

REPORT FOR DECISION



DECISION OF:	CABINET
DATE:	14 OCTOBER 2015
SUBJECT:	CULTURAL ECONOMY STRATEGY 2015-18 AND ACTION PLAN
REPORT FROM:	CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND CULTURE
CONTACT OFFICER:	IAN CHAMBERS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEARNING & CULTURE)
TYPE OF DECISION:	CABINET (KEY DECISION)
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	This paper is within the public domain.
SUMMARY:	<p>The Cultural Economy is one of the fastest growing sectors internationally. There are significant financial and employment benefits for areas with a thriving cultural economy; together with intangible benefits resulting from greater civic pride, community cohesion and better health and wellbeing of the population.</p> <p>This Strategy will help Bury to build on its existing assets, promoting a stronger cultural economy in the future.</p> <p>With increasing pressure on resources, the Strategy will seek to maximise the benefits to the Borough, by encouraging greater partnership working with all involved in this sector.</p>
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	<p>Option 1: To approve the Cultural Economy Strategy and associated Action Plan. This is the recommended option as it gives clear focus and direction to the cultural economy sector in the Borough for the next three years.</p> <p>Option 2: Do not approve the Strategy and Action Plan. This would leave the Council without a strategy to increase the benefits to the Borough associated with having a strong cultural economy.</p>

IMPLICATIONS:		
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes	
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:		
Health and Safety	There are no health and safety issues arising directly from this draft Strategy. Any changes in services or operating practice will be subject to risk assessments and implemented in line with existing policy.	
Statement by Executive Director of Resources:		
Equality/Diversity implications:	The Strategy provides a framework for the future and does not directly impact on any specific group. The implications for people with protected characteristics will be assessed when detailed proposals are brought forward as part of the delivery of key projects in the Action plan.	
Considered by Monitoring Officer:	Yes	JH
Wards Affected:	All	
Scrutiny Interest:	Overview and Scrutiny	

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR: Executive Director for Children, Young People and Culture

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Executive Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
21.09.15			
Scrutiny Committee	Committee	Council	
	14.10.15		

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Internationally, the cultural economy is one of the fastest growing sectors. It can support local economies, bring in employment and income, and increase civic pride and community cohesion.
- 1.2 As has been the case with a number of recent strategies, this document does not follow a traditional format. Reflecting the Council's need to streamline the services it provides, the Strategy has been cut back to focus on the key objectives which we need to achieve in order to build a successful cultural economy in the Borough.

- 1.3 Bury already has a strong identity and reputation as a popular visitor location, with attractions such as Bury Art Gallery, Museum and Sculpture Centre, Bury Cultural Collection (Archives), Bury Market, The Fusiliers Museum, the East Lancashire Railway(ELR) and the Met helping to build the Borough's identity.
- 1.4 As a result, the Borough has achieved regional, national and international recognition including:
- Bury Town Centre obtaining Purple Flag status in 2015;
 - Bury Market winning 'Market of the Year' in 2015;
 - ELR was awarded Lancashire Tourism 'Large Visitor Attraction of the Year' Award in 2014
 - The Met won 'Best Entertainment Venue' at the 2014 Manchester Tourism Awards
 - International acclaim for the Art Gallery programme and cultural trading practices
 - Ramsbottom runner up in the Daily Telegraph's 2014 'High Street of the Year' survey and it hosts one of Europe's top Chocolate Festivals
 - Bury has won 'Best Large Town' category in the North West for 11 years running
 - Radcliffe winning the Gold Award for North West in Bloom for the fourth consecutive year in 2014.
- 1.5 It is important to build on these successes and assets, and this Strategy will help to support and co-ordinate activity to achieve this.
- 1.6 The Strategy has been developed in consultation with the Cultural Economy Group which includes key representatives from the organisations listed in 1.3 as well as other commercial partners and Council officers. A draft Strategy was presented to the Council's Strategic Leadership Group on 8 July 2015 and, as a result of feedback from that meeting, further consultation has taken place with the Cultural Economy group members and an Action Plan has been developed to set out specific activities and timescales.

