

By: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member and Amanda Honey, Managing Director

To: Communities Policy Overview Committee, 7th July 2009

Subject: Kent Cultural Strategy Update

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To update members of the committee of the latest position regarding the work in progress on development of the Kent Cultural Strategy, in the wake of the recent successful Cultural Strategy Summit

Recommendations: Members of the POC are asked to note and comment on the latest developments on the Kent Cultural Strategy development work in progress

FOR INFORMATION AND COMMENT

1. Introduction

1.1. On behalf of the Kent partners, Kent Arts Development Unit is leading on the work to develop a partnership-based Kent Cultural Strategy. This is a report to members on the work in progress to develop and launch a Kent Cultural Strategy for all the Kent partners over 2009 and in to early 2010.

2. Background

2.1. In 2004 Kent County Council outlined a commitment to culture in its response to DCMS' document Culture at the Heart of Regeneration. The authority's aim was to be a leader in developing regional, national and international partnerships that promote arts and creativity, to reach a wider community, to be the main driver of cultural tourism, and to develop and implement policies for cultural development in Kent. However, a strong, strategic and partnership-based leadership framework was lacking at the time. In 2005, the Kent Cultural Vitality Report prepared by ABL Cultural Consulting set the scene for the development of a Cultural Strategy for Kent. Between 2005 and 2008, KCC moved towards the development of the strategy in three ways: obtaining political support, facilitating one-to-one discussions with Kent district and borough councils to gain support for the development of the strategy, and restructuring the Arts Development Unit to create the capacity to do this work.

3. Achievements so far

3.1. The Kent Cultural Strategy Summit that took place on 17 February 2009 in Maidstone was the first of three events planned this year to facilitate the development of this strategy. That first event gathered together 130 influential

people from all tiers of local government, national and regional development agencies and cultural organisations. It aimed to raise the bar for culture in Kent, to provide opportunity for reflection on existing cultural provision, share opportunities and challenges, and to agree on the principle of working together across sectors and geographical sub-regions.

- 3.2. On behalf of all the partners, Kent Arts Development Unit led on the work to develop the Summit, via a cross-Directorate Steering Group, with representatives from Economy and Regeneration, Children Families and Education, and Libraries and Archives. The Unit will continue to lead the work to develop the Kent Cultural Strategy over the coming months.
- 3.3. A good turnout was secured of key influencers and decision-makers, across a range of agendas where culture is already making a positive impact, including: health, regeneration, education, youth development, tourism and rural access. Feedback from the Summit has been overwhelmingly positive, successfully securing the hoped-for consensus on the value and importance of culture to development generally, and of cultural planning to secure that.
- 3.4. The second Summit will look at options and solutions for a viable cultural strategy and the third event will launch the finalised Kent Cultural Strategy.

4. A working definition of 'culture'

- 4.1. The following working definition supported at the Summit is noted here so that members are aware of the definition which frames the starting point for that work.
- 4.2. As set out in the introduction to the Summit proceedings, and for the purposes of this strategy development process in conjunction with partners, we are limiting our definition of culture to 'the arts, entertainment and events, museums, heritage and our oral and built heritage, media, publishing, the knowledge economy and the cultural and creative industries. This includes the provision of professional work for people's enjoyment and opportunities for participation and creativity. It includes libraries and also culture within the education sector at all levels.'
- 4.3. This does not reflect the whole of the area of responsibility of the DCMS, omitting for example sport and physical recreation. It does however embrace a celebration of richness, distinctiveness and diversity in the way people live their lives, such as what they choose to wear, eat or do that expresses their individuality or their belonging.
- 4.4. There are two reasons for limiting the scope. Firstly, that these practices fit well together in a coherent way with an integrated or collaborative management structure in the public sector. Secondly, that sport and physical recreation and related areas are better planned and joined-up in Kent already.

5. Current position

- 5.1. The Kent Arts Development Unit Annual Operating Plan for 2009/10 states that the second Kent Cultural Strategy Summit will take place in September 2009.
- 5.2. The Steering Group convened a productive pre-scoping discussion in early February, with representatives of CMY Policy and Resources and of ABL Cultural Consulting, who were contracted by the Unit to deliver the Summit. That discussion, together with the outcomes of the Summit itself – summarised below – constitute the starting point for scoping the detailed development work on this strategy that lies ahead.

6. Proposed shape of the strategy and method of development

- 6.1. *The Cultural Strategy for Kent should do what a local cultural strategy cannot do. A Cultural Strategy for Kent will not attempt to do what a local cultural strategy can do.*
- 6.2. It is proposed that the strategy is now developed with assistance from an external consultant, and that we use the standing conference of delegates who attended the first Kent Cultural Summit to deliver two more Summits and to steer the development of the strategy. The second Summit will look at options and solutions for a viable cultural strategy, and the third event will launch the finalised Kent Cultural Strategy.
- 6.3. The Strategy will be based on Consensus, Collaboration and Creativity. Following the lead from the findings of the first Summit it will:
 - State the Vision for Culture in Kent
 - Declare a Cultural Manifesto (to cover entitlement and responsibilities)
 - Advocate and celebrate culture
 - Highlight what exists already
 - Identify challenges
 - Identify areas of strength/leadership in the county
 - Agree mechanisms/protocols for partnership working
 - Frame and enable the development of other partners' strategies
- 6.4. Areas of delivery are likely to include: increasing participation (improving access); supporting the creative economy; place making; capacity building (asset development, training/professional development/cultural networks, festivals); supporting excellence; and young people and creativity.
- 6.5. The Kent Cultural Strategy will reflect the themes of Vision for Kent, the community strategy for the county, including: Economic success - opportunities for all; Learning for everyone; Improved health, care and wellbeing; Environmental excellence; Stronger and safer communities; Enjoying life; Keeping Kent moving, and High quality homes. It will also reflect the challenges of Unlocking Kent's Potential, the Kent County Council Regeneration Framework, including: Building a new relationship with business; Unlocking talent to support

the Kent economy; Embracing a growing and ageing population; and Building homes and communities, not estates.

- 6.6. The Strategy will have a concise action plan capturing high-level county wide actions which will need to be signed up to on a county-wide level.
- 6.7. The impact of the Strategy will be to provide mechanisms for negotiating where cultural provision is best placed, where cultural investment is most needed, and to set out the value of culture in order to agree a shared view across Kent.
- 6.8. The impact of the strategy on Kent's communities will be once removed, with the real impact being made at a strategic level, setting the scene for localised strategies which will impact on individual lives.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1. Members are asked to note this report, and to comment on any matters that may arise from its content.

Contact

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