

Report of the Director of City Development

Report to Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Date: 30 March 2016

Subject: A New Culture Strategy for Leeds

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. The last Culture Strategy for Leeds came to end in 2015, its higher profile achievements included successfully delivering both the Leeds Arena and a new home for Northern Ballet and Phoenix Dance Theatre at Quarry Hill. For a city of the scale and ambition of Leeds a new Cultural Strategy was always going to be needed to set a framework for future work, but this requirement is now further emphasised by our long term ambitions.
2. A year ago Executive Board approved the recommendation for Leeds to bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023, following an intensive year of city-wide consultation and debate. In order to bid for, and ultimately we hope to win the title, the city is required to have a current Culture Strategy, from which the bid takes its steer. This strategy should also link closely to the city's wider developmental ambitions according to the criteria of the competition. The report to Executive Board therefore stated that the city council team would:

Work with the people of Leeds, stakeholders and partners to create a culture strategy for the period 2017-2030.

3. Over the next six to nine months the Culture and Sport team will continue to work with the people to 'co-produce' a new Culture Strategy, setting the underpinning values, defining and shaping our cultures, articulating the value of culture across a

range of policy areas and supporting the future creators of the city's vibrant cultural offer.

4. The new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 will set the tone for the Leeds bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023, and provide the framework for its delivery should Leeds be successful in its bid.

Recommendations:

Scrutiny Board is requested to:

- consider and debate the contents of this report;
- comment on the approach to developing the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030;
- suggest other groups, networks, organisations and individuals who could contribute to the new Culture Strategy;
- request officers to come back with a progress report later in the year.

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Board with an update on the approach taken to develop the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Since the development of the previous Culture Strategy the landscape of cultural activities and local government has changed significantly.
- 2.2 Austerity measures have seen funding reductions to culture both from local government and from lottery distributors. However we have also seen more creative approaches from the cultural sector working with Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services to build resilience across their businesses and find innovative new solutions to providing care and support to the people of Leeds.
- 2.3 The way people create and consume culture has also changed; the expectations of audiences are different, and increasingly informed by digital technologies. Barriers between art forms continue to break down and artists move more seamlessly between a portfolio of subsidised, commercial and individual work. Creativity is valued as a key skill across a wide range of careers, not just within the creative sector. Tastes also change, but reading for pleasure remains the most popular cultural activity.
- 2.4 The Commission for Local Government sought to redefine the relationship between the local authority and the people of Leeds, moving towards enabling people to not only have a stronger voice in how services are created and delivered, but in some cases to take on the delivery of services and management of assets. Culture remains one of the best examples of a city activity delivered through an enormous range of individuals and groups at vastly different scales.
- 2.5 The scale and changing context for culture and increasing emphasis on working with stakeholders and communities has led to an innovative approach to the development of a city-wide cultural strategy.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 Considering the above challenges and opportunities, this new approach will see the people of Leeds co-produce the strategy. This will be achieved initially via an online blog capturing views, comments and opinion. An initial six month period of consultation starting with representatives from a broad spectrum of the culture sector, including major flagship organisations, community organisations, individual artists and performers, and independently funded cultural businesses, took place in 2015. The insight gathered from this period was used to launch the blogs which suggests a new approach seeking to broaden the definition of 'culture' to include but not be limited to the arts, in the minds of audiences and funders alike..
- 3.2 The first three blogs are attached as Appendix 1 to give a sense of the early work and approach to date. The initial style and tone of the blogs is intentionally informal

and discursive in order to open the debate up to a wide range of views. We anticipate a range of individuals from across the city will contribute their own thoughts in the coming weeks and months. There are currently 5 blogs on the site.

