus Theatre, Oxford Playhouse and Modern Art Oxford. This will support fundraising towards extended artistic outcomes and improved resilience for these organisations from 2012 to 2016. City Council support enabled these organisations to leverage in this additional funding, which will in turn contribute to their future sustainability. The City Council will work with the Cultural Action Group and Arts Council England to share best practice in developing philanthropy with arts and cultural organisations. This is not to be considered as a substitute for public funding, which remains essential for the arts and culture to be world-class and available to all.

Clearly, continuing reductions to local government funding will impact on our overall ability to fund culture and any other services.

Building a world class culture offer for everyone

For many people who live in and visit our city, Oxford is very obviously a place of global cultural interest. Oxford is one of the most photographed, filmed, and written about cities in the world. The enduring images are of historic Oxford, where much of the city's heritage environment and many of its cultural attractions directly reflect the influence that the University of Oxford has had on the development of the city. These images are vital to our flourishing tourist industry because it is historic Oxford that over nine million tourists visit every year.

Historic Oxford is, however, only one part of our city's story. Contemporary Oxford is a densely packed urban space, with a population of around 150,000 living in an area of only 17.6 square miles. There are very high levels of housing density. There are severe pressures on housing stock, with large concentrations of homes in multiple occupation and significant numbers of homeless and other vulnerable groups. Some areas of the city suffer multiple levels of deprivation—low skills, low incomes, and poor housing.

The City Council encourages excellence across all areas of cultural activity in our city. We also believe that culture and the arts can be key drivers of regeneration, with the potential to build community cohesion by encouraging different community groups to enjoy and share their different traditions. Our aim - working with our partners in the cultural sector - is to increase access for all our communities to good quality cultural opportunities and events, at affordable prices, in a range of venues and locations.

Delivering our priorities for culture and the arts

The City Council has three key priorities for culture:

1. Lead a partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the city.
2. Improve opportunities for young people to access and actively participate in high quality cultural activities.
3. Improve opportunities for the diverse range of communities and faith groups in the city actively to participate in high quality cultural activities that reflect their own identities and can be shared with the whole community.

Underpinning each of these priorities is a commitment to explore the barriers to participation in cultural activities confronted by different sectors of the community and find ways of removing them.

1. Working in partnership

Oxford City Council directly delivers some services, for example the Museum of Oxford, Town Hall, and events. We also help develop and sustain our cultural sector through the provision of £250,000 in grant support and by supporting cultural partnerships. The City Council will continue to continue to invest in culture through grants and match funding for new initiatives that support corporate objectives.

However, partnership and collaboration are essential if we are to reap the full benefit from the cultural opportunities offered by the city and the City Council is committed to retaining a partnership model for delivery of culture. Working together increases opportunities, reduced duplication, and maximises funding potential.

This has been demonstrated through the activities of Oxford Inspires. An initiative born out of the European Capital for Culture bid in 2000, Oxford Inspires has provided a unique model of partnership for cultural development, involving the City and County Councils and the two universities.

The City Council's Culture team will work closely with Oxfordshire County Council to identify collaborative opportunities for arts and culture to contribute towards priorities in strategies including the Children and Young People's

Plan 2010-2013, Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-16, and the Libraries Strategy 2008-2018. We will also co-ordinate with other City Council departments to overcome practical barriers to delivering arts and cultural activity and to embed arts and cultural activity and infrastructure in the planning and delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy. This work will focus on the following priorities:

- Strong and active communities
- Vibrant and sustainable economy

We work closely with key national agencies such as Arts Council England and we support the strategic aims of Achieving Great Art for Everyone. The Council regards Renaissance funded Oxford ASPIRE and the NPOs as major partners in developing culture in Oxford.

Oxford City Council is committed to working in partnership with the city's major stakeholders (the two Universities, County Council, Visit Oxfordshire, as well as the local Strategic Partnership and LEP) and across the sector, to create a collective vision for Oxford's cultural offer for its residents, artists, businesses and tourists. This will bring the city into line with its competitors as well as helping to deliver our vision of a world-class city for everyone.

Action Plan:

- Research new funding models for arts and culture in association with our core partners
- Explore new avenues to attract partners who offer high profile branding opportunities through philanthropy and sponsorship and strong interaction with the local community.
- Encourage volunteer schemes, apprenticeships and paid bursary/internship schemes.
- Commit to sustaining and growing the creative economy and encouraging more creative industries to move to the city, building on the recommendations in the Economic Impact of the Cultural and Creative Industries in Oxfordshire report, commissioned by Oxford Inspires in May 2010.
- Explore ways to increase the amount of cultural activity that is available to audiences digitally, working with partners including NPOs in the city and Oxford ASPIRE to achieve this.
- Identify and develop collaborative opportunities for arts and cultural organisations to deliver against City Council and County Council strategies, particularly in regards to education and libraries, health and social care, and strong and active communities.
- Work with Visit Oxfordshire and the County Council to maximise the role of culture in the city's and county's tourism offer.
- Support collaborative projects which enhance awareness of the diversity of Oxford's cultural tourism offer.
- Convene Culture Forums to share best practice and collaborative working opportunities for arts and cultural organisations, the thriving amateur sector, student companies, and individual artists on specific topics of shared interest, for example models of philanthropy for small

scale arts organisations, marketing, audience development, enhancing digital skills and engagement.

