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To: Communities Cabinet Committee

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Subject: **The Kent Cultural Strategy**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Kent Cultural Strategy was produced by Kent County Council in 2010 following an extensive consultation process. It is a strategy for the cultural sector in Kent and is managed by the Arts & Culture service in the Customer & Communities Directorate. Delivery is overseen by an Executive Group with representatives from across the cultural sector. The Strategy guides the work of the Arts and Culture service. This paper outlines how the Strategy is being taken forward and summarises some of the work of the service to ensure the Strategy is implemented. Members are asked to acknowledge the extensive work being taken to implement the Strategy.

1. Introduction

1.1 The production of the Kent Cultural Strategy was led by Kent County Council's Arts & Culture service and was the result of two years of consultation and discussions with key organisations within the public and commercial sectors.

1.2 The three aims of the Strategy are as follows:

- grow Kent's creative economy by being welcoming and cooperative hosts to the creative workforce
- protect Kent's existing strengths by being passionate and responsible stewards of Kent's built and natural environment
- enhance Kent's potential by being ambitious and resourceful cultural planners.

2. Monitoring Progress against the Strategy

2.1 As part of the Strategy's launch organisations were invited to submit details of work they were doing which is delivering one or more of the intentions. This work was compiled into an activity log which is being managed and updated by the Arts & Culture service.

- 2.2 Drawing on the information contained in the log, the Arts & Culture Service is collating a number of case studies which will demonstrate what has been achieved so far in meeting the aims. The case studies will be reproduced both electronically and in print to provide an illustration of what has been achieved to date through the Strategy and highlight examples of good practice.
- 2.3 In parallel with this the Arts & Culture Service is running a series of ongoing `conversations` as a means of engaging the sector directly and encouraging debate. So far topics covered have included the following:
- business models for the creative industries
 - strategic commissioning
 - sector skills.
- 2.4 These discussion sessions, led by industry professionals, are intended to provide a dynamic forum for those involved in delivering the Strategy to develop their understanding of ways in which they can engage, demonstrate delivery against the Strategy and identify gaps. The conversations are being coordinated by Dr Tom Fleming, a leading researcher on creative and cultural development. He is responsible for drawing key messages from the conversations and forming a development plan which will provide a focus for targeting future delivery of the Strategy.
- 2.5 The Arts & Culture Service has identified resources from within existing budgets to provide a `challenge fund` which will be available as leverage to kick start new projects which deliver against the Strategy in order to target some of the gaps identified in the development plan.
- 2.6 A digital platform will be established to provide a means of animating the Strategy by sharing information and good practice on delivery and giving the sector opportunities to comment and engage with work emerging from the Strategy through message boards, through posting comments and via blogging. The platform will also provide a positive showcase for the Strategy.

3. Key projects and Programmes

- 3.1 Working within the framework of the Strategy, the Arts & Culture service has successfully started to build an enhanced profile both internally and externally for its work in delivering against the economic and social imperatives of the Council. Examples of this include developing partnership with Education, Learning & Skills, Economy & Enterprise and Libraries, Archives & Registration and establishing the Kent Cultural Network to bring together external partners.
- 3.2 The Arts & Culture service is driving a number of practical initiatives which fit well with the Kent Cultural Strategy. A number of these projects are listed below:

3.2.1 Supporting Creative Industries

The Arts & Culture service has developed a strong relationship with Economy & Enterprise to identify opportunities for joint working and is currently undertaking projects to develop a sustainable approach to creative industries business growth. This has entailed leveraging approximately £350,000 of European funding in to the County through the Interreg programme.

3.2.2 UK City of Culture 2017

The Arts & Culture service is leading a range of partners to plan for a bid to the DCMS for the UK City of Culture 2017 from East Kent. Seven Hills, the company commissioned by Kent County Council to lead the Grow for It campaign, has been recruited to work alongside partner organisations on the creative shaping of the bid.

3.2.3 Touring Project

The Arts & Culture service is delivering a joint project with the Libraries, Registration & Archives service to raise awareness of the work of the archives service and celebrate some of the creative history which is contained in Kent's records. Supported by a £78,000 grant from Arts Council England, the project will employ a leading artist to interpret some of the work and create an exhibition which will tour to different venues in Kent.

