



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Cabinet

11 July 2023

Report of Councillor Paul Stokes,
Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure

Cultural Strategy (2023 to 2026)

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To consider a recommendation made by the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the draft Cultural Strategy (2023 – 2026) be formally adopted.

Recommendations

It is recommended Cabinet:

1. Approves the adoption of the Cultural Strategy (2023 to 2026) to underpin the corporate priority of Healthy and Strong Communities.
2. Endorses a six-monthly update is provided to the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee detailing progress and delivery of the Action Plan contained within the Cultural Strategy.

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities? (<i>delete as appropriate</i>)	Healthy and Strong Communities
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this proposed Strategy. If Cabinet is minded to allocate additional resources then financial proposals can be developed as part of the budget setting for 2024/2025.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 Following consideration and debate, a recommendation for Cabinet to formally adopt the draft Cultural Strategy (2023 to 2026) was made at a meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 13 June 2023.
- 1.3 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer.

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.4 In the absence of a robust Cultural Strategy for the District, there remains a risk the service could remain vulnerable to further reductions in funding and the Council does not deliver on its corporate ambitions.

Completed by: Tracey Elliot, Governance and Risk Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Corporate Plan 2020 to 2023 sets out the Council's ambition to be the best district in which to work, live and visit, with a key objective of building and celebrating the rich heritage and culture of the district. There is a commitment within the Corporate Plan to develop and adopt a refreshed Cultural Strategy, covering the provision of local arts and events across the district of South Kesteven.
- 2.2 An independent arts review was carried out in 2021, as a result of which a range of actions were recommended to improve the performance and financial viability of the Council's Arts and Culture service. Whilst the review acknowledged the work that had gone into developing the current Cultural Strategy (see background papers), it was identified that it lacked clear objectives and a coherent action plan.
- 2.3 At a meeting of the former Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 September 2022, the Members present approved the development of a refreshed Cultural Strategy and the key themes to be included. Furthermore, the Committee endorsed the commencement of a procurement exercise to appoint a suitably qualified consultant.
- 2.4 Following a compliant procurement process Red Quadrant were appointed to work with the Council to develop a refreshed Cultural Strategy for the District.

Research and Preparatory Work

- 2.5 Prior to commencing work on the development of a draft Strategy, Red Quadrant undertook a review of existing documentation and evidence. This included the research and consultation which had been undertaken to develop the current Cultural Strategy, and the results of the independent arts review undertaken in 2021.
- 2.6 In addition they undertook a review of recent culture related policy, both locally and nationally, identifying examples of best practice and current thinking in the cultural sector.
- 2.7 Representatives of Red Quadrant also visited the three Council owned arts venues in Grantham, Stamford and Bourne to gain an understanding of the venues, the artistic offer, and the nature of the district.

Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

- 2.8 At the outset of the work, supported by Officers, Red Quadrant undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify key stakeholders, individuals and groups who had a vested interest in cultural activity within the district. As a result, a wide

range of consultation activity was planned to support the development of the refreshed Cultural Strategy.

- 2.9 A publicly available survey was promoted across the District, its launch supported by a media release and regular reminders to fill in the survey on social media. Paper copies of the survey were made available to ensure all residents had the opportunity to participate and put forward their views.
- 2.10 A separate survey was circulated to Members seeking their views and opinions on the strategic direction of the Council's arts and cultural offer and key challenges.
- 2.11 Conversation Cafés were held in Grantham and Stamford. Responders to the surveys were invited to attend these events and provide feedback on a range of round table topics including:
- How the Council could strengthen partnership working and develop a collaborative approach to cultural provision across the district.
 - How the Council's arts and cultural service could recover from the impact of the pandemic and increase participation levels.
 - What were the main considerations for the development of the Council's cultural venues.
- 2.12 A series of one-to-one discussions took place with key stakeholders which included the Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder (at the time), the Chief Executive, Director of Growth and Culture and Deputy Chief Executive.
- 2.13 All staff employed in the Council's Arts and Cultural Services team were invited to attend an online focus group to share their views.
- 2.14 A workshop was held for Members of the Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Thursday 19 January 2023. The workshop was hosted by Red Quadrant and supported by the Director for Growth and Culture and the Assistant Director for Culture and Leisure.
- 2.15 **Appendix One** to this report provides a summary of the consultation undertaken and the associated findings.

Draft Strategy

- 2.16 The draft Cultural Strategy for South Kesteven District Council is attached at **Appendix Two**. This has been developed by Red Quadrant taking into account the research undertaken and the consultation results.

- 2.17 Identified within the Strategy is the vision ‘South Kesteven is a place that people want to live, work and visit, where culture and creativity are valued, accessible to all and given the chance to flourish’. The Council’s mission being identified as ‘To enable culture to thrive across South Kesteven, to coordinate cultural activity, support a strong cultural network and ensure that all residents benefit’.
- 2.18 The draft Cultural Strategy is built upon the following seven key themes:
- Economy and Growth
 - Partnership and Collaboration
 - Equality and Inclusion
 - Placemaking
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Value for Money
 - Cultural Venues and Programmes
- 2.19 For each key theme, priorities have been identified together with an explanation why these are important for the Council, residents and service users. The draft Cultural Strategy also contains an Action Plan which, if supported, will form the basis of the Council’s future work and activities.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 Spend on Arts and Cultural Services is discretionary for the Council and therefore it is important the service demonstrates value for money, and resources invested deliver the outcomes the Council is seeking. The refreshed Cultural Strategy aligns with the corporate vision and takes account of the Council’s challenging financial situation. For example, moving away from the Council directly funding events and festivals to supporting communities to do so.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Within its Corporate Plan, the Council has committed to building on, and celebrating the rich heritage and culture of the District with a key priority to develop a refreshed Cultural Strategy. Therefore the ‘do nothing’ option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 At the meeting of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 June 2023, Members considered a report detailing the work undertaken to develop the draft Cultural Strategy. Following debate, a recommendation to Cabinet was made that the Strategy should be formally adopted.
- 5.2 Should this recommendation be accepted, Members of the Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed to receive six monthly updates on

the progress and delivery of the Action Plan contained within the draft Cultural Strategy.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1 *Refreshed Cultural Strategy* – Report to Culture and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published on 13 June 2023, available online at:

<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s38008/Refreshed%20Cultural%20Strategy%20for%20the%20District.pdf>

- 6.2 *Development of a Cultural Strategy for the District* – Report to Culture and Visitor Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, published on 6 September 2022, available online at:

<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s35421/Refresh%20of%20the%20Cultural%20Strategy.pdf>

- 6.3 *South Kesteven District Council Cultural Strategy (2020 Draft)*, available online at:

<https://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s27348/Appendix%201%20-%20draft%20cultural%20strategy.pdf>

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix One – Consultation Report
- 7.2 Appendix Two – Draft Cultural Strategy for South Kesteven