- Identify locally-focused projects which academic departments at the two universities can support and work collaboratively to deliver them.
- Work with the City Council Planning department to embed cultural infrastructure and activity in physical regeneration schemes. For example, if the Community Infrastructure Levy is adopted by 2014 deadline, we will identify and co-ordinate opportunities for cultural infrastructure projects, and advocate for cultural infrastructure to be included in Regulation 123 list and in future development plans.

2. Improving opportunities for young people

As part of its commitment to building a world class city for everyone, Oxford City Council aims to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society. We particularly want to improve outcomes for young people.

This is important for our young people in Oxford, where there are major inequalities in life opportunities. Relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation 2010 place Oxford in the top half of the most deprived Local Authorities in England. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 ranks Oxford 131st out of 354, placing it in the top half most deprived local authority areas in England. Of 85 areas in Oxford, 12 are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with one area in Northfield Brook ward among the 10% most deprived. Around 23% of Oxford's under-16s live in low-income households and child poverty is a key concern in eight neighbourhoods which feature among the 10% worst affected in England.

Attainment levels of pupils in Oxford's state schools are much lower than the national average. In 2009/10 only 67% of Oxford pupils gained five or more A* to C grade GCSEs, compared to a 76% national average. This was the fifteenth worst result of any local authority area in England. Pupils living in deprived areas have particularly poor results. In the same year 46% of Oxford children achieved the benchmark of five or more A* to C grades at GCSE. This was below the national average of 55%. Improving educational attainment and access to cultural education and experiences are integrally related and are key priorities for the City Council.

Engagement with culture from an early age can develop technical skills, discipline, and the confidence necessary for future success. It can offer opportunities for young people to share their experiences with others, helping to build social cohesion. Exposure to a full range of cultural provision can also expand young people's horizons and generate a sense of ambition. In addition, the cultural and creative industries represent a significant percentage of the jobs market in the UK and can provide employment for talented young people.

The City Council has allocated £350,000 annually over the next four years so that we can play our role in improving educational attainment in the city,

particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods. Access to quality cultural experiences and exposure to the practical skills that the arts require play a key role in high performing educational environments and this will also be the case in Oxford.

Action Plan:

- Champion the implementation of recommendations in the Henley Review of Cultural Education in England and work with Arts Council England's regional 'bridge' organisation, Artsworld, to pilot projects which address these recommendations.
- Work with schools, widening participation teams at the two universities, Artsworld and the cultural sector to support and commission activities to fill gaps and enhance existing cultural provision for young people, including through digital engagement.
- Work with Artsworld and Arts Council England NPOs to encourage the take-up of Arts Award (both primary and secondary) by young people in the city and support schools wishing to become Artsmark accredited.
- Provide the opportunities for young people to engage in cultural planning and programme delivery.
- Explore the barriers to participation in cultural activities confronted by young people and find ways of removing them.
- Improve information for young people about where and how to access culture.
- Encourage take-up of creative apprenticeships.
- Support and develop collaborative initiatives to improve skills and attainment amongst young people.

3. Encouraging diversity and inclusion

The City Council is committed to supporting cultural representation and engagement opportunities for all of Oxford's communities, ensuring inclusion of all age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, faith, physical ability and class groups. Diversity is one of our city's strengths and social inclusion and community cohesion are key goals for the city and the Council. This diversity is not currently reflected in much of the city's cultural offer. For example, while Christmas Light Night has become a highlight in the annual events calendar, there are no public celebrations of significant events from different faith groups.

In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the third highest minority ethnic population in the south east. In 2009, 19.6% of the population were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with an England average of 12.5%. The largest non-white ethnic groups represented are Indian, Pakistani and Black African. In Oxford nearly half of births (47%) in 2010 were to non UK-born mothers, compared to a national and county average of 26%.

Oxford's population is constantly changing. People come to Oxford to live, to study and to work, coming from both within the UK and from other countries. There are over 30,000 students studying full-time at the two universities, and there is significant annual turnover in their number. Around

6,000 people arrive from overseas to live in Oxford each year, about half of these being students and a quarter migrant workers. A consequence of this is that one in five of our residents were born outside the UK – the most common countries of birth being Ireland, USA, Germany, Pakistan and India. Around 4,000 international migrants living in Oxford apply for national insurance numbers every year, usually in order to pay tax on their income. These migrant workers most commonly originate from the USA, Poland, India and Italy.

Action Plan:

- Work with people from Oxford's diverse communities to explore and remove barriers to participation and enable access to quality arts provision for local communities, particularly amongst people who are currently excluded.
- Support activities and events that embrace diversity and celebrate different cultures.
- Work in partnership with the cultural sector to identify gaps in arts provision and support activity which addresses these gaps.
- Work with NPOs and Oxford ASPIRE to develop a detailed understanding of current audiences in order to better identify gaps in engagement and take a joint approach to audience development.
- Support audience development schemes aimed at increasing diverse audiences.
- Support and develop collaborative initiatives to improve creative skills, and provide mentoring and professional development opportunities for all communities, including particularly marginalised or vulnerable groups.
- Support arts and cultural organisations to embed diversity into their work and management, for example through building on the recommendations of Arts Council England's report, The Role of Diversity in Building Adaptive Resilience.

