

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Executive Board

Date: 17th July 2017

Subject: Leeds Culture Strategy 2017-2030

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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

“The challenges and opportunities of a place and how we respond to them is what will make our city and our Culture Strategy distinctive. A strategy is no good if it doesn’t stimulate change.”

Leeds Culture Strategy 2017-2030

Summary of main issues

1. In March 2015 Executive Board approved a recommendation that officers should work with the people of Leeds to co-produce a new Culture Strategy to cover the period 2017-2030. This report responds to that request, presenting the city’s first co-produced Culture Strategy for approval, following a period of intensive conversations and consultation.
2. The new Culture Strategy will cover a thirteen year period responding to the city’s ambition to become Best City 2030. In order to achieve this ambition and remain relevant across that timeframe Leeds will need to rethink how it operates and connects across communities, departments and organisations to achieve a greater quality of life for its residents. It will also need to consider a flexible and iterative approach to developing and delivering the new strategy to reflect and respond to the changes that may occur during that time.
3. In creating the strategy more than 1,500 conversations took place with people from across residential communities, arts and culture, business and property, schools, colleges and universities, and Leeds City Council departments. A blog which was set up for an initial 12 month period to document the conversation received more than 40,000 unique visitors who actively debated, discussed and commented on views that they may otherwise not have heard. This conversation has led to a new Leeds definition of culture,

a set of six values to guide the strategy, a set of seven objectives, and five initial areas of focus. (The five areas of focus will act as a starting point for a Delivery Plan that the whole city can contribute to and which will be developed after the strategy is adopted.)

4. Following approval at Leeds City Council's Executive Board in February 2017 a period of more formal consultation was undertaken to test support for the definition, values, objectives and initial areas of focus. An innovative online consultation tool enabled people to agree or disagree with the statements or to directly edit and comment on the draft strategy. The consultation site had 1,300 unique visitors over the six week period and of those who took part in the consultation 88% were in agreement with the proposed strategy and 12 direct edits were made to the document. In addition to this, ensuring the voices of children and young people will be included in the consultation, every school in Leeds has been sent a classroom survey to test agreement and endorsement for the strategy among school age children, the results of which will be inform the strategy and delivery plan as it further develops.
5. Following approval of the strategy by Executive Board a Delivery Plan will be created to implement the strategy including examples of how the city can reframe its existing policies and programmes to deliver the city's ambition to become Best City by 2030. Some early work has begun to develop this with three significant actions included in in separate reports detailed on the agenda for this meeting:
 - Grants to Arts and Cultural Organisations
 - Leeds 2023 European Capital of Culture Bid Interim report
 - Proposed Refurbishment of West Yorkshire Playhouse

"It is not enough to simply exist here; our cultural organisations must immerse themselves in the city and use their platforms and connections effectively. Our artists, creators, makers and producers can create a new kind of city where culture doesn't just respond to the agenda, but sets it."

Leeds Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030

Recommendations

6. Leeds City Council's Executive Board is recommended to:

- i) Adopt the new definition, values, aims, objectives and five areas of focus of the Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030.
- ii) Adopt a new narrative for the city, placing culture at the heart of all future major policy decisions.
- iii) Request officers continue the work with stakeholders to develop a delivery plan to implement the strategy.
- iv) Request Directorates consider how their challenges and opportunities could be reframed in light of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 and how their service areas could contribute to the Delivery Plan.
- v) Request that the Director of City Development returns to Executive Board with an update on the Delivery Plan later in the year.
- vi) Note that the Chief Officer Culture and Sport will be responsible for implementing these recommendations.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief Executive Board on the development of a new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030, and to request the adoption of the strategy, and a commitment to a culture-led narrative and focus for the city.

2 Background information

“Culture is what we do and who we are, encompassing a broad range of actions and activities which have the capacity to transform, challenge, reassure and inspire, giving a place and its people a unique and distinctive identity.”

