



WORTHING BOROUGH
COUNCIL

Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee
6 March 2023

Key Decision [No]

Ward(s) Affected: All
Cabinet Portfolio: Culture & Leisure

New Culture Principles for Worthing

Report by the Director for the Economy

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Executive Summary

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to outline Worthing Council's approach for supporting the cultural and creative sector and to outline the headline principles that will guide the approach.
- 1.2. The key pillars of the Council's support to the sector reflect the vision of the Council: fair, green and local.
- 1.3. The report sets out the commitment to make the best use of Council assets to support the sector for the benefit of our residents together with the wider economic benefits associated with places that people value and enjoy.
- 1.4. A foundation to this cultural approach is community wealth building. This is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy, and places control and benefits into the hands of local people.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To develop the Arts Forum (outlined in 3.6) to be an effective reference group linking, and working with, an Officer / Member Working Group. To share and develop the principles with the Arts Forum and engage them fully in the shaping of a Cultural Plan.
- 2.2. For the Officer / Member Working Group to manage progress and report back, and take influence from, the Arts Forum and other creative networks. To delegate to the Director for the Economy authority to agree the terms of reference for the working group in consultation with the Executive Member which shall include the requirement to report back to the Committee (at such intervals to be agreed in the terms of reference) with further recommendations to the Committee.
- 2.3. For the Working Group to design and develop outcome measures to be reported to the Committee within appropriate timeframes as directed by the terms of reference.
- 2.4. To further develop the principles, moving into the development of a Cultural Plan, as outlined in section 7. This should cross-reference to developing Service and Project Plans, as part of Our Plan.

3. Context

- 3.1. According to recent data from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the [creative industries sector contributed £109bn to the UK economy in 2021](#). This is equivalent to 5.6% of the UK economy that year.
- 3.2. Growth in both the creative industries sector and the economy as a whole declined in September 2022 compared to the previous month. However, overall, the creative industries sector grew by 6.9% in September 2022 compared with the same month in 2021. The creative industries sector saw a faster recovery in employment after the pandemic when compared with the rest of the UK economy. In 2021, there were [3mn filled jobs in the creative industries](#).
- 3.3. The UK government provides funding to creative industries and the arts through direct funding (as below). It also provides funding through arms-length bodies such as [Arts Council England](#). The following programmes are currently available and should be targeted as part of the principles and Plan:

- **Cultural Investment Fund:** a package of the three capital funds made up of the Cultural Development Fund (CDF), Museum Estate and Development Fund (MEND) and Libraries Improvement Fund (LIF). Future rounds of funding are anticipated with £48 million already invested in the cultural sector.
 - **Create Growth Programme:** this fund is to ensure creative businesses (in targeted regions) are able to access finance to support growth. East and West Sussex has been identified as a priority region which should benefit our cultural businesses in Worthing.
- 3.4. In developing Culture Principles and a Plan in Worthing, the Council needs to be cognizant of regional and national policy. On 4 November 2022, [Arts Council England published its 2023–26 investment programme](#). This outlines the strategic intent of one of the main funders of cultural activity.
- 3.5. At a local level, the Council, in partnership with Adur District Council, developed the [Adur & Worthing Cultural Strategy - Commitment to Culture in 2016](#). Whilst a number of references and interventions are still valid today, due to the time lapse and change in political approach, the Council believes it's the right time to develop a new Plan for Worthing, built on community-led principles.
- 3.6. To ensure an immediate impact post May 2022, the Council has established an Arts Forum. Whilst still in its infancy, this group has quickly established itself as a key component of the Worthing cultural landscape and provides scope to ensure the finalised principles and Plan are embedded in the community and sector. This developing group is a 'collective' of organisations, venues and individuals representing the creative and cultural sector across Worthing.
- 3.7. In addition, the Council has continued to support the sector by supporting the delivery of outdoor events, whilst also working in contractual partnership with Worthing Theatres & Museum regarding the Council's cultural venues, as well as with the Adur & Worthing Trust regarding Colonnade House Creative Hub. As a new addition in 2023, and to provide a marked change, the Council are currently working with a number of organisations, venues and individuals to stage the first Worthing Festival. This multi-venue and multi-genre festival will take place from 10th - 18th June 2023.
- 3.8. It's important to note that the development of the cultural principles and Plan will clearly reference the Council's commitment to being fair, green and local. Broadly this includes:

- **Fair:** Worthing Council believes in an inclusive, resilient economy which provides stability, high quality opportunities for all and a social safety net at its core.
 - **Green:** With business partnerships and networks, providing effective tools to enable businesses to better understand their carbon footprint and take action to drive to net zero, supporting our ambition for Worthing to be net zero by 2045.
 - **Local:** Adopt an approach of community wealth building; a people-centred approach to local economic development that seeks to provide resilience where there is risk and local economic security where there is uncertainty.
- 3.9. Further details relating to the commitments under 3.8 can be found in the [New Economic Principles for Worthing paper](#), presented to the Worthing Joint Strategic Sub-Committee on 5 December 2022.
- 3.10. It should also be noted that the principles and Plan, will also investigate how the cultural and creative sectors, partnering with the Council, can also support the evening and night time economy of Worthing.

