

## **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE – 27 SEPTEMBER 2016**

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**Title:**

**CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR WAVERLEY 2016-2026**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Jenny Else]**

**[Wards Affected: All]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

This report asks Members of the Executive to:

- adopt phase one of the Cultural Strategy, which covers the evidence report and outcomes framework produced by the Consultants, Janet Mein and Adrienne Pye, included with this report;
  - agree to a Cultural Strategy action planning workshop in the autumn with Waverley's cultural sector, to identify priorities for action and investment; and
  - agree to the creation of a summary version of the Cultural Strategy and Action Plan to be reviewed at the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2017.
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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:**

The Cultural Strategy evidence report relates to all of the Council's 2016-19 Corporate Priorities. The Culture Outcomes Framework in [Appendix 6](#) (attached) uses the corporate priorities as headings to group the relevant strategies and cultural actions. A 'golden thread' of culture can be seen running through the Corporate Plan, providing an overview of the various ways in which Waverley's arts and cultural infrastructure is contributing to the vitality and wellbeing of our communities.

**Financial Implications:**

The National Planning Policy Framework introduced in 2012, states that the planning system should take account of and support local strategies to improve cultural wellbeing for all, as one of the 12 core principles underpinning planning and at a local level. The Cultural Strategy evidence report has therefore been purposefully developed to complement Waverley's Local Plan and the cost of producing it has been met through section 106 funds. In the future, the Community Infrastructure Levy will sit alongside the Local Plan as the principal vehicle for negotiating funding for community amenities through the planning process.

The development of the Cultural Strategy acknowledges that local authorities' budgets for culture have reduced and that austerity in the public sector is set to continue in the future. Despite these fiscal pressures, the Council has maintained funding levels for culture and worked with partners to attract external funding and resources. Therefore its envisaged that any ambitions arising from the Cultural Strategy will be resourced from budgets already identified for culture within the Council's annual budget book and realised through co-ordinated efforts with partners.

The evidence report outlines alternative models for resourcing the arts, as well as identifying national funding bodies that the Council and its partners may consider applying to.

### **Legal Implications:**

There are no legal implications associated with this report. Cultural services are discretionary services provided by the Council and therefore there are no specific statutory requirements that need to be met in relation to their provision.

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### **Background**

1. High quality, sustainable and well-located arts and heritage provision is an important component of successful communities. To ensure that our physical buildings and arts organisations can continue to play a central role in the public life of the Borough, a new Cultural Strategy has been developed that will enable Waverley and its partners to plan culture in a more systematic and place based way.
2. There is substantial evidence to show the many ways in which culture has a positive affect upon people and society. For example, participating in arts activity can increase physical and psychological health and wellbeing and offer meaningful opportunities for social engagement. The link between culture and economic success can be seen in the value of services exported by the creative industries as well as the jobs and spending they generate locally. The heritage and landscape of a place can help in forming character and distinctiveness. While artistic communities, cultural traditions and celebratory events bring a special value that help make places more desirable to live and work. Museums, libraries and the voluntary arts also play an important role in providing access to a wealth of lifelong learning opportunities and their relationship with schools can help to increase educational attainment.
3. Creating all forms of culture and ensuring that all sections of the community in Waverley have access to the Borough's arts and heritage offer is a fundamental principle that will underpin every aspect of the strategy and its delivery.

### **Introduction**

4. The Cultural Strategy is a new ten year plan for arts and cultural services in Waverley. This report introduces an evidence report that will inform the creation of a more succinct version of the strategy, that clearly communicates the Council's overall aims and objectives for culture.
5. The evidence report is based on a detailed assessment of cultural provision in the Borough; demographic area profiles showing the propensity for arts engagement and extensive consultation with key individuals and organisations. The cost of producing the strategy has been met through S106 funding with the aim of linking it to Waverley's Local Plan, so that a stronger case for arts and heritage provision can be made through the planning process.
6. The evidence report includes a Culture Outcomes Framework at Appendix 6, which will form the basis for discussion at the Cultural Strategy Action Planning Workshop.