- Leeds definition of culture, Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030

- 2.1 In March 2015 Executive Board approved a recommendation for officers to create the city’s first co-produced Culture Strategy. This innovative approach would see the people of Leeds directly writing, contributing and challenging the strategy as it developed rather than following a more traditional consultation method, which seeks views on proposals rather than active participation in the development and creation of those proposals.
- 2.2 With major transport developments taking shape, including plans for HS2 and the new Leeds Railway Station, pressures on health and social care, opportunities in new and emerging technologies and major public realm investment planned, the City Council needs to bring a shared focus to these distinct projects. The Vision for Leeds 2011-2030 canvassed the city for its views on what would make Leeds the Best City, which resulted in seven priorities of which more than half had a cultural dimension. Six years into that vision and culture consistently remains high on the public’s agenda with a recent Southbank consultation prioritising culture as the second most important factor in the future development of that area. Culture has the opportunity to become the golden thread that runs throughout all policy areas, unifying our collective ambitions and delivering on our vision for Best City 2030.
- 2.3 To create the radical, irrevocable and transformative change required in the quality of life experienced by all communities in the city, all stakeholders and partners must be active in creating and delivering the solutions. As a range of partners will deliver the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030, a set of six guiding values have been created to ensure that our actions work towards the same principles and to guide future decision making:
- Bravery - many of the conversations expressed a view that Leeds has not always had the confidence and boldness to deliver on its ambitions. Bravery combines both ambition and confidence.
 - Curiosity – in discussions Leeds was often considered risk averse and afraid to fail which hinders our ability to innovate and lead. Curiosity is a willingness to experiment and explore new cultures, new ways of working and new technologies without the fear of failure.

- Generosity – more than a personal attitude, generosity must appear in the opportunities we have and who we share them with, the design of our city, our urban and rural areas must create the space for people to breathe.
- Respect - this value is the result of many conversations about division and difference. It is the value with which to challenge xenophobia, prejudice and exclusion. We must become comfortable with our differences and learn to champion and celebrate them, learning to unite rather than unify our communities.
- Resilience - our cultural life has flourished for generations and will withstand austerity, digitisation, globalisation, and shifting demographics. It is nevertheless hugely challenged by these and other competing demands and we must find new models to sustain our future.
- Honesty – whilst we can ask the culture sector to become more resilient, in order for it to do so we must be honest with it about the challenges ahead, collectively and openly plan for austerity and develop a new partnership with the city, the culture sector and our communities.

2.4 The new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 places culture as central and essential to the future development of the city and improving quality of life for the city's residents. The aims of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 are to:

- Change perceptions and attitudes towards culture and the arts, moving the focus from what they cost to what they create.
- Ensure that culture is celebrated, runs through our DNA and is inextricably linked to who we are and what we do.
- Value and respect artists and creativity considering both vital to the growth and prosperity of Leeds and ensuring that they are promoted as part of our diverse economy.
- Become open to the cultures of the world, internationally connected, and play an active role in shaping global policy and leadership.
- Embrace and celebrate the differences in our communities, inviting artists and thinkers from all corners of the world to sit alongside our communities, and find new connections with Leeds.

2.5 The objectives of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 are:

- For the city to value and prioritise cultural activity, utilising it as a means of improving the quality of life experienced by every person and every community in Leeds.
- For culture to build respect, cohesion and coexistence between communities and individuals.
- For people, whatever their background, to be continually supported to be creative through school, informal learning, training and employment, ensuring that culture can be created and experienced by anyone.

- For Leeds to be nationally and internationally recognised as a liveable city, and a thriving, internationally connected cultural hub open to collaboration.
- For Leeds to be at the forefront of cultural innovation, making the most of new and emerging technologies.
- For the culture sector to grow and increase its contribution to Leeds' economy, by placing culture at the heart of the city's narrative.
- For established cultural organisations to be resilient, and to create an environment where new cultural organisations can flourish.

