

**To: City Executive Board**

**Date: 15 October 2014**

**Report of: Scrutiny Committee**

**Title of Report: Culture Strategy 2015-18**

### **Summary and Recommendations**

**Purpose of report:** To present comments of the Scrutiny Committee on the Draft Culture Strategy.

**Key decision?** Yes

**Scrutiny Lead Member:** Councillor Simmons

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Simm

**Policy Framework:** The Corporate Plan: Strong, Active Communities and Vibrant, Sustainable Economy

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1. That the Culture Strategy presents the fullest picture of Oxford's cultural offering, including cultural experiences that the City Council is not directly involved in.**
- 2. That the Culture Strategy sets out how City Council functions such as licencing and planning can play an important role in supporting culture.**
- 3. That the list of organisations invited to contribute to the Culture Strategy is shared with elected members, so that they can make any further suggestions.**
- 4. That consideration is given to how the City Council can encourage visitors to spend more time in Oxford, and to whether increasing visitor length of stay should be made a priority in the Culture Strategy.**

#### **Introduction**

1. The Scrutiny Committee considered the Draft Culture Strategy 2015-18 at their public meeting in October. The Committee would like to thank

Peter McQuitty for attending the meeting and answering the Committee's questions.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

2. The Scrutiny Committee noted that the strategy is aligned with the priorities of funders, which is welcome.
3. The Committee felt that the Culture Strategy does not provide the fullest picture of the City's cultural offering. For example, cultural events missing from the strategy included the Oxford Literary Festival, Lieder Festival and the Oxford Punt Festival.

### **Recommendation 1: That the Culture Strategy presents the fullest picture of Oxford's cultural offering, including cultural experiences that the City Council is not directly involved in.**

4. The Committee felt that the City Council has a wider role in supporting culture than the one set out in the strategy. This role extends to areas such as licencing and planning, which can influence or determine whether venues can stay open.

### **Recommendation 2: That the Culture Strategy sets out how City Council functions such as licencing and planning can play a role in supporting culture.**

5. Members noted that over 500 Oxford-based cultural, educational and community organisations are being invited to contribute to the consultation. Members requested access to this list in order to make further suggestions.

### **Recommendation 3: That the list of organisations invited to contribute to the Culture Strategy is shared with elected members, so that they can make any further suggestions.**

6. The Committee felt that extending the time that visitors and tourists spend in Oxford is crucial to maximising the economic benefits to the City. Members would welcome moves to change the marketing offer to encourage longer visitor stays.

### **Recommendation 4: That consideration is given to how the City Council can encourage visitors to spend longer in Oxford, and to whether increasing visitor length of stay should be a priority in the Culture Strategy.**

## **Further actions and consideration**

7. The Chair of Scrutiny will write to Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Cultural Services encouraging them to participate in the consultation.

8. The Committee noted that the current strategy will be evaluated in April 2015 and have requested a report upon completion his exercise.

#### **Director and Board Member Comments**

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**List of background papers: None**

**Version number: 1**

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