2. CULTURAL ECONOMY STRATEGY OBJECTIVES 2015-2018

- 2.1 The Strategy is framed by Bury Council's vision, purpose and values to '*lead, shape and maintain a prosperous, sustainable Bury that is fit for the future*'. In order to make the most of our existing assets and maximise the opportunities available to the Council, the Strategy is based around three key objectives.

Leadership and Innovation - Building Bury's reputation as a cultural centre

At the heart of the town's cultural quarter is Bury's Art Gallery, Museum and Sculpture Centre. Particularly in recent years, it has gained an increasing regional, national and international reputation for the quality of the exhibitions it has been able to attract and for the successes it has had leading multi-authority exhibitions to places like China. It is important for this reputation to be maintained and new opportunities identified. Not only will this reinforce the Art Gallery's reputation, but it will also bring about economic benefits for the surrounding outlets and services.

Developing talent and entrepreneurship

It is essential to identify and build upon talent and skills to create a sustainable, healthy cultural economy which benefits residents through employment, learning

and leisure. This objective also identifies the intention to communicate and maximise benefits to businesses and service providers of major events in the Borough and the North West, such as the Borough's successful festivals, Bury's hosting of the European Network of Cultural Centres Conference in 2016 and Manchester's status as European City of Science in 2016.

Making the most of the Borough's cultural offer

It is important to recognise that the Council cannot achieve all of its ambitions on its own. Whilst it has an important role to play in the development of the cultural economy, it is essential that work is done in partnership with other agencies. By working collectively we will be able to promote the multitude of attractions, festivals and events with the Borough and maximise new opportunities which will enhance the cultural economy.

- 2.2 Within the Strategy a number of actions have been identified against each objective. The Cultural Economy Action Plan sets out for each action the key projects, outputs and milestones that will be taken forward to deliver the objectives. Alongside will also be developed by the Cultural Economy Group a number of measures of success, such as visitor spend; numbers employed in tourism; income generated by Bury Art Gallery, Museum and Sculpture Centre; and national recognition of the Borough's cultural assets through retention of existing and achievement of new awards and endorsements.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Strategy has no direct financial implications for the Council but provides guidance to managers in respect of prioritising the use of resources.
- 3.2 By working with partners to develop the cultural economy, there is a recognition of the wider economic benefits to be derived from increased visitor numbers, a thriving retail and leisure sector and increased employment opportunities. Expenditure by visitors to Bury rose from £238million in 2009 to over £302million in 2012. Further increasing income from Bury's cultural assets is central to the Council's priorities for growth and investment and the Greater Manchester Strategy for the Visitor Economy and these actions fully support that approach.

4. RISKS

- 4.1 There is no identified risk to introducing a strategy subject to continued support to the priorities from the Council and its partners.
- 4.2 The absence of a strategy however does carry risks. Bury is building a healthy reputation as a cultural and visitor destination but faces strong competition from other areas. With public funding continuing to be limited in future years, it is important to focus activities in those aspects that will make most difference. The strategy sets out a direction of travel that is transparent to partners and external investors (to guide future growth) and minimise the risk of unplanned developments.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 5.1 There are no direct equality issues arising from this report. These will be identified and assessed when detailed proposals are brought forward as part of the delivery of key projects in the Action plan.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Bury has already established a reputation as a cultural centre and visitor destination. It is essential that this status is maintained and developed in the future to contribute to growth in the Borough.
- 6.2 This Strategy provides a strong focus and foundation for the co-ordination of future cultural economy initiatives.
- 6.3 It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Cultural Economy Strategy and associated Action Plan.
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List of Background Papers:-

Cultural Economy Strategy 2015-18
Cultural Economy Action Plan 2015-16
Economic Strategy for Bury 2010-2018

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