2.6 A lot can and will change in thirteen years and the strategy needs to be flexible and adaptable to remain relevant and effective. Our priorities will need change to respond to the world around us and as such five areas of focus have been set for a short term initial period of three years. At the end of this term the areas of focus will be reviewed to ensure that they are still relevant, and that the work to date is achieving against the aims and objectives of the strategy. The initial areas of focus are:

- A City of Creators – building capacity and supporting individuals at all stages of their development to create the city's cultural life.
- A Place of Many Destinations – celebrating the diverse and distinctive identities that create our communities and supporting place-making across the city.
- A Connected City with a 'Yes' Mentality – building connections, changing attitudes, opening up venues and assets, and rethinking spaces and policies to empower communities and artists.
- An international capital of culture – playing an active role at regional, national and international level, leading policy, debate and decisions, building a strong, respected and productive international profile.
- A fast-paced city of cultural innovation – harnessing new technologies as they emerge to unlock the potential of cultural innovation.

Conversation & Consultation

2.7 From the start of the process Leeds City Council's Executive Board has championed a co-produced approach to developing the strategy, which is widely used in the digital and technology sector, rapidly prototyping ideas and solutions which start with the end user and their needs. The development process aimed to collectively create a strategy that would focus on the issues, ideas and ideals of people before the creation of policies. The approach had two stages: conversation building a qualitative assessment and baseline, followed by consultation to test and refine the strategy and build evidence for change.

2.8 The conversation was a qualitative process aiming to recognise us all as equals regardless of age, gender, race, expertise, income, artistic preferences, geography, or organisation. A diverse range of people were encouraged to pool their ideas and share them openly, with the strategy taking shape as the conversations unfolded.

- 2.9 The more formal consultation was designed to test the draft with those who helped to create it, and with wider audiences who were yet to engage or prefer a more traditional approach. The consultation stage gives quantitative evidence in support of the definition, values, aims and objectives and the initial areas of focus.

Conversation (Qualitative Research)

- 2.10 The conversation was initially held with the culture and arts sector in its very broadest form, from major arts organisations and institutions to small community groups and individual artists. These groups all identified themselves as part of the culture sector and more than 200 face to face interviews took place to understand their perspectives.
- 2.11 Following the initial conversations with the culture sector an online blog was created to propose a different focus for the new Culture Strategy based on those conversations, which outlined a more flexible delivery, a greater focus on empowering people through shared values, less focus on rigid policies and facing into issues of challenging financial environments, differences and divides across sectors and communities, a feeling that the city has failed to champion its cultural offer and that many neither fully understand nor fully value its contribution.
- 2.12 The response to the blog was overwhelming positive with 3,000 hits in its first month and a clear mandate to continue the conversation with a wider group of people. In the 18 months that followed extensive conversations took place with people who may not consider themselves to be cultural or even interested in culture. During that time more than 1,000 workshops, focus groups, 1-2-1 meetings, presentations, open discussions, media debates and blogs sought to determine what culture meant to Leeds, what barriers prohibited people from creating or enjoying the cultures that they love and how a Culture Strategy could recognise these issues, challenges and opportunities and provide a framework for overcoming or capitalising on them. All conversations were documented on the blog which over the course of 12 months had more than 40,000 unique visitors with many users actively commenting, debating and shaping the outcome, and continuing conversations across social media platforms.
- 2.13 The conversation also took place across departments and services within Leeds City Council working across Best Council Leadership Team, Community Committees, leadership and management structures in areas as varied as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Environment and Neighbourhoods, Planning, Highways and Transport, Economic Development and of course Culture and Sport. In addition the emerging strategy was debated and discussed with a range of Executive Members at briefings and formal meetings such as Executive Board. The Executive Member for Economy & Culture, Chief Executive and Director of City Development all played active roles in ensuring that the conversation was supported internally and enabling officers to reach external partners such as Leeds Property Forum and third sector partners.
- 2.14 Alongside this process, and in the context of the city's bid to become European Capital of Culture 2023, officers also canvassed views, opinions and best practice from international partners. Working through the Eurocities networks and using the United Cities and Local Government Agenda 21 for Culture as a guide to host conversations with cities including Espoo in Finland, Malmo in Sweden, Galway (who will host the European Capital of Culture title in 2020), Leeuwarden in the Netherlands (2018 European Capital of Culture hosts) and Aarhus in Denmark (current host city for European Capital of Culture).