4. Setting in a sub-regional context

- 4.1. As outlined in the Coastal West Sussex report (see background papers), the official business register data suggests that in March 2020 there were approximately 1,475 creative industry businesses operating in the Coastal West Sussex (CWS) region, with an additional 2,985 creative industry businesses operating in Brighton and Hove (B&H).
- 4.2. Across Coastal West Sussex (CWS), the data suggests Chichester and Worthing have a significant Creative Industries presence. In regards to the different subsectors of the Creative Industries, it found the majority of activity taking place in IT, software and computer services which accounts for 45% of all CI businesses and in Film, TV, video, radio and photography, which accounts for 13% of all creative businesses.
- 4.3. The CWS report also references the growth rates for Creative Industry businesses from 2016-2020, alongside some benchmark comparisons. The CWS area has seen growth of 10% in Creative Industries businesses over the past five years, exceeding the UK national average of 8%. Worthing shows the highest growth at 16%. The Worthing creative industries micro-cluster is the fastest growing micro-cluster in the CWS region. It is relatively diverse in its sectoral make-up, but has a high concentration of web design and branding companies alongside a growing number of video production, visual effects and animation companies. The cluster also houses at least 6

recording studios, suggesting strong links with the wealth of musical talent across the CWS and B&H region. This demonstrates the wealth and opportunity for the creative and cultural sector in relation to the principles.

- 4.4. As with other places, the Council is in positive dialogue with West Sussex County Council regarding a new Growth Deal between the parties. Due to the emergence of this work, it's envisaged that 'culture and creative' growth will play a significant role in any future Deal. Whilst further work is required ahead of a new Growth Deal being agreed in the Summer (2023), early indications that Worthing's cultural assets will feature in the Deal, as well as drawing on WSCC Officers' expertise in relation to cultural development.
- 4.5. In addition, a report commissioned by Greater Brighton Economic Board also signalled the creative and cultural opportunity in Worthing. Commissioned by GBEB, delivered by the University of Sussex Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre (PEC), it showed that *"real potential exists to seed "areas of excellence" across the Greater Brighton footprint"*, with Worthing identified as a particular place to develop expertise within this specialist cluster.

5. Developing the Principles

- 5.1. The Council has undertaken preparatory work to assist in the development of the emergent principles, as outlined in Section 6. This involved a series of conversations and a workshop which covered the following aspects:
 - **Why are we doing this?:** This explored the rationale behind the Council's decision to establish the principles. Findings included the sense of a real and established 'creative community', a new and dedicated political focus on culture, excellent assets (both buildings and people), a growth sector coming out of the pandemic, an opportunity to connect culture to wider issues more prominently and building on a strong momentum.
 - **What are our assets?:** In assessing the physical, financial and human assets, this signalled the excellent geographical 'canvass' (i.e "countryside to coast") for which culture can 'play', the potential economic impact of the sector, existing and future skills of the industry but also noted the potential disparity between those people who can and can't access the sector.
 - **What are the opportunities?:** This focused on the possibility of establishing a true 'collective' cultural ecosystem, enabling and

encouraging a spirit of experimentation and innovation, executing a place-based and community-led approach (through the culture lens) and thinking about the sector beyond the physical spaces.

- **What needs to be overcome?:** When reviewing this area, the most overriding consideration was inclusion and access is vital. Furthermore, the Council does need to establish a new relationship with the sector, giving confidence to how the Council can and will support in the context of the wider position of the Council.

5.2. As outlined throughout this report, the outcomes resulting from 5.1 need to be qualified and tested with the community, whilst also encouraging participation to share their own experiences and perceptions of the sector in and around Worthing.

6. Emergent Principles

6.1. The Council are committed to supporting the cultural and creative sector and whilst these headline principles have been developed it should be noted that these need to be tested and agreed with the community.

6.2. The principles are intended to act as 'guardrails' to support the sector, with the intention of a more comprehensive Cultural Plan being developed through active community participation.

6.3. The principles have been developed through a number of routes. Firstly, a critical analysis of the previous iteration of the Adur & Worthing Cultural Strategy - Commitment to Culture. Secondly, an assessment of similar ambitions in both coastal and urban communities and thirdly, an understanding of how this potentially maps against the Council's broad economic aims.

6.4. The emerging principles are as follows:

- **A place where culture and creativity can address systemic inequality** - ensuring no one is left behind
- **A place where cultural entrepreneurs can set up roots and flourish, where Createch and the culture and creative industries can thrive on innovation**- encouraging young entrepreneurship and sustainable growth with creativity at the heart

- **A place that celebrates its unique creative heritage** - through its past, present, and future as part of Worthing's contemporary cultural renaissance
- **Where culture grows sustainably in our place between the countryside and the coast** - championing sustainability at the heart of cultural participation and production
- **A place that platforms quality culture reaching beyond its borders to the creative coastline** - collaborating and championing high quality arts experiences at a local, coastal, regional, and national level
- **A place where culture welcomes everyone** – platforming full and dynamic cultural experiences of all genres and artforms
- **A place where culture and creativity delivers growth and regeneration** - enhancing the very places we live, work and study to their best potential

6.5. The statements will need to be refined with Worthing's creative community to achieve the necessary buy-in and support to deliver an effective plan.