- 3.3 Of course not everyone is able to take part in an online debate and so the work will be supported through a range of off-line events, focus groups, meetings, workshops and conversations to ensure the broadest range of views are taken into account. A number of platforms will be used to open up the conversation further including, but not limited to, Leeds City Council Community Chairs Forum; the Sustainable Economy and Culture Partnership Board; the Leeds 2023 Independent Steering and Advisory Groups; targeted focus groups; one to one conversations with interested individuals; social media conversation and debate; and a series of targeted events and campaigns to raise the profile of the approach and the opportunity for involvement. The equalities section of this report notes further scope of consultation.
- 3.4 In addition we will commission a number of artistic projects which in themselves will look at issues raised as the strategy develops.
- 3.5 The website has been live for five weeks and at the time of writing has been visited by more than 5,000 unique visitors and gathered a total of 35 comments across five blog posts. In addition to this, activity across Facebook, Twitter and Linked In has also been high with Twitter and Facebook being the highest refers to the site. Social media activity has been positive with constructive debate and offers of support in terms of hosting focus groups and discussions with a range of audiences. Although anecdotally the social media activity is high and positive, this is hard to measure as there are no social media accounts specifically for this project, content is channelled through partner project accounts such as Leeds Inspired, Leeds 2023 and Arts at Leeds, and officers own accounts.
- 3.6 Crucially, at this stage no decisions have been taken regarding the aims, objectives, values and core focus of the strategy. The team are not consulting on the city council's ideas and suggestions for a Culture Strategy. Instead, taking its leave from the commission and the approach to the 2023 consultation, the team are seeking a genuine co-authored approach to the development of ideas and ultimately the services and delivery mechanism that will be created as a result. It will then sit as a strategy for the City, not just for the city council.
- 3.7 Following the initial conversations that have taken place since the launch of the blog the Culture Strategy may also seek to reposition the value of culture in the city. Often viewed as the 'nice to have' or added to conversations about the regeneration of areas towards the end of the project, culture can have transformational effects across a range of policy areas from housing, planning and urban regeneration to health and wellbeing, adult social care, children's services and education.
- 3.8 The new Culture Strategy for Leeds may not directly create a raft of new cultural policies, but instead will seek to work with policy makers from across these areas. It will investigate how, by placing culture at the start and heart of policy making, how a range of policies could be adapted to enable culture to lead and help to overcome challenges. However, taking the lead from the culture strategy, organisations in the

city might then propose for instance a strategy for dance, or an approach to public art which could be living documents, developing and changing through the years.

- 3.9 The initial conversations have sometimes revealed a lack of understanding between different aspects of life in the city which has sometimes led to division where there could be unity. One current example of the proposed values of the new strategy is therefore 'tolerance.' The new Culture Strategy could reset our approaches, valuing all cultures equally from local community activities to independent producers and the flagship organisations.
- 3.10 Over the last five years there has been surge in new events, clubs, societies and gatherings. The people who create these happenings are makers of the city's culture, just as those who make the city's world class arts and performance offer are also makers of the cultures that define us. These activities are not mutually exclusive, and all their stories need to be told, and supported as part of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds, and indeed the city's bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.
- 3.11 Over the next six to nine months the Culture and Sport team will continue to work with the people of Leeds to co-produce the new Culture Strategy, setting the underpinning values, redefining and shaping our cultures, articulating the value of culture across a range of policy areas and supporting the future makers of the city's vibrant cultural offer.
- 3.12 The new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 will set the tone for the Leeds bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023, and provide the framework for its delivery should Leeds be successful in its bid.

4. Corporate Considerations

- 4.1 Based on early feedback from those who have taken part in the co-production of the new Leeds Culture Strategy to date, there is little appetite for the Strategy to be prescriptive or restrictive. However there is significant appetite for it to be used as a means for supporting a more enabling approach across policy areas, offering an opportunity to revisit a range of current policies across the council's portfolio.
- 4.2 Early consultation with teams across Leeds City Council has also shown support for this approach and the Culture and Sport team will continue to work with Members and colleagues from across portfolios and services to ensure that the approach is delivered responsibly and with respect for the knowledge, expertise and work of those teams.