Consultation (Quantitative Research)

- 2.15 During the six week period of consultation from 2nd May to 12th June 2017 a new website was created to replace the blog, which invited members of the public to agree or disagree with the definition, values, objectives and areas of focus, or add comments and edits directly to the draft document. Over that six week period the website had 1,300 unique visitors and achieved an overall rating of 88% in agreement with the proposed strategy. Whilst we recognise that the consultation will not have reached everyone it was supported by coverage in the Yorkshire Evening Post as front page news, and a social media advertising campaign across Facebook and Twitter with conversations continuing to take place offline to encourage people to take part.
- 2.16 All areas of the strategy received an approval rating of above 75%. The definition was supported by 88% of those who took part in the consultation and received no amends in the live document. Of the values Bravery, Curiosity and respect were most popular all achieving 88% and above with Resilience (79%) and Generosity (77%) not far behind.
- Of the seven objectives most had above 90% approval rates with the two that were connected to the economy (89%) and resilience (88%) following a similar trend to the values and culture being used to create cohesion and coexistence across communities (87%) not being quite as popular. Of the five priority areas all received between of the 89-92% agreement rating for the strategy as a whole.
- 2.17 In addition to this, ensuring the voices of children and young people are included in the consultation, every school in Leeds has been sent a classroom survey to test agreement and endorsement for the strategy among school age children, the results of which will be incorporated into the Delivery Plan.
- 2.18 Finally, during the consultation stage the project pioneered the use of a new technology, Penflip, that enabled people to make edits directly to the document, track changes, continue conversations and take part in the writing of the final document. This technology had never been used before by Leeds City Council, and was a risk for the project as, although final comments and edits are selected by officers, all edits and suggestions are made public. There were 12 suggested edits from members of the public, all of which were either positive or constructive.

What did we learn?

“We must become comfortable with the idea that Leeds, like all great cities, does not have one story to tell, we are multi-faceted, diverse and messy, and should seek to unite our communities rather than unify them.”

- Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 consultation

- 2.19 The process to develop the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 revealed that whilst the arts form a significant part of the city’s cultural offer, culture encompasses a much broader set of activities and extends beyond the activities we undertake to build our identity, our sense of place, and shape our attitudes and our way of life.
- 2.20 This process revealed that whilst some in the city struggle with the words ‘culture’ or ‘art’ and the idea of ‘strategies’ and ‘policies’, they almost unanimously saw the

activities, attitudes and identities that create our culture as vital to the future development of the city and the health and wellbeing of its residents.

- 2.21 Culture was repeatedly cited as crucial to the future sustainability of Leeds, to achieving its ambitions to become Best City, to influencing its policies such as transport, health and social care and education, to enabling the city to face into and celebrate its differences, overcome its challenges and step up to perform on an international stage.
- 2.22 The methodology of conversation and consultation, with a greater emphasis on qualitative research was also widely regarded as best practice by those who took part in the conversations and our international peers. As the balance of power shifts in cities with devolution and the response to austerity, globalisation and the need to deliver services differently many cities internationally are adopting models of co-production, leading with people before policies and moving from a one size fits all approach to flexible and shared decision making and delivery.
- 2.23 An infographic describing the strategy in visual form, and the next steps as we move towards the delivery plan, is attached as an appendix.

3 Main issues

“The city has a responsibility to develop and grow but it must also have an obligation to do so sustainably and with respect, compassion, and consideration for what already exists.”

- Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 consultation

- 3.1 Much has changed since the development of the previous Culture Strategy which ran from 2010-2015. There has been a change in leadership locally, nationally and internationally; the economy has weathered the effects of the 2008 economic crash; major regeneration schemes such as Leeds Arena, Trinity Leeds and Victoria Gate have been delivered; in 2015 the city approved the recommendation to bid for European Capital of Culture 2023; in 2017 the country narrowly voted to leave the European Union.
- 3.2 The new Culture Strategy will cover a thirteen year period in which Leeds will continue to change at a rapid pace, looking and feeling vastly different by 2030. There are 774,060 people living in Leeds and estimates that the population will exceed 1,000,000 by 2030. Of the current population 140 ethnic groups are represented, speaking 170 languages.
- 3.3 The city has a target to build 70,000 new homes by 2033, some of which will appear in new estates and others will be attached to existing communities. The city centre will double in size with the development of South Bank meeting residential communities in the south. The transport system will undergo a major overhaul. While some in the city do enjoy increased life expectancy, social mobility, access to high quality cultural activity, better jobs and high quality housing, others live in deepening poverty.
- 3.4 In 2014 11.09% of households experienced fuel poverty in Leeds compared to the national average of 10.9%. Some areas of the city have a life expectancy of 10 years

less than the city average. Of our neighbourhoods 105 are in the top 10% of most deprived areas nationally, with 148 ranking in the top 20% of UK deprived neighbourhoods.

- 3.5 The ambition to become Best City 2030 requires Leeds to radically rethink how it operates and connects across communities, departments and organisations to achieve a greater quality of life for all communities, in which culture has an integral role to play and must be central to our future development.
- 3.6 The culture sector has a new opportunity to make a difference but must look beyond the confines and constraints of its own sector to do so. Across each of the areas described above culture has been cited as potential tool for helping to overcome the city's challenges and creating its future opportunities.
- 3.7 The global changes in environment, leadership and economy since the previous strategy required a different approach to developing a new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030. In order to effectively deliver the new strategy a change is required, adopting the new values and demonstrating a strong commitment to leading with culture across all levels of leadership and policy areas.
- 3.8 In addition, where previously strategies and policies have been the sole responsibility of the City Council to deliver, this new model requires a collective and shared responsibility for the delivery and ensuring that the many stakeholders and partners across the city play an active role.
- 3.9 Should the strategy be adopted by Executive Board the next step will be to develop a shared Delivery Plan with partners and stakeholders across sectors in the city. The plan will need to be flexible, adapting and changing to the local and global environment.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Engagement has formed a core part of the ethos and approach to the development of the strategy, which started with early conversations about the city's cultural offer in 2014 and has continued with the co-produced approach to developing the initial draft. The open consultation process allowed members of the public to directly edit the draft strategy and targeted workshops, meetings, surveys and interviews with groups and communities ensured a broad spectrum of participation and engagement.
- 4.1.2 However, in a city of 774,060 people which continues to grow there will always be those who have yet to engage with the process, not be aware of it or feel that it is not relevant to them. The delivery of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 and the development of the Delivery Plan will continue the ethos of strategy and will strive to reach new audiences and groups, engaging them in the future development of the city and its cultural offer.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 Every effort has been made to meet with the broadest possible range of communities and the team has worked with the Communities & Equalities and Adult Social Care services to ensure a diverse range of views have been incorporated.

- 4.2.2 Groups consulted include faith forums, LGB T* Hubs, and the city's award-winning Migrant Access Partnership to host conversations with the city's many minority ethnic groups. Working through area leaders we have for instance connected with members of the Chinese, Kashmiri, Polish and Roma communities. Workshops have taken place with elderly groups and with children and young people.
- 4.2.3 In addition every school in Leeds is currently undertaking a classroom survey to test agreement and endorsement for the strategy's definition, values, objectives and areas of focus among school age children, the results of which will be incorporated into the strategy and delivery plan as they develop.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 has a direct impact on all the Best City outcomes and the Chief Executive has recently asked all departments and services to consider how activity in the cultural sphere can help to realise the city's transformational ambitions.
- 4.3.2 The strategy will work across policy areas to support the delivery of the Best Council Plan and the Breakthrough Projects.

