



<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet- 5 th October 2020	
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Vibrant Shropshire; Shropshire's Cultural Strategy 2021-31.

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1. Summary

- 1.1 Vibrant Shropshire; Independent by Nature is a new 10-year cultural strategy for the Unitary area of Shropshire, which sets out the ambition and strategic priorities for the cultural sector for the next 10 years (appendix 1).
- 1.2 Our Vision
By 2030, Shropshire's vibrant culture will be inspiring more people – both local communities and visitors alike - to explore, create, be active and enjoy themselves. It will enhance lives and nurture the environment for all our futures.
- 1.3 Our Ambition
In 10 years, our ambition is to create a place where extraordinary and everyday cultural experiences are a source of inspiration for all. The importance of culture to quality of life, health and wellbeing and the economy is reflected in happier and healthier communities and cultural venues and activities lead the way for climate and environmental change mitigation.
- 1.4 This strategy will help deliver the planned Community and Rural Strategy for Shropshire, focusing on keeping people happy and healthy helping people who are lonely to connect with others, embracing the skills and experience of the older generation, attracting and keeping young people in the county.
- 1.5 It was developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders, through the Cultural Strategy Working Group; the membership of which is shown at the end of the document. It follows one to one consultation with sector leaders and three workshops with individuals representing the wider cultural sector.
- 1.6 The draft Cultural Strategy will be available for public consultation between October and beginning December 2020.
- 1.7 Once published, an Implementation Plan will be created, setting out the actions across a range of partners for the next three years. This will be monitored annually, and a report will be published that sets out the progress against the priorities set out in this document.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees to the draft Cultural Strategy (Appendix 1) being published for public consultation in October 2020.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The public sector has seen significant change since the last Cultural Strategy was produced in 2010; in particular, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, current economic climate and associated budget pressures, economic growth aspirations aiming to significantly increase the population and business base of Shropshire, and the growing need for cultural activities for health and wellbeing. This is also having an impact on the voluntary and private sectors and there is now even greater need to have a clear, evidence-based, prioritised plan to target limited resources whilst giving the greatest public benefit. A new approach is needed, delivering across multiple policy areas and integrating activity across local authority services, partner organisations and businesses.
- 3.2 Vibrant Shropshire raises the profile of the exceptional cultural assets that we have in Shropshire, identifying gaps, clarifying the opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and community cohesion, the local economy and the environment, and bring together partner organisations with similar goals, encouraging more co-ordinated, cost-effective approaches. It does not attempt to duplicate other plans and strategies but will link to them where appropriate.
- 3.3 The Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) initial screening attached at appendix 2 has been carried out and an assessment follow up is planned for after the public consultation phase, in order to take account of and feed in views from people in the Protected Characteristic groupings, seek to maximise positive impacts in terms of equality, and mitigate any negative impacts. The second ESIIA will be completed before the final strategy is published. The strategy sets out to have a positive impact across all the Protected Characteristic groupings, particularly the groupings for age and disability, with regard to all ages and with regard to seen and unseen disabilities. This will itself then include not only children and young people but also older people, given the ageing demographic profile of the county. A positive impact is also anticipated for groupings including people with caring responsibilities, as well as those at risk of social exclusion. Efforts were made to seek views from communities as well as from stakeholders in the development of the draft strategy, and further ongoing engagement will continue across all groupings, particularly those where low or no responses are received during the consultation itself. The Council is also mindful, as a large and sparsely populated rural county, of the need to seek views from across the county, particularly around physical and digital access to services and cultural opportunities, and utilise these in informing and developing the strategy.
- 3.4 The consultation will run for 2 months from the 12th October to 11th December 2020. The draft strategy was generated as a result of engagement with key

stakeholders and the public consultation is designed to gather views relating to the strategy and to inform next steps for implementation.