5. Consultation and Engagement

- 5.1 Officers have conducted an intensive six month long period of consultation initially with representatives from a broad cross-section of the Culture sector, to inform early development of the approach.

- 5.2 In January 2016 a new online blog was launched acting as a repository for the conversation and debate relating to the Culture Strategy which will ultimately agree its final content.
- 5.3 Officers are working with colleagues across Leeds City Councils Communities and Equalities team and will continue to undertake internal consultations across all policy areas.
- 5.4 Officers have consulted with Arts Council England and the European Commission to ensure the innovative approach was supported by other partners, it was.

6. Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 6.1 Focussed discussions regarding the new Leeds Culture Strategy have already started and will continue to be conducted with groups representing Child Friendly Leeds, Older People, Migrant and Refugee communities, LGBT communities and others.
- 6.2 Young people will be engaged through events delivered by Breeze and directly through the breeze networks and relationships with Children's Services.

7. Council Policies and City Priorities

- 7.1 The new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 is a key element of our 'Best City' ambition. It has the potential to support all eight of the 'Best City' outcomes, giving further evidence of the way in which culture and cultural activity is a vital part of all our lives and that of future generations.
- 7.2 Done strategically and well, the new Culture Strategy will assist in supporting the city to achieve health and well-being targets, increase rates of participation, create new jobs, boost skills, and add to civic pride in our city.
- 7.3 Through productive working relationships with colleagues from across services, the Culture Strategy could also help realise the potential of Europe's largest regeneration area on the city's Southbank.

8. Resources and value for money

- 8.1 In developing this innovative approach the team have already secured additional financial support from Arts Council England and in kind support from the University of Leeds to develop and implement the new approach to the Culture Strategy. Conversations with additional potential funding partners are on-going.
- 8.2 With these contributions, the budget for the development of a cultural strategy is included within the normal activity of the Culture and Sport service. Activity will include new commissions as part of research and development, the hosting of a European Conference in Leeds to share ideas with our European colleagues, and to support the continued conversations which will lead to the co-production of the final strategy by 2017.

9. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 9.1 As the new Culture Strategy is to be co-produced all conversations, consultation and commissions will be publicly shared.
- 9.2 This report is not subject to call in.

10. Risk Management

- 10.1 Should the project not succeed the city would be ineligible to bid to be European Capital of Culture and would have no framework by which to make strategic decisions in relation to cultural activity. The development of the strategy is managed through an established project plan

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 Given the changes to the landscape of both the cultural sector and local government, and the city's decision to bid for European Capital of Culture, a new approach is needed to the development of a new Culture Strategy for Leeds, to cover the period 2017-2030.
- 11.2 There is significant appetite and support from both the culture sector and other stakeholders approached to date for a co-produced methodology, working with the people of Leeds to develop the new Culture Strategy, setting the underpinning values, creating a new definition of our cultures, articulating the value of culture across a range of policy areas and supporting the future makers of the city's vibrant cultural offer, as the city embarks on its bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023.

12. Recommendations

12.1 Scrutiny Board is requested to:

- consider and debate the contents of this report;
- comment on the approach to developing the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030;
- suggest other groups, networks, organisations and individuals who could contribute to the new Culture Strategy;
- request officers to come back with a progress report later in the year in September 2016.

APPENDIX 1: Initial Blog Posts

These and future blog posts documenting the consultation process can be found at www.leedsculturestrategy.org

A New Approach to a New Culture Strategy – Part I

Nine months ago a small team of three council officers wrote a report to the city council's Executive Board recommending that Leeds should bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023. In order to bid for, and ultimately win the title, the city must have a current Culture Strategy, from which the bid takes its steer. The report stated that the city council team would:

Work with the people of Leeds, stakeholders and partners to create a culture strategy for the period 2017-2030.