The aim of the workshop is to establish priorities and objectives; to identify the key partners and resources needed to ensure delivery and to make appropriate links with local, regional and national agendas. Recommendations from the workshop will inform the development of the Action Plan, through which the Council and its partners will deliver the objectives of the strategy.

### **Implementation:**

4. Successful implementation of the Cultural Strategy will critically depend on:
  - Signing up key players and securing their active involvement
  - Building on existing strengths and addressing gaps and weaknesses
  - Developing a coherent set of projects in response to the Action Plan
  - Monitoring and reviewing the outcomes of the Action Plan
5. Waverley's cultural organisations and physical assets are an essential resource in enabling the Council to achieve its cultural ambitions. Fostering a positive relationship with these organisations signifies our approval of the contribution they make to community life and enables them to align their delivery in accordance with the Cultural Strategy.

### **The Culture White Paper**

6. The timing of the cultural strategy coincides with the recent publication of the first Government white paper for culture in more than 50 years. The white paper sets out the Government's approach to public support for art and culture in the UK and its central notion that 'Every one should enjoy the opportunities culture offers, no matter where they start in life' resonates strongly with the cultural strategy.
7. The white paper also places a real importance upon strong local leadership, cultural vision and effective partnerships. It also highlights the value of cultural strategies as a means of developing the role of culture in place making and embedding this vision in local authorities' policies and plans.
8. The launch of a new Great Place Scheme demonstrates this commitment by backing local communities who want to put culture at the heart of their long term vision and plans. The scheme is to be piloted in twelve areas, four of which will be rural.

### **Why a Cultural Strategy is important**

9. At a time when local authorities have less money to deliver cultural projects themselves, the value of a clear, long term Cultural Strategy has never been greater. It is a vehicle for establishing shared ambitions and priorities as well as the means of coordinating the delivery of outcomes by a range of partners. To be successful, it is important that the strategy is owned and shared at the highest to signal the Council's intent to partners and potential investors including developers and funding bodies.
10. The Cultural Strategy evidence report has been created alongside the Local Plan to enable the arts to work more effectively with the planning service. This is designed to ensure that high quality arts and cultural provision, which meets the needs of

Waverley communities, is taken into account as part of the planning process. As well as ensuring future generations have the facilities they need to experience and enjoy the fulfilment that participation in the arts and heritage activities can bring.

11. Buildings are an important part of the Borough's creative environment. But in recent years, there has been a major shift away from creating specialist buildings such as theatres and civic centres, due to the cost of maintaining these facilities in perpetuity. Changes in cultural behaviour and patterns of use highlight a need for more flexible spaces that are adaptable over time and can accommodate a range of users and services.
12. Non-building based cultural infrastructure plays an equally important role in supporting the quality of life in the Borough. The arts service provides advice and assistance to local artists, so they can develop creative projects which benefit their own communities at a grass roots level. This has led to the production of some incredible work over the years, that has involved many people of all ages and backgrounds.

### **Gathering the Evidence Base:**

13. The brief for the cultural strategy was tendered and awarded to Janet Mein, a freelance consultant and Adrienne Pye of the Audience Agency. The consultants were contracted to deliver the following elements:
  - Mapping of Waverley's existing cultural infrastructure and resources
  - The identification of current need and future demand for cultural service provision
  - Synopsis of the current policy landscape for culture and wider funding context
  - Review of Waverley's adopted strategies
  - Extensive consultation including face-to-face meetings with partners and stakeholders; a focus group discussion with young people in Cranleigh; an electronic survey for the Town Councils and voluntary arts groups and an online and postal survey conducted through the Citizens Panel.
  - Development of the Cultural Strategy Evidence Report.
  - Development of a culture outcomes framework to guide the creation of subsequent annual action plans.

