



Committee

# Committee report

## **Neighbourhoods and Regeneration Policy Scrutiny Committee**

Date

4 May 2023

Title

Draft Island Cultural Strategy

Report of

Director of Regeneration

### SUMMARY

1. The council's corporate plan identifies the cultural sector as a key area which can help drive regeneration and economic growth.
2. The council is supporting the development of a cultural strategy, led by the Island Collection, to identify the key objectives and actions in supporting the sector across agencies, stakeholders, and the wider community.
3. The final draft strategy is due to be considered at Cabinet in June and the document attached is an early draft produced via engagement with island stakeholders.
4. Members of the committee are asked to provide their comments on the draft to share with cabinet in its consideration of the strategy at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### BACKGROUND

5. Culture can be viewed as part of the glue that brings and keeps our communities together. A strong cultural sector and enriching cultural life can contribute to welcoming, distinctive, and attractive places. Used effectively, culture and the institutions and services of culture (museums, libraries, festivals, and dozens of other elements) can contribute toward the revitalisation of communities, the development of trust, improved health and wellbeing, and the possibility of a more positive future.
6. Having a cultural strategy in place as well as strategic partnerships with combined authorities or other independent cultural institutions increases the likelihood of securing funding, such as from Arts Council England(ACE). Development of an island cultural strategy is key element of the council's

place partnership agreement with ACE who designated the Isle of Wight as “priority place” needing investment in 2021.

7. This is because it is vital amongst stakeholders that councils that are seen as demonstrating a strategic commitment to culture and the role it can play for society. The inability to produce a cultural strategy not only results in a lack of a strategic cultural vision for the area, but also a lack of funding, which is already problematic against the challenging funding circumstances that most councils including the Isle of Wight are currently facing.

## PROCESS AND CONSULTATION

8. Supported by the council “The Island Collection” CIC used the Local Government Association “Culture in a Box” framework to help development the draft strategy, ensuring connection with Island community needs. The strategy is a document that needs to be unique to the Island, not generic and off-the-shelf; that speaks to the Island’s unique aspirations, needs and challenges.
9. Desktop research combined with regular opportunities for sense checking, dialogue, and consultation with representatives from across a broad spectrum of stakeholders; engaging with over five hundred people in the process. It is recognised by all this is the start of the process of strategy adoption and conversations have really just begun. In order for it to remain relevant and dynamic it will be essential for the strategy to be reviewed, at least annually, and updated as dialogue continues to grow and new insights emerge once the strategy has been initially approved.
10. The Strategy recognises that each place on the Island has a distinct character which plays into its cultural offer and collectively there is:
  - a. Strong ambition for a sustainable mission zero together Island.
  - b. lack of opportunities and support for developing creative practice/ businesses.
  - c. real community appetite and momentum in time for culture and creativity to be a major catalyst for change on the Island, especially if it focuses on:
    - an aim of transforming the Island for new generations.
    - a desire to regenerate tired places.
    - build a reputation of the Isle of Wight as cultural island where creative people want to be – to study, to visit, to work.
    - Develop place-based ‘cultural clusters’ supporting Island-wide strategic initiatives.
    - introduce the idea of a distributed centre of natural and cultural heritage, linked by shared storytelling, audiences, collections, and heritage assets, working practices.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

11. Draft Cultural Strategy 2023

## RECOMMENDATION

12. This paper seeks comments from policy scrutiny committee on the draft cultural strategy attached as Appendix 1 to enable further refinement of the plan before it is considered for adoption by cabinet.

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