Since the writing of that report Leeds City Council approved the recommendation to bid for the title and create a dynamic independent Steering Group. A general and local election was held which saw the city of Leeds elect its first female Leader of the Council, who in turn appointed one of the youngest Cabinets of decision makers in the country, and chose Culture and Economy for her portfolio. These events place culture at the heart of the city's agenda like never before.

With an atmosphere of ambition, anticipation, influence, excitement and progress where everything seems to have aligned and anything seems possible, writing a Culture Strategy should be a breeze - but something doesn't feel quite right.

With such an opportunity for change, to write a strategy as it's always been feels like a missed opportunity. Particularly, a strategy that is focused on one of the most vibrant, creative, deep-rooted parts of our lives, the part that defines our cultures, creating and celebrating who we are. If we stopped to think about strategies, what they are and why we create them, would we create a Culture Strategy in the same way?

Strategies are defined as the art or science of planning for success, leading to policies and tactics to get us there. Policies can be defined as rules and codes to guide decision making. With a definition like that, we could be forgiven for no longer feeling a sense of excitement, ambition, and opportunity.

Maybe it's the rules that come with a strategy that feel so restrictive at a time when people are starting to feel like maybe the streets, parks and playgrounds do belong to them, even if only in some small way that they can't yet articulate. Maybe it's the idea of a code telling us what our decisions will be before we've even been asked the question. Maybe it's a deep seated need to seek the permissions handed down by strategies and policies. Whatever it is, it is at odds with a time of bold decisions and big ambitions in Leeds. A sort of rallying cry for culture, but only if the rule book says it's OK and it looks familiar enough to be acceptable.

To write a restrictive document that will date before the ink is dry defining a culture that we cannot possibly yet know of, for the next thirteen years, does not feel ambitious. To write a Culture Strategy under the same headings that are so familiar to us because we see them in every

strategy regardless of the subject, does not feel reflective of the messy anarchy and indomitable spirit of culture. To create a series of rules that will govern our cultural development for more than a decade with no opportunity to be flexible and responsive for that period, does not seem innovative and bold. To have a strategy which is about knowing where we're going and having the all answers, seems to somehow dim the lights on the city's adventure towards European Capital of Culture and beyond to 2030.

Nevertheless a new Culture Strategy for Leeds is needed, not just to fulfil the criteria of a competition, but to take advantage of the unique sequence of events over the last nine months. To use this time as a galvanising force to redress our relationship with the city in all its forms, and consider what our cultures might be in 2030, and who will be their makers. To make a promise to empower the people of Leeds to become the future architects of culture, whatever forms it may take. For a moment there it sounded exciting again.

The challenge here is not to write a new Culture Strategy for Leeds – in some respects this could be achieved with a programme of consultation that we all know so well. Gathering views and evidence on a plethora of post-it notes, followed by a brief for an anonymous writer of strategies to lock themselves away for two months and write it all up in that old familiar way, making up the rules by committee as we go.

The challenge is to create a new approach to developing a new Culture Strategy for Leeds. An approach that is flexible, fun, and reflective of the great minds and artistic, edgy and independent attitude that our culture is already known for. An approach to strategy development that doesn't suggest that we have all the answers, or even that we know the people who do, but instead we're happy to take a mystery tour into the unknown and see what happens, adjusting and adapting on the way.

So here's an idea for a new approach to a new Culture Strategy.

We do not offer up a definition of culture. Culture is so much too so many from the art forms we use to mark the unfolding of our history, to the gastronomy of life's celebrations and events, and the heritage that defines our diversity. Culture comes from within it cannot be placed into a neat little box with a bow. It continues to morph and evolve making it impossible to pin down what's in and what's out. That's the thing with culture we only really know what it is to us, so why would we try to define it for others?

We start on line. It's easy to change and edit as we go so we can be flexible and if we learn something new that says we were wrong two months ago – we acknowledge that and change our course. The digital world calls it 'agile working' – never getting too far ahead of ourselves, always testing and questioning, working in short little bursts of energy informed by what we learn.