4.4 Resources and value for money

"The gold standard for delivery is that culture will be woven into the strategies and action plans of every council department, every school, every business, every university and college and every organisation in Leeds."

- Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 consultation

- 4.4.1 The new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 does not in itself require major new investment to deliver. Instead it seeks to work across a range of policy areas to support existing activities and offer new opportunities to reframe challenges and explore opportunities. This will require working across the city council and stakeholder organisations to incorporate culture as one of the main tools to delivering on the city's ambition to become Best City to live by 2030.
- 4.4.2 In many instances culture strategies are developed then forgotten, used only by a handful of arts organisations. A small operating budget will be allocated from within current budgets for an initial three year period to facilitate the development of a Delivery Plan and ensure that the strategy becomes embedded across the city, changing our narrative, and running through our DNA.
- 4.4.3 To further support the aims of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 staffing resource will be allocated to the delivery of the strategy with responsibility to develop the Delivery Plan and facilitate the ongoing, iterative development of projects and ideas that will lead to the implementation of the strategy.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 This report is subject to call-in.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The new strategy presents a significant challenge to current working practices and with competing demands for council resources and priorities it could become another box to tick. However the strategy does not seek to replace the work already taking place and instead aims to support it and to offer new solutions. For example, to be a Child Friendly City culture plays a vital role in creating safe spaces, developing self-confidence, health and wellbeing. Without culture we cannot be a Child Friendly City and as such by working together and embedding culture across initiatives for Children and Young People we can ensure that we meet our ambitions.
- 4.6.2 We are operating in a difficult financial climate and an uncertain political environment as Brexit negotiations unfold. A new relationship will be required with the culture sector to support a transition to new funding models and to change the dynamic between the city and the sector.
- 4.6.3 The strategy does not focus solely on the culture sector and clearly states that its delivery is not the sole responsibility of the City Council or the city's culture sector. As such a new narrative and working partnership will need to be created with stakeholders from across communities, property, development, education and more. The success of the strategy rest on its ability to inspire a change in how we work together as a city and its adoption across a range of stakeholders.

5 Conclusions

“Cultural diversity is as important for humankind as biodiversity is for nature and the environment. Culture must be played out at every turn in public spaces, education institutions, offices and our homes.”

- Agenda 21for Culture, United Cities and Local Government, International Committee on Culture

- 5.1 The process to develop the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 revealed that whilst the arts form a significant part of the city's cultural offer, culture encompasses a much broader set of activities and extends beyond the activities we undertake to build our identity, our sense of place, and shape our attitudes and our way of life.
- 5.2 In addition, where previously strategies and policies have been the sole responsibility of the City Council to deliver, this new model requires a collective and shared responsibility for the delivery and ensuring that the many stakeholders and partners across the city play an active role is not without its challenges and will require the full support of Leeds City Council's Executive Board.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 Leeds City Council's Executive Board is recommended to:
- i) Adopt the new definition, values, aims, objectives and five areas of focus.of the Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030.
 - ii) Adopt a new narrative for the city, placing culture at the heart of all future major policy decisions;

- iii) Request officers continue the work with stakeholders to develop a delivery plan to implement the strategy;
- iv) Request Directorates consider how their challenges and opportunities could be reframed in light of the new Culture Strategy for Leeds 2017-2030 and how their service areas could contribute to the Delivery Plan; and
- v) Request that the Director of City Development returns to Executive Board with an update on the Delivery Plan later in the year.
- vi) Note that the Chief Officer Culture and Sport will be responsible for implementing these recommendations

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.