### **What does the evidence tell us?**

14. The Council is deservedly proud of its long track record of valuing and supporting the arts and museums in Waverley, and has contributed to an environment in which communities can enjoy the benefits of a rich and fulfilling cultural life. This is clearly demonstrated by the framework of resources and financing arrangements which exist to support cultural activity such as; salaries, revenue budgets, community and rent-related grants, service level agreements, business rate relief and the provision and maintenance of buildings occupied by cultural institutions. The Cultural Strategy builds on this investment and signifies the continuing importance of culture in Waverley to a range of delivery partners and funders.
15. The strategy shows that the investment made by the Council in our cultural organisations is working effectively to generate additional resources for culture in the Borough. But, there are significant opportunities for organisations to benefit

more greatly from funding bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and larger grant giving trusts and foundations. The presence of a Cultural Strategy is a positive development in building stronger relationships with these agencies and is an approach that is endorsed in the Government's Culture White Paper.

16. When it comes to culture and creativity, Waverley has a great deal to offer. Within the Borough it is possible to find a world class University for the Creative Arts; National Portfolio Organisations such as the Maltings and Stopgap Dance who are producing and presenting high quality art for local and international audiences; arts venues such as Cranleigh Arts Centre and Haslemere Hall making artistic development programmes accessible to the local community; a growing network of visual arts and craft organisations who are working together to establish Farnham as a destination for craft; and four museums, each offering distinctive collections and educational resources for schools and family learning. The distinctive nature and character of Waverley is fundamentally shaped by its green spaces and historic towns and villages. Further opportunities exist to interpret and celebrate the value of these places and to create stronger links with conservation, preservation and countryside management through a range of culture and heritage-led initiatives.
17. Section 4.1 to 4.4.6 of the Cultural Strategy provides a more detailed description of Waverley's cultural infrastructure and Appendix 3 provides a series of maps plotting various forms of cultural provision across the Borough. The area profiles in section 4.3 and Appendix 4 provide insight into the cultural values and behaviours of audiences in Waverley. Audience segmentation is a valuable tool, which allows cultural organisations to better understand who is attending and where there is a greater need for outreach work, to encourage arts participation in areas of low engagement.
18. Consultation with our key partners suggests that all tiers of local government recognise the value of culture and are working effectively together to support provision in local areas. The role museums and arts centres play as hubs of social activity and providers of entertainment is especially valued by the town councils alongside their contribution to tourism and economic development. Public consultation carried out through the Citizen's Panel and derived from Neighbourhood Plans, also reveals a strong connection between cultural service provision and making Waverley a desirable place to live and work.
19. Waverley is actively engaged in Arts Partnership Surrey a strategic alliance of eight local authorities and the County Council. By working together the partners aim to maximise their capacity and resources and to use the arts to address wider social, economic and environmental agendas. In addition to libraries and adult education services, Waverley also benefits from a range of other Surrey Arts initiatives such as the Surrey Artists Open Studios network, the Surrey Music Hub and the Surrey Hills Cow Parade and Inspiring Views Project.

### **Key Findings and observations:**

- The success of Cranleigh Arts Centre means that there is a high demand for cultural activities and spaces within Cranleigh which is placing the arts centre building under increasing pressure.