We build a strategy using the cultures of the city. Rather than commission one author to play out our findings in a traditional document form, we commission a range of communities, artists, performers, people, writers, poets, musicians, children and others, to build a creative narrative told in a range of languages designed to engage the whole city in a way that suits us, whoever we are.

We do not make up any rules. Our Culture Strategy will be a framework, not a doctrine. It will be about people not policies. Where policies are needed they will be flexible outlines, rooted in our values and not too prescriptive, policies that are about finding the right solution, not just a solution.

It's a start. It might change along the way. It might even become that strategy with the headings so recognisable to us all. We don't know, but it feels like anything might be possible, which is how all great adventures should start.

A New Approach to a New Culture Strategy – Part II

My last post proposed an idea for a new approach to a new Culture Strategy, setting the scene for the city to embark on a great adventure.

After the initial excitement the second stage in any adventure is a feeling of being totally overwhelmed as you start to scratch the surface, and discover the reality and enormity of the task ahead. I spent the last six months talking to lots of people about a new Culture Strategy for Leeds, and the idea for a new approach. I asked how things are in Leeds. What's easy? What's hard? What's it like working with the city council to make culture happen? What are the things you've loved in Leeds that we need more of? What drives you mad?

During these conversations I met the household names of culture in Leeds, who seemingly have it all - infrastructure, funding and international renown. I met with great passion and pride but it was mixed with frustration and an undercurrent of doubt. People said that they didn't know what the city thinks of its cultural offer despite being the leading producers of it. When I asked about who they created the great culture for, they asked me to tell them who the city wanted it to be for. Funding was difficult. Why couldn't the city prioritise culture? Is Leeds ashamed of its cultural sector? Why wouldn't it fight to protect it above community centres and care homes? Controversial until you understand the benefits that culture brings to health and wellbeing, social cohesion, equality and diversity. Why then is culture never talked about in this way with such confidence?

With others I had conversations that lasted over an hour never using the words culture, strategy, community, or development. These people wanted to talk about other people and the things they do, that brighten our lives. They talked about local galas, melas, fundraising Beetle Drives and the commitment of others. We had conversations about local heroes, those dynamos that have utterly bonkers ideas and somehow convince everyone else that it's perfectly sane. Where allotments, play groups and dance troops converge. Where there was a gap in life and someone filled it, not to make a quick buck, but just to fill the gap. We talked about language, identity and connectivity. We talked about perception, snobbery and often wilful ignorance that cast these ventures in a lesser light when the word culture does eventually surface in the conversation.

There was a strange meeting of these two worlds where people had, had ideas and made them happen and were very successful. It was culture as most people would recognise it – a gallery, a music venue, a theatre, but it isn't paid for by the public sector. There was a strange feeling these creators of culture were a hybrid of dirty words like success, commercial, and privately-owned

mixed with the new vanguard of culture embodied in independence, freedom, and creative industries. They were neither nowt nor summat, but they were very definitely culture. They were also very definitely angry, angry that they were pigeon holed one way or another, infuriated with the inflexibility of an archaic system that stops them from thriving and punishes them for not requesting a grant.

During these conversations some people used the word leadership, but what they described was management – tell us the answer, tell us what to do, tell us how to fix it. Others were clear that the city stifles itself and its people. Throw away the rules and leave us be, we will create the cultures of the future. Others were more pragmatic. Yes we want leadership, someone to set the tone and ambition, but we're all adults and we see different things that no one leader can ever know. Relax, trust the people who create the culture you can be proud of. It's not your job to protect us, it's your job to help us to do that ourselves, and to enable a culture that we can all have share in.

These conversations were almost all 1-2-1 meetings. In and amongst those discussions I found activists, anarchists and pioneers. I found angry, frustrated and proud people. I found humour, honesty, respect, passion, and fire. I also found fear and a sense of bewilderment. A sense that we have the chance with 2023 but nobody really believes we'll take it. Hiding behind the gloss of a well-rehearsed rhetoric on the importance of the culture sector, was a sense that we've all been here before and it probably won't be different this time.