6.6. As the principles develop, the intention is these will further align with other cross-cutting themes the Council are also working towards. This isn't an exhaustive list, however this could include how culture can support our climate emergency work, our young people strategy and our wellbeing ambitions.

7. Our Roadmap

7.1. In addition to the specific commitments above we will also ensure our cultural ambitions are positioned in a way that allows for the delivery of these principles through the daily operations of the Council.

7.2. To ensure these principles are tested with the community, with the aim of establishing a Cultural Plan, we will develop a comprehensive

roadmap in Q1 2023 to review relevant policies and strategies in order to move forward with these principles.

- 7.3. The broad timelines to establish the Plan, including key outcomes and key results includes:

Month 1 – baseline data collecting and positioning of the culture plan, further evaluation of the impact of the existing culture plan and setting the wider culture context for Worthing across the coastline.

Month 2 – evaluation of the challenges and opportunities for culture in Worthing, including a cultural asset audit. This will identify “where are we now?”

Month 3 – Following more detailed stakeholder engagement and community participation, continue testing the top-line principles. This will establish “where do we want to go and who do we need?”

Month 4 – Finalising the principles and development of a Cultural Plan. This needs to be built in a realistic way to coincide with the Council’s role and resources.

Month 5 – Finalisation of the Plan through further testing with the cultural community of Worthing. Once signed off, this will enable commencement, allocation of resources and launch.

- 7.4. The timeline outlined above could be reduced or extended depending on resource, scope and capacity. However, to achieve this programme and to ensure the best result, and for Worthing to best capitalise on its creative coastal position, a minimum 5-month timetable is advised.

- 7.5. It should be noted that the timeline identified in 7.3 is subject to change and the delivery of ‘live’ projects will still happen in parallel (e.g. Worthing Festival) to the principles being agreed and the Plan coming forward.

- 7.6. In developing the Plan, the Council also needs to take into consideration a number factors, including:

- **Resourcing:** who will develop and lead the Culture Plan?
- **Expertise:** what skills and capabilities already exist at the Council that can help facilitate the Plan?
- **Funding:** are there routes to funding to create and deliver the Plan? (e.g. Arts Council England)
- **Managing Expectations:** framing this could help answer the resource, expertise and capacity questions.

- **Momentum:** a timely Culture Plan in line with the emerging Arts Forum and Worthing Festival could present the biggest impact and provide a 'springboard' for an effective Culture Plan and it's delivery.

7.7. In the setting of the principles and a Plan, the Council also need to be mindful of the connections to the sub-regional agenda and ensure any resulting actions connect to the wider coastal economy in West Sussex and beyond.

8. Engagement and Communication

8.1. This document sets out plans to engage with the local organisations, venues and the wider community in order to develop the strategies and policies needed to respond to the principles and priorities laid out here.

8.2. Work has already commenced with the Arts Forum to assist in developing the principles, akin to 5.1. This group will be one of many opportunities for the community to engage with and be part of the principles development, as above.

9. Financial Implications

9.1. The Council already invests significantly in the cultural sector within the Town through support to the Theatres and the Museum which will have a combined budget in 2023/24 of £2.4m. The Council's budget also contains

9.2. Contained within the report are the actions required to support and develop the cultural sector in Worthing. It is expected that much of the costs of this programme will be funded from our existing budgets or via external funding. However, if this is not possible then members will be consulted on the release of additional resources.

9.3. As outlined in Section 5, it's anticipated the culture principles will be led by the community, for the community, therefore the Council will play different roles in delivering the principles and the Plan, although this is initially seen in a supportive and facilitative role.

10. Legal Implications

10.1. Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to do anything that is calculated to facilitate, or which is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

- 10.2. s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the Council to do anything an individual can do apart from that which is specifically prohibited by pre-existing legislation
- 10.3. Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999 (LGA 1999) contains a general duty on a best value authority to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Background Papers

- [Adur & Worthing Cultural Strategy - Commitment to Culture \(2016\)](#)
- [Coastal West Sussex Report - Creative Digital Economy \(2021\)](#)
- [New Economic Principles Paper - WJSSC \(December 2022\)](#)
- [Greater Brighton Creative Industries Strategy 2022 - 2025](#)

Sustainability & Risk Assessment

1. Economic

- This document describes a new approach to cultural activity which reflects the economic objectives and priorities of the Council administration. As such it is intended to have an ongoing effect on the Borough's cultural activity and an action plan to support this will be developed to support this work. This will be done with support of the proposed working group to ensure we develop it with the participation of our communities.

2. Social

2.1 Social Value

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

2.2 Equality Issues

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

2.4 Human Rights Issues

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

3. Environmental

- Matter considered and no issues identified.

4. Governance

- Matter considered and no issues identified.