- Where housing development occurs, heritage and cultural initiatives have the potential to play a key role in developing the identity of places.
- There is potential for greater collaboration between Farnham Library, the Adult Education building and Farnham Museum around adult and family learning. A stronger alliance could also be beneficial for other cultural providers in the town.
- UCA is a major cultural player and an exceptional resource for the Borough. The development of the Cultural Strategy has unlocked the potential to hold more conversations with UCA around common interests and agendas.
- The creative and digital industries are a significant component of Waverley's economy. According to the Enterprise M3 digital technologies report Farnham and Haslemere are hot spots of activity with the Maltings and UCA cited as key players. Positive interventions around affordable workspace for creative businesses would help meet a growing demand.
- There is a need to review the storage facilities for both Godalming and Farnham Museum. Both museums have recently achieved Museum Accreditation.
- There is the potential to benefit more greatly from national funding sources such as the Great Place Scheme and the Arts Council and Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 644 people responded to the cultural strategy via the Citizens Panel. 73% of the responders consider arts and entertainment as important to them with 79% regarding them as a priority for improvement. 70% said heritage and museums are important to them with 73% considering them a priority for improvement.
- Culture is recognised as having a role to play in delivering Corporate Priorities and delivers value for money by supporting and enabling the creative and cultural sectors to align with community agendas.
- The number of Council adopted strategies and plans that either contain cultural actions or the potential to use culture to achieve wider outcomes, suggests that culture is inherent in the Council's strategic thinking.

### **Waverley Culture Outcomes Framework**

20. The Waverley Culture Outcomes Framework in Appendix 6 identifies the following priorities to inform cultural delivery in the short to mid term:
- 1. *We aim to deliver excellent, accessible services which meet the needs of our residents*** – we will work with delivery partners to enable more people to experience and participate in cultural activities throughout their lives
  - 2. *We will support the wellbeing and vitality of our communities*** – we will work with delivery partners to facilitate arts and cultural activity that makes a positive contribution to health and wellbeing and living and ageing well.
  - 3. *We will strive to protect and enhance the environment of Waverley*** – We will work with partners to enable creative placemaking approaches that heighten quality

of life and contribute to the economic vitality of places. We will use our influence and partnerships to build support and backing for local vision.

4. ***Cultural vision shaped at a local level is achieved through effective leadership and partnership working*** – we will use the Cultural Strategy to bring local leaders, cultural organisations and communities together and cultivate relationships with a range of national partners and funding bodies.
5. ***Culture is supported and thrives, playing a key part in delivering Borough Priorities*** – Waverley’s cultural infrastructure is good but sustaining our assets in the long-term is a challenge. We will support our cultural institutions in developing mixed funding models and stronger governance to achieve financial sustainability and resilience.

### **Conclusion:**

21. The Cultural Strategy evidence report provides a rich body of information about the Borough’s cultural infrastructure and through consultation with residents and key partners, demonstrates the value of and substantial support for culture in Waverley’s communities. The strategy accentuates opportunities for further cultural-led initiatives and policies, as well as highlighting the synergies between culture and a wider range of Council strategies.
22. Importantly, the strategy will enable officers to develop a more effective relationship with the planning service. By for example, referencing the Cultural Strategy in the Local Plan, contributing to the infrastructure delivery plan and making the case for arts and heritage through the planning process.
23. The Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the Cultural Strategy on 12 September 2016. In general, the Committee was somewhat ambivalent about the Strategy – there were some individual concerns expressed that it did not relate to the previous Strategy (what lessons had been learned from that, what had been achieved); contradictory views on whether sport and physical activities should be part of the ‘cultural’ offer; was the Strategy too in-depth to be of use – what purpose did the ‘cultural profiles’ really serve? Insufficient priority given to the value of the ‘creative economy’ and how this can be developed to the benefit of the community and local economy; lack of clarity about the purpose of the ‘Outcomes Framework’ in relation to the Action Plan which will follow. There were also comments relating to having clear outcomes and the importance of taking a more programme management approach to the development of the action plan to enable continual monitoring).
24. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee noted that it would be consulted on an action plan for the first 18 months of implementation of the Strategy at its January meeting.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that, having considered any comments from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Executive recommends to the Council that

1. Phase one of the Cultural Strategy, which incorporates the Evidence Report and Outcomes Framework produced by the consultants be adopted;

2. the Cultural Strategy Action Planning Workshop in the Autumn goes ahead to identify priorities for action and investment; and
3. officers produce a summary version of the Cultural Strategy, which includes an Action Plan to be reviewed by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January 2017.

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### Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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