When I talked about a new approach most people laughed. Not because it's ridiculous or even that ground-breaking, but because it's so obvious yet we've never done it before. No one demanded that I stop this nonsense and start writing a document immediately. Everyone was slightly cautious, wondering what the end result would be, but happy enough to see where this goes. When I spoke to the Arts Council they said: "It's terrifically exciting. A bit mad and a bit risky but, still, exciting."

While I was talking to people I was inundated with reading. Someone would recommend this city's strategy that was pretty much identical to that city's strategy recommended by someone else. Someone else would send me the biggest report I've ever seen on what the academic world expects of a strategy. People would recommend books, articles, journals and I'd have a go at reading them all. They all led me to believe that maybe this approach is more ground-breaking than we thought.

Admittedly the vast majority of my conversations were with people who have some connection to the many definitions of 'Culture' choose how tenuous that may be. There will be criticism that I only spoke to those who are 'in' and where the conversation went wider I was box ticking.

This short series of blog posts is in part a response to those criticisms. As a team we thought long and hard about whose voice this is written in. The voice is mine, but I am just the narrator of the city's story. It's an open, co-authored, co-produced story. I can only share what I'm told and what I learn. You can challenge those things. You can add your own views, knowledge and experience. Yes currently, it does only reach those on line and we will need to find other ways of sharing this conversation, but that's a good place to start and an open, transparent repository for what

develops out of those discussions. It's also a good test of how committed we – all of us – really are to going beyond the usual suspects because that only happens if we all make it happen.

Secondly we would challenge who you yourself consider to be 'in'. If we are to do away with definitions of 'Culture' then no one is in or out. True, these conversations started with those who programme venues, lead clubs and classes, promote and tour the city's perceived cultural offer, and bring people together to create events and spaces enlivening communities, but then I was directed to other people. People who volunteer, people who prod and poke, people with big ideas for what should be happening on their doorstep. I didn't get to speak to all 750,000 people of Leeds, I probably didn't get to speak to you.

If it's a co-authored strategy of which I am the narrator surely then, it is within everyone's gift to change.

Who are the people who never turn up to a consultation meeting? Don't expect those people to talk to me or my colleagues, who they don't know much less trust. Why don't you have this conversation with the people you know and share what they said? Comment on these blogs and tell me if I got your story wrong, tell me what I've missed and who I should talk to. That said it doesn't always have to be an attack, maybe something here resonates with you. Maybe you're glad it's finally been said. Maybe it's important enough for you to tell me so?

Setting Our Course

So far I've talked about ideas – a new way of doing this, a different approach to that. Throwing the rule book out always seems like a good idea to someone like me who likes change and trying something new. However with the rule book, came an enormous safety net. Following well-trodden steps is often how we know we're on the right path sure that there will be a destination at the end.

So where do we start if we've torn up the map in favour of finding our own adventure? If we're undertaking an adventure we'll need a compass, and a set of shared values that guide us through what lies ahead seems like a good substitute. Like a compass values should be things that we can all identify with and understand even if the paths that we discover are wildly different and distinct.

The values that we choose will be the things that set our course, the yard stick by which we measure our decisions when we get to a cross roads.

This post starts to suggest what the values underpinning a new Culture Strategy for Leeds could be. They are based on the conversations to date and speak of the frustration we feel and acknowledge the challenges that we face, but they also speak of the fire, the fight and the determination to get past this, to finally make our star shine and build a capital of culture.

Our values will be rooted within and fought for, fiercely protected and upheld by us all. If that's the case then we had better get them right from the start. Below is a suggested reading of our compass and what it could mean for the future cultures that we create. That said a compass can

be read in many ways so these are just examples and suggestions, there for us to test and change as we build a new strategy, collectively.