- 3.5 The information that will be presented as part of the public consultation to ensure respondents are able to make informed comments include:
- Evidence base (appendix 3)
 - Results from completed stakeholder engagement (appendix 3)
 - Strategic evidence review (appendix 5)
- 3.6 Stakeholders and members of the public will be given a choice of ways in which to comment on the draft strategy, options include:
- complete an online survey
 - complete a paper version of the survey
 - comment by email
 - leave comments over the telephone
- 3.7 A further series of meetings and workshops are planned to gather further feedback on the draft strategy and implementation plan from key partners.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Funding for the Culture, Leisure and Tourism service areas will follow the usual budget process and the delivery of this strategy does not change this, although any significant reduction in these budgets would impinge on the deliverability of “Vibrant Shropshire”.
- 4.2 Improvements to cultural assets and activities highlighted in the priorities will mostly be funded outside core public sector funds. Increasingly, external funding will need to be found and this could include:
- Earned income from parks and sites, events and commercial activities
 - Project funding from external sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, Sport England, Arts Council and other charities and trusts
 - Countryside Stewardship or alternatives following the introduction of the new schemes
 - Business support or sponsorship
 - Funding associated with new housing and commercial developments, the provision of greenspace and developer contributions to canal towpaths and other access
 - Memberships, donations and legacies
- 4.3 Major funding organisations, such as Arts Council England and National Lottery have raised concerns about the lack of strategic direction for the Cultural sector and had previously called for a partnership approach to clarifying priorities for the county. The strategy evidences the need for further investment in cultural activities and venues, which will help secure external funding.
- 4.4 External funding is becoming increasingly competitive and joint working between partners will be key although match funding will need to be considered.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

5.1 Climate change mitigation needs to be considered across all activities. One of the cross-cutting themes of the draft strategy is:

"Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together"

5.2 This could be in the form of encouraging active travel, introducing energy efficiency measures in buildings or tree planting and habitat conservation for nature recovery and carbon off-setting. Activities would also be encouraged that increase public awareness or interpret climate change through cultural activities.

6. Background

6.1 The previous Cultural Strategy for Shropshire was published in 2010 and is not current.

6.2 Summary of Vibrant Shropshire priorities

6.2.1 Several key priorities have emerged as instrumental to the development of a vibrant, healthy, prosperous culture for residents and visitors to Shropshire. Their implementation will be phased over the next 10 years.

- **Create** Culture better supports the growth of the local economy and creates more opportunities to earn a living
- **Explore** Delighting and surprising visitors and residents with independent, authentic experiences
- **Enjoy** Using culture to support people to be active, happy, healthy and connected
- **Live** Harnessing the power of distinctive places for the benefit of all
- **Nurture** Shropshire's high-quality natural landscapes are valued and enhanced for future generations
- **Innovate** Driving digital development to enhance cultural experiences, improve physical and intellectual access and tackle social isolation
- **Connect** Forge strong partnerships to drive forward our shared cultural ambition

6.3 Cross-cutting themes

6.3.1 We developed a number of cross-cutting themes to help ensure that the priorities address Shropshire's core challenges:

- Climate and environmental change mitigation – Everyone needs to do their bit to address the climate and environment emergency to ensure a happier and healthier future for all. Culture can help us engage with these challenges creatively together
- Developing volunteers – Supporting volunteers through promoting good practice, providing opportunities for training and development and recognising their achievements
- Young people's skills and learning – Engaging young people in all of our priority areas and providing clear pathways into all of the cultural sector
- Marketing and communication – Ensuring that there is a joined-up marketing and communication strategy to promote greater joint working and reach new audiences

6.4 Strategic links

6.4.1 The priorities outlined in Vibrant Shropshire are in line with national thinking and will help deliver against a range of national, regional and local strategies, including:

- The Cultural White Paper, DCMS - maximising the opportunities to transform communities through culture; everyone should enjoy the opportunities culture offers, no matter where they start in life, the riches of our culture should benefit communities across the country and the power of culture can increase our international standing
- Everyone Active Every Day, Public Health England - encouraging regular physical activity.
- The Industrial Strategy, Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - strengthening cultural assets and developing skills.
- The 25 Year Environment Plan, Defra - better connecting people, health and the outdoors, especially for young people and to benefit those with mental health issues; improving the delivery of biodiversity and greenspace gains through the planning process and raising awareness of the economic benefits of the outdoors.
- Strategic Enterprise Plan, Marches LEP - promoting Shropshire as a business investment opportunity, building on individuals' quality of life, staff wellbeing and company reputation.
- Marches Visitor Economy Strategy- developing the visitor economy of the county
- Shropshire's Economic Growth Strategy - developing the visitor economy, agricultural support following exit from the EU, developing skills, improving quality of life and ensuring attractive environments.
- Shropshire's Local Plan - better planning of meaningful greenspace and non-motorised access, protecting environmentally and culturally-sensitive sites.
- Shropshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy - harnessing the power of the culture to increase physical activity, address mental health issues, and help people to stay independent for longer.
- Shropshire Council Corporate Plan - helping to deliver care for those in need at any age, a good place to do business, a healthy environment, sustainable places and communities, embracing our rurality.
- Shropshire's Great Outdoors Strategy
- Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan
- Shropshire Museums Service Strategy- helping develop museums and collections for the benefit of all
- Shropshire Library Strategy
- Shropshire Leisure Strategy
- Actively Improving Lives – Energize Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin County Schools Partnership- helping to improve lives and empower communities through the power of physical activity and sport
- Shrewsbury Big Town Plan
- Shrewsbury and Oswestry BID business plans

6.5 A review of the strategic evidence is included in appendix 4.

7. Additional Information

- 7.1 A detailed evidence base has been commissioned to build the foundation for this Cultural Strategy (appendix 2). This provides a good snap-shot of where we are starting from.
- 7.2 It includes national data from:
- [Visit Britain](#) - Day visits and overnight stays
 - [MENE data](#) - Visits to the natural environment and environmental attitudes
 - [Active Lives survey](#) - Children and adult engagement with arts and culture, sport and volunteering
 - [Lottery investment](#) - Amount of funding invested in the county
 - [Health profile](#) - Health of the population
 - [ONS survey](#) - Levels of Wellbeing and Life Satisfaction.
- 7.3 We will monitor local data held by Shropshire Council including:
- Numbers of unused/underused buildings
 - Energy and water monitoring.
- 7.4 We will conduct local research on progress to date including the numbers and locations of:
- Creative businesses and cultural enterprises, including charities and CICs
 - Cultural Venues and workspaces
 - Festivals.
- 7.5 We will also work with partners to develop a local framework of indicators to include:
- Investment in environmental change mitigation projects
 - Visitor numbers to key destinations
 - Number of volunteers
 - Number of children and young people involved
 - Customer satisfaction surveys
 - Investment and finance metrics
- ### **7.6 Delivery and Ownership**
- 7.6.1 This Strategy has been led by Shropshire Council and is supported by a range of strategic partners through the Cultural Strategy Working Group. A new Cultural Partnership will be set up to guide the delivery of this Strategy, whose purpose will be to connect the cultural sector in the county, creating opportunities for engagement and enabling collaboration with partners.
- 7.6.2 The Strategy will work alongside the individual business plans and artistic ambitions of the cultural sectors, the strategic plans of key stakeholders such as Arts Council England and Historic England, and Shropshire Council's Corporate Plan.
- 7.6.3 Delivery of the Strategy will adapt and respond to local, regional, national and international policies to ensure the vision and priorities remain valid.
- 7.6.4 An implementation plan will set out detailed outcomes under each of the high-level priorities. The plan will be published online and will be a live document.

8. Timescales

- 8.1 The draft strategy will be published for consultation from October until the beginning of December 2020. Final amendments will be made, with a view to publishing the completed strategy in January 2021, following approval by Cabinet. The strategy will apply until March 2031. It will be evaluated and reviewed after five years. A new 10-year plan will be published, following a full evaluation of Vibrant Shropshire in 2031.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Vibrant Shropshire is a partnership Cultural Strategy, which clarifies the priorities for the cultural sector in Shropshire for the next 10 years. It will be published following public consultation and approval by Cabinet of the final version.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
Cllr Lezley Picton

Local Members

Appendices

Appendix 1: Vibrant Shropshire; Independent by Nature. Draft Cultural Strategy for Shropshire 2021-31

Appendix 2- ESIIA Initial Screening

Appendix 3- Evidence Base for the Cultural Sector

Appendix 4- Cultural Strategy Consultation Results

Appendix 5- Strategic evidence review