Conclusion

Oxford City Council and its partners believe that culture and the arts play a profound role in shaping people's experiences and attitudes. We believe that access to high quality cultural experiences across a wide range of forms is the right of all our citizens. We believe that the proposals in this strategy will contribute to ensuring that these opportunities are open to all our citizens and not just the few.

Initial Equalities Impact Assessment Screening

1. Which group (s) of people has been identified as being disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?

Culture Strategy and Action Plan

Statistics are available from the DCMS and the arts Council that indicate that there are some gaps in terms of under represented groups accessing the arts.

Recognising that the national and local climate of funding cuts across the arts sector represents a significant challenge, the Council proposes to act as a leader and facilitator to enable, develop, promote and celebrate cultural diversity.

The core aims of the strategy are the development of effective working partnerships to:

- Increase the access of local residents, particularly those most excluded (living in the OX1 to OX4 postcodes) to high quality cultural experiences.
- Increase participation of excluded and vulnerable groups, such as young people, older people, different faiths and cultural groups, and people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender
- To improve skills and opportunities for marginalised groups.

Suggestions from the consultation included requests for more focus on diversity and how the strategy will be implemented with the widest range of communities and groups, including young people, older people, students and lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender. In response the strategy has been strengthened to reflect these comments.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?

Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan

The strategy will support the arts sector to remove current barriers to accessing a range of arts and cultural experiences. These barriers primarily revolve around socio economic (cost/ price) and social factors, e.g. possible historic perceptions of elitism and social distance from higher art forms or

events.

It is difficult to anticipate any adverse impacts as the rationale behind the strategy is to increase access and remove barriers to involvement in arts activities/ events.

The Culture Strategy includes the following actions:

- Work with community leaders to explore and remove barriers to participation and enable access to quality arts provision for local communities, particularly amongst people who are most excluded.
- Support activities and events that embrace diversity and celebrate different cultures.
- To work with partners in the cultural sector to develop a detailed understanding of current audiences in order to better identify gaps in engagement and to take a joint approach to audience development.
- Support audience development schemes aimed at increasing diverse audiences
- To improve skills and provide mentoring and professional development opportunities for particularly marginalised groups and vulnerable communities.
- Support cultural organisations to embed diversity into their work and management.

3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.

Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them

Invitations to join the consultation on the draft strategy were sent to over 500 Oxford based cultural, educational, health and community organisations, who were encouraged to share it with their members.

The draft strategy and consultation questions were live on the consultation portal from 11th April to 11th June (just over 8 weeks).

The consultation process generated response from a wide range of cultural bodies, faith groups and community groups within the city.

A summary of the consultation process and responses are provided in Annexe 2 of the Executive Board Report.

4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?

Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments

It is difficult to anticipate any adverse impacts as the rationale behind the strategy is to increase access and remove barriers to involvement in arts activities/ events.

5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.

Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place.

The delivery framework, including a detailed annual work schedule and KPIs to measure success, will be completed in October 2012.

Targets to improve access will be developed and benchmarked against achievements to date in the previous strategy, including targets about increasing engagement from target groups and communities.

The Culture Strategy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Jarleth Brine

Role: Equalities Officer

Date:

Annex 4

Risk Assessment

Nominations to Outside Organisations

Risk Score **Impact Score:** 1=insignificant; 2=Minor; 3=Moderate; 4=Major; 5=Catastrophic **Probability Score:** 1=Rare; 2=Unlikely; 3=Possible; 4=Likely; 5=Almost Certain

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Objectives	Gross Risk		Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk		Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid		Monitoring Effectiveness				Current Risk	
		I	P			I	P	Action Owner:	Outcome required:	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	I	P
1.	Change in Central Government and national and regional policy direction	3	4	Central Government policy changes	Mitigating Control: Keep up to date and monitor potential changes and the impact on the Oxford Strategy	2	2	Action Owner: Cultural Development Manager	Outcome required: Delivery of the Culture Strategy					2	2
2	Change in Local Government	3	2	Elections	Mitigating Control: To work closely with all members and Groups	3	2	Action Owner: Cultural Development Manager	Outcome required: Delivery of the Culture Strategy					2	2
3.	Lack of resources to deliver the strategy	3	4	Staff member leaving	Mitigating Control: Appoint new staff	3	2	Action Owner: Democratic Services Manager	Outcome required: Delivery of the Culture Strategy					3	2
3	Full Council / Executive Board not approving the document	2	4	Lack of communication with members.	Mitigating Control: Continued liaison with key members. Document is properly prepared, consulted upon and supported by a good evidence base.	2	2	Action Owner: Democratic Services Manager	Outcome required: Strategy agreed					2	2

This page is intentionally left blank