- *Bravery* –We have been creating, growing, welcoming and nurturing a phenomenal cultural identity for decades, but we don't know how to tell people about it and we've forgotten how liberating taking a risk can be. We behave like the wonderfully gifted child in a class of averages, too shy and nervous to shine even though we know we can do better than that. If we are going to find a new age where culture takes centre stage, we have to believe in its ability to do so. Confidence is not told, it is shown in how we act, our reaction to the world, and our faith in our ability to stand out, in our own way. We will not emulate the cultures of another place, but be bold in creating our own mark. Culture is a fiery, creative, passionate process some will like what we create, others will not, but that won't stop us from creating it. Leeds is a radical and independent city, we have a strong voice and a ferocious talent, we will be brave enough to use it.
- *Resilience* – Our world is changing. The funding handed down to local government and the Arts Council is already dramatically reduced and set to reduce further. But, money isn't everything. As a city collectively we have so many riches that with a little resourcefulness and creativity can yield more than we ever imagined, but we have to go through the challenging terrain, not around it. It's going to be tough. We will need to make big changes, emptying out the 'too hard box', taking decisions together that will change the face of our cultures irrevocably, but will also make us stronger. Together we will build a new sustainable model for culture whatever its form and function.
- *Generosity* –From the people I spoke to there was a sense of the cultures that have and the ones that don't, which could easily become a dividing line. Again it wasn't always about money, sometimes it was about who had marquees and seats that could be borrowed and shared. Others it was about shared learning. Sometimes it was about opportunity. If you're hosting the world's media, whose story are you telling them? Does it only have to be your own? It was always about the will to do something good, to share and support. The will to empower future generations to create future cultures without boundaries. We will share our assets, knowledge and opportunities, build new networks where we learn from and support each other irrespective of the cultures we represent and our own interests.
- *Tolerance* -Feisty, chaotic and independent by nature we will never agree on everything, but we don't have to. I met people who wanted total freedom in a Culture Strategy, and those who wanted rules or at least a firm guide. I met people who are vehemently passionate about the arts and want to not feel embarrassed extolling its virtues, alongside others who have no interest in the arts but dedicated their lives to the enjoyment of people. Nobody should feel silenced on the subject that they have so much zeal for. The cultures of Leeds are not mutually exclusive. Our cultural spectrum will have no high or low. We don't all have to love Opera or Community Galas, but we will all be proud and grateful that the people of Leeds create, support and develop them both, and more, because without one, there won't be the other and this city thrives on both.
- *Curiosity* –We will travel light on this adventure leaving the baggage of the past behind. The sense of excitement which we feel is sometimes accompanied by trepidation because

we don't allow ourselves to be brave enough to fail. Valuing the freedom, creativity and flexibility to try things, be honest with ourselves, take the good things, leave the rest and try again, will be at the core of who we become. It will make us innovative, keep us relevant, make us unique, and allow us to learn from what went before rather than having to banish it from our consciousness.

If the values we choose now guide the decisions we make for the next thirteen years, how fitting are the ones suggested here?

Could we develop a new Events Strategy for the city based on these values?
Can we ask developers who invest in the city to adhere to them?

Will they change the way we behave enough? Will it be for the better? Will it make a difference?

Are they too similar – is curiosity and the will to fail fast and get up again, the same as being brave?

Are we missing something obvious?

What do we really value as a city, and how can the Culture Strategy make sure that we use those values as measure of success?

Based on your comments, we will revisit, update and refine these values to check that they work before we set off into the woods with them.

If they don't we'll try something else, if they do we'll figure out our next move, together.

PS –Over the next few months we'll be inviting ourselves along to the opening of a packet of crisps, asking all these questions and more, but if you want us to join your event, meet your group, speak to your local community or attend your meetings please get in touch with me at: Leanne.buchan@leeds.gov.uk or call 0113 24 78195.