3.2.4 Kent Cultural Network

The Arts & Culture service has supported the establishment of a group of arts and cultural organisations, which currently make up the cultural infrastructure of the County and are delivering work to world class levels. The service is working with them to deliver a celebration of creative work through the Kent Year of Arts in 2014, the application for East Kent to be the UK City of Culture in 2017 and a new Kent Youth Arts Festival (see below).

3.2.5 Kent Youth Arts Festival

Managed by the Arts & Culture service, the Kent Youth Arts Festival will commence in Easter 2013 with a series of workshops, performance and exhibition opportunities involving various partners and led by a group of young arts ambassadors aged between 14 and 19 years of age. Turner Contemporary, Stour Valley Arts, South East Dance, Marlowe Theatre, University of Kent and Rose Bruford College are amongst the organisations involved in delivery. It will continue throughout the year with a variety of developmental activities which will culminate in a larger scale festival in 2014 as part of the Kent Year of Arts.

3.2.6 Arts Investment Fund

A key element of encouraging the sector's achievement against the key aims of the Strategy is through Kent County Council issuing funding through the Arts Investment Fund. More than 25 organisations

providing the bedrock of the arts in Kent were awarded funding in 2012 and include Canterbury Festival, Whitstable Biennale and Stour Valley Arts. The funding enables the continuation and extension of a range of high quality arts opportunities across the county through an open access grant process.

3.2.7 Creative People and Places

The Arts & Culture service is taking a strategic lead on the delivery of Creative People and Places, a £1.4 million programme funded by Arts Council England to build grass roots community engagement in North Kent.

3.2.8 The John Downton Awards

The John Downton Awards are managed by Kent County Council and aim to give the opportunity to young artists to showcase their talents. The 2012 Awards attracted a record number of entries (more than 300 from 28 schools) and saw 14 individual prizes awarded across seven categories including a 'people's choice' and three whole school awards for overall quality. The quality of entries was of an extremely high standard which is partly attributed to the competitive element of the competition. Closer links are being developed with the 'Page Turner' competition at Turner Contemporary, which was also involved in the judging. Three of the individual prizes were sponsored by the University of the Creative Arts.

3.2.9 Schools Olympic Legacy

The service is working with the Education, Learning & Skills Directorate to deliver cultural elements of the Schools Olympic Legacy programme into which the Arts & Culture service has been successful in securing 50% match funding from the South East Bridge Organisation and strengthening links between schools and mainstream arts practitioners to enrich learning opportunities available to children and young people in Kent.

3.2.10 Kaleidoscope Gallery, Sevenoaks

The Kaleidoscope Gallery in Sevenoaks is managed by the Arts & Culture service and runs an annual programme which, during the last twelve months, has included some excellent shows attracting significant regional interest, including an exhibition by John Adams, which was part of the Cultural Olympiad and several Arts Council regional touring shows. Locally, the Sevenoaks Visual Arts Forum is taking an increasingly active part in the programme. The gallery, with its situation as part of the library building, has been highlighted on a national stage as an example of good practice by Alan Davey, Chief Executive of Arts Council England.

3.2.11 Client Function

The Arts and Culture Service has recently taken responsibility for procurement of future music services in Kent and continues to manage

key strategic relationships with creative organisations including Turner Contemporary, South East Dance and Theatre Royal Margate.

4. Relationship with Arts Council England

- 4.1 In terms of wider strategic partnerships, the Arts & Culture Service has a strong and positive working relationship with Arts Council England and is creating a `9 point plan` which will identify key strategic areas which the two organisations have agreed to address jointly. The Arts & Culture Manager is a trustee of Arts Development UK and is able to link the work of the Arts & Culture service to trends and relationships which are developing nationally across the arts and culture sectors.

5. Further Opportunities

- 5.1 As part of the Culture & Sport Group, the Arts & Culture Service is working with colleagues in Sport & Physical Activity and the Country Parks service to identify areas of joint working and opportunities for income generation and with Visit Kent to develop cultural tourism.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Members are asked to acknowledge the approach being taken by Kent County Council to monitor and achieve the aims of the Kent Cultural Strategy

Background Documents:

Copy of Kent Cultural Strategy can be found at :

<https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/leisure-and-culture/arts-development/Cultural%20Strategy/KCC%20Cultural%20Strategy.pdf>

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