



Cabinet report

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| Date | 8 JUNE 2023 |
| Title | ISLE OF WIGHT CULTURAL STRATEGY |
| Report of | CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMY, REGENERATION, CULTURE AND LEISURE |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report seeks adoption of a new Isle of Wight Cultural Strategy (Appendix 1).
2. Culture is a difficult thing to define but in simple terms it is about how we live our lives, who we are, our heritage and our future. It is often viewed as arts, festivals, music, film, design etc. but it is also about the distinctive character of people and places. A strong cultural sector can help grow the economy and create new jobs, enrich people's lives and make the island a more attractive and welcoming place to invest in and visit.
3. The councils corporate plan 202125 highlighted the administrations ambition to elevate the role of the cultural sector as part of its regeneration strategy of which a key activity was the development of a cultural strategy for the Island.
4. The draft Cultural Strategy is a call to action for placing culture and creativity at the heart of the Islands prosperity base on 4 key goals:
 - Ensure the Isle of Wight is a place known for great creativity.
 - Nurturing creative talent.
 - Develop cultural audiences for prosperity and well-being.
 - Embedded resilience into our cultural and creative offer to ensure the strategy has longevity and thrives.
5. The current draft has been developed through consultation with key stakeholders and businesses in the cultural sector and will help deliver increasing economic value and jobs as well as strengthening the council relationship with organisations such as Historic England and Arts Council. It will also ensure the island can demonstrate a joined-up approach across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors making it better placed to lever additional public (and private/investment to deliver the objectives of the strategy.

6. This report seeks agreement to the draft Cultural Strategy subject to any final amendments agreed by the Cabinet member.

RECOMMENDATION

7. To agree the Isle of Wight Cultural Strategy 2023 subject to any further amendments agreed by the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure.

BACKGROUND

8. The Island has a rich cultural history and a vibrant cultural sector which is often the reason people both visit the island but also decide it's the place they want to stay and call home.
9. It is often easy to take for granted what makes the island a special place and if it is not understood, supported and nurtured and there is not a wider appreciation of what it means to every facet of our lives, it can quickly diminish.
10. The council has been actively pursuing its regeneration agenda since the regeneration strategy was adopted in 2018 and the actions undertaken have included projects and programmes that have directly or indirectly supported the cultural sector.
11. For example, the council was successful in its bid for funding to Historic England for Ryde and Newport to become Heritage Action Zones (HAZ) with the authority leading a partnership of public, private and community organisations working together to deliver place improvements to the historic centres of both towns.
12. The council was also successful in working with Shade Makers in Ryde in a £2.3m bid to the Arts Council to restore the former Packs Department store in Cross Street as a new cultural and community hub.
13. The council has recently agreed to the disposal of land at Kingston, East Cowes for a new film studio which will create hundreds of jobs and new business opportunities in that sector as well as promote the island as location for films given its diverse landscape and built heritage.
14. The council is also continuing with its feasibility study for a new Heritage Centre on Newport Quay and the successes of the above projects along with a new cultural strategy will give it the best opportunity to secure the support and public funding the scheme will need to enable its creation.
15. The current draft has been developed using the Local Government Associations (LGA) "cultural strategy in a box" guide which is aimed at helping local authorities in writing a cultural strategy by drawing on good practice from other parts of the country.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND STRATEGIC CONTEXT

16. The development of a cultural strategy for the island is identified in the Corporate Plan 2021-25 and supports the IW Regeneration Strategy.

The provision of affordable housing for Island residents

17. There is no direct impact of this decision on the provision of affordable housing.

Responding to climate change and enhancing the biosphere

18. The cultural strategy refers directly to the UNESCO biosphere designation of the Island and the role that the sector can play in delivering its objectives.

Economic recovery & Reducing Poverty

19. The cultural sector is an important component of the island economy supporting a large number of businesses across the island employing many thousands of people. The businesses are predominantly micro and small enterprises and there is a significant opportunity to grow this sector creating more job opportunities and further diversify the local economy making it more resilient and help enable its recovery.
20. It will also provide positive publicity and profile for the Island as an area that values its culture which could be used in marketing campaigns for both tourism and inward investment.

Impact on Young People and Future Generations

21. The cultural sector can provide employment and business opportunities for our young people but is also an area where it can have much wider benefits. Festivals, events, film, the arts in general can help them develop, support their general well-being and can make them happier and in a better position to contribute positively to the future of the Island.
22. The development of the plan has included significant engagement with young people through events involving schools, the youth council, the IW College and Platform 1.

CONSULTATION

23. The strategy has been developed through an extensive range of meetings, workshops, meetings and events including engagement at Hullabaloo in October 2022. Cultural mapping workshops took place in 9 locations across the Island, 4 public “drop-in” events were staged at Dinosaur Isle, Ryde Library, West Wight Sports Centre and Quay Arts alongside work to engage with young people via schools, the IW College and Platform One to specifically take on board their views. The Strategy has also been discussed at the recent Policy Committee for Neighbourhoods and Regeneration with comments received from committee members, all of which have helped shape the content of current draft.

FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

24. The cultural strategy has been developed using support from the Arts Council and the Island collection alongside existing council resources. There are no further budget implications specific to its adoption.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

25. There are no direct legal implications from the adoption of the cultural strategy.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

26. The council, as a public body, is required to meet its statutory obligations under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities between people from different groups and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
27. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
28. It is not considered that the cultural strategy will have any direct adverse implications to any of the protected characteristics groups.

OPTIONS

29. The options considered by the Cabinet are:
 1. To agree to adopt the Isle of Wight Cultural Strategy subject to any further minor amendments to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration in liaison with the Cabinet member for Economy, Regeneration, Culture and Leisure to conclude any final further amends.
 2. To seek changes to the cultural strategy and request that a revised draft is brought back to Cabinet at a later date for further consideration.
 3. Not to adopt a cultural strategy.

RISK MANAGEMENT

30. If the council does not adopt the strategy it will leave the sector on the island without a clear joined up approach and lack of understanding of the objectives for the cultural sector. This could negatively impact on the ability of businesses, public bodies and third sector organisations to access funding and support. Most organisations offering support and finance now do so on a competitive basis and those areas that can demonstrate specific projects are aligned with a wider strategy are more likely to be successful.
31. The strategy has been developed by engaging with a wide and diverse range of interested parties. Given the breadth of the cultural sector any document will need to balance competing demands and priorities. The engagement undertaken has enabled the development of a draft which reflect most of the views across the Island

and any further review is likely to only lead to a document that is different rather than better and require more resources which are not available. It will also result in further delay in adoption and not able to support current bids.

EVALUATION

32. The Island has a rich cultural heritage which is constantly evolving, and the cultural sector has the opportunity to flourish and grow to the benefit of not just the local economy but also the wider wellbeing of the Island community.
33. A cultural strategy will provide the basis for promoting and growing the cultural sector to the benefit of the island people and place.

APPENDICES ATTACHED

34. Appendix 1 – IW Cultural Strategy 2023

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