



Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance

Item

Report of	Assistant Director For Communities	Author	Frank Hargrave
Title	Response to Arts Council England Draft Strategy 2020 - 2030		
Wards affected	All Wards		

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Colchester Borough Council is responding to the Arts Council England (ACE) Draft Strategy 2020 – 2030
- 1.2 The final strategy will come into effect from April 2020. Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service has been a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) since April 2018, receiving £199,250 a year from ACE for the four-year funding period (2018 – 2022). The strategy is important therefore in the future direction of the activity funded by ACE and the likely future application to re-join the NPO programme 2022 – 2026.
- 1.3 In addition to CIMS there are three other NPOs in Colchester; Mercury Theatre, Firstsite and Colchester Arts Centre which are all directly supported by CBC.
- 1.4 The Draft Arts Council Strategy 2020 – 2030 was published in December 2018 following many months of consultation with NPOs, stakeholders and members of the public. A second consultation was launched on the 1st July 2019 for 12 weeks.
- 1.5 The Council invests in the arts and culture due to the well documented positive impact on the wellbeing and quality of life enjoyed by those who are actively engaged in them. Due to the wealth of historical assets; namely Europe's largest Norman keep, nationally significant Roman museum collections and a townscape boasting Celtic, Roman and Medieval monuments, Colchester's communities are proud of their heritage. The Council and its arts partners recognise the opportunity of working with the Arts Council towards an ambitious cultural strategy.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 To respond to the Arts Council Draft Strategy 2020 - 2030 as proposed in Appendix 1.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The strategy mirrors many of the objectives of the Council. The recommended decision here provides the Council with the opportunity to endorse and strategically align its cultural services with those of Arts Council England. This will provide clear policy for the museums run by the Council and its cultural partners as well as raising their profile with ACE, a major external funder.

- 3.2 The response is also an opportunity to assure Arts Council England of the Council's continued commitment to funding of arts and culture in Colchester. This assurance helps ACE to assess the value of their own existing and future investments in areas where there is clear local authority buy-in.

4 Alternative Options

To choose not to respond. However, by not responding Colchester Borough Council would lose its opportunity to set a clear policy for its cultural services and partners and endorse a strategy likely to be of benefit to the community.

5. Background Information

- 5.1 The Arts Council Draft Strategy 2020 – 2030 furthers the ambitions identified in its predecessor and current strategy, 'Great Art and Culture for Everyone'.
- 5.2 The new strategy identifies the successes achieved by the arts and cultural organisations in England, particularly those within the NPO programme but also notes those areas in which issues remain, notably that there 'remains a persistent and widespread lack of diversity within cultural organisations'.
- 5.2 In addition to tackling issues around inclusion, the strategy recognises the new challenges around climate change, technology and Brexit.
- 5.3 In addition to the new challenges, the draft strategy expects greater interworking between NPOs. Although the NPOs, including CIMS do work on projects together (and CIMS also works with NPOs in Ipswich, notably the close relationship with the Pacitti Company who share premises with Ipswich Museum), it is evident that a greater focus on these partnerships will be necessary to satisfy Arts Council.

6. Health, Wellbeing and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 Arts and culture have widely reported benefits to public health and wellbeing. By successfully meeting the new objectives of the Arts Council it is reasonable to assume that the NPOs in Colchester will continue to receive investment from ACE which will be of direct benefit to the community.
- 6.2 The challenges identified in the new strategy will allow the NPOs in Colchester to respond directly to some of the issues that are in the forefront of the public's mind such as Brexit and climate change.

7. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications

The duty requires us to have regard to the need to;

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

- 7.1 The focus on inclusion within the new strategy will help ensure that no sector of the community is excluded from the arts and culture programming and delivery in Colchester.

8. Strategic Plan References

- 8.1 The draft strategy's focus on greater cooperation between NPOs furthers the ambition within the CBC Strategic Plan, that we 'work with partners to create a shared vision for a vibrant town centre'. The approaches encouraged under the strategy likewise reflect CBC's vision of promoting '...responsible citizenship by encouraging residents to get involved in their communities'.
- 8.2 CBC has recently declared a Climate Emergency. The new Arts Council strategy also highlights the urgency of a response to the changing environment.

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The second and final consultation on the draft strategy asks for people working within or with the cultural sector to respond to the proposed vision, three outcomes and related priorities and three investment principles. The consultation also asks for a response on how ACE should deliver the new strategy.
- 9.2 Consultation is taking the form of an online survey. The response proposed in appendix 1 does not conform to this standardised process but represents the Council's official response, and support for, the new strategy. The purpose of this is to show the Council's willingness to engage with Arts Council England, the National Portfolio programme generally and work with its NPO partners towards a shared vision for a vibrant town centre.

10. Publicity Considerations

- 10.1 Arts Council are consulting widely on the draft although there are no considerations from the perspective of CBC until the draft is approved and an application from CIMS is made for funding from the next National Portfolio funding round in 2021 (for 2022 – 2026).

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service will need to plan how to meet the new Arts Council objectives through the current National Portfolio Organisation funding and consider an application for the NPO programme at the end of the current cycle of funding in 2022.

12. Health and Safety Implications

- 12.1 No Health and Safety Implications identified.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Arts Council England's draft strategy:

https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Draft_Strategy_summer_consultation_2019.pdf

The strategy is being developed to replace its predecessor, 'Great Art and Culture for Everyone' which spanned 2010 – 2020.

The draft strategy is not a major departure from its predecessor and updates it in terms of the challenges that have emerged, notably Brexit and the greater urgency now placed on climate change. There is now a greater emphasis on collaboration and empowering communities and individuals.

The new Arts Council Vision is proposed to be;

'Over the next decade, we want England to become a country where the creativity of each of us is valued and given the chance to flourish, and where every one of us has access to a rich and remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences.'

The outcomes are:

1. **Creative people** - Every person can develop and express creativity throughout their lives
2. **Cultural communities** - A collaborative approach to culture helps villages, towns and cities across the country to thrive
3. **A creative & cultural country** - England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international

The investment principles are:

1. **Ambition & quality** - Cultural organisations are ambitious and committed to improving the quality of their work
2. **Inclusivity & relevance** - England's diversity is fully reflected in the organisations and individuals that we support and in the culture they produce
3. **Dynamism & environmental sustainability** - Cultural organisations are dynamic and environmentally sustainable

It is proposed that the Council will respond with a letter endorsing the new strategy, briefly outlining the collaboration that has and continues to occur between NPOs in Colchester and committing CIMS and the other NPO partners in Colchester to improving that collaboration. The response will also assure ACE of the Council's continued investment in the arts and culture in Colchester.