

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

5 November 2024

North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy

Report of the Corporate Director [Community Development]

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To approve the adoption of the North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy, developed by the Culture & Archives Service in collaboration with community and sector partners.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report outlines the development of a new North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy, developed in collaboration with community and sector partners, informed by extensive consultation. The strategy will give focus and foundation to cultural development work in the region by the Council and its partners and will support the leverage of external funding.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 During Local Government Reorganisation, and as part of the Culture, Leisure, Archives and Libraries workstream, an Interim Cultural Delivery Plan was created to provide a framework for cultural work and to ensure access to funding opportunities, and momentum on key projects was not lost through the reorganisation process.
- 3.2 Following LGR, a single cultural service was created, and it was recognised that a new North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy would be required as soon as possible to underpin cultural work by the Council and its partners, across the County.
- 3.3 The inaugural North Yorkshire Cultural Symposium was held in November 2023, inviting members of the cultural sector in the region to meet the Executive Members for Culture and Open to Business, along with speakers from key national funding bodies: Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund, and Historic England. The symposium was attended by over 100 representatives across our communities and sector.
- 3.4 An overall vision for cultural development in North Yorkshire was discussed, along with the current position of the sector and funding landscape. Attendees participated in initial workshops mapping the cultural offer in the region and discussed initial ideas of what they hoped for the future. It was agreed to run the Symposium as an annual event.
- 3.5 The new Culture and Archive Team worked with Arts Council England on a plan for cultural strategy development and secured funding from the Arts Council to support the work.
- 3.6 The Head of Culture & Archives has led on the development, and incorporated working with City of York to ensure a joined-up approach and development of shared priorities aligned with the Mayoral Combined Authority.

4.0 ASSESSMENT AND FINDINGS

4.1 The key elements of the completed strategy are that:

- It recognises the collaborative nature of the cultural sector, and applies this sensibility to strategic development to ensure it is embedded in the sector and can deliver real results;
- It defines the term culture, as decided by consultees, to establish clarity within delivery and ensure all parties are clear what we are trying to achieve and for what purpose;
- It highlights key links with other county-wide strategic areas to ensure effective implementation with maximum impact;
- It is succinct and therefore easy to integrate with existing plans of work across North Yorkshire's cultural sector;
- It is deliberately un-dated to keep us focused and constantly evolving to the needs of our communities and sector, to be more agile in response to opportunities, and flexible to changes in national context and priorities.

4.2 Strategic Priorities identified through consultation and strategic development are:

- To use culture and creativity to create places where people want, and are able to live, work, visit, learn and engage.
- To ensure that places, spaces and activities are inclusive and accessible.
- To enable a thriving cultural workforce including employees, volunteers and freelancers, where grassroots creativity is nurtured and supported to grow.
- To maximise the value and ensure sustainability of the region's cultural assets and promote the cultural identity, wealth and distinctiveness of the region.
- To ensure cultural engagement contributes to improved health and wellbeing across North Yorkshire.
- To ensure cultural activity positively contributes to the delivery of strategic priorities including economic, health and social well-being, skills and education, environment, public transport and quality of life.
- To identify, support and promote places, spaces, people and activities that can contribute to the vision.

5.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

5.1 The Strategy has been developed collaboratively following comprehensive engagement with local residents, partners and the cultural sector. Engagement activity took place throughout July, August and the early part of September this year, via:

- Open face to face sessions in each constituency area (x7)
- Online consultation workshops (x 2)
- Public survey – digital and paper copy (Circa 550 returned)
- Face to face accessible sessions (x 20)
- Face to face targeted sessions (x 5)

The team engaged with:

- Community members
- Cultural sector representatives & organisations
- Individual artists, culture & heritage practitioners
- Arts Award & Young Archaeologist groups

- FEAST programme participants
- Groups with specific access requirements
- Other NYC services, e.g. Libraries, Tourism/Ec Dev, Health, Localities
- Work experience students

5.2 Prior to engaging in consultation, the team also undertook background information-gathering and asset mapping to inform the strategy, which included:

- Key recommendations from relevant reports and reviews, e.g. Celebrating Our Distinctive Heritage, Audience Agency Covid Review, High Street Heritage Action Zone Evaluation, Great Place Lakes & Dales Legacy.
- Key national funder strategies, including Arts Council England Let's Create, NLHF Heritage 2033, and Historic England Future Strategy.

5.3 A special session of the Housing and Leisure Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the draft Strategy on 16th October 2024. Overall, there was strong support for the Strategy and the priorities identified. Key comments and areas highlighted by Members included:

- A desire to gather further research into the regional North Yorkshire creative industries employment and economic impact statistics. It was clarified that discussions have already begun with the Combined Authority around collating this baseline data.
- A discussion about the importance of the screen industries and of maximising investment from this, within North Yorkshire. This was accepted, and reference was made to potential partnerships and opportunities being explored in this area.
- A discussion about shared priorities with City of York, and the need to ensure a strong focus on the needs of North Yorkshire residents. It was clarified that these shared priorities are points of connection between the two authorities, and linked to the wider economic plan, in order to maximise impact and enable opportunities for shared investment where this is appropriate.
- Clarification was provided about where and how people wanting to access support can go, and how Members can support and signpost. It was confirmed that the Creative Hub referenced in the strategy will be an open access digital resource and Members will be briefed when it goes live.
- A discussion about how we ensure that the benefits of culture to economy, regeneration, built environment and other service areas is recognised and embedded across the authority. It was recognised this work is ongoing, with joint working between Culture and Archives and Economic Development on regeneration opportunities and tourism, with Planning on Section 106 relating to public art and heritage. In addition conversations have begun with Health colleagues and this work will continue.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

6.1 Culture contributes to the following Place & Environment objectives & related priorities:

- A clean, environmentally sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit.
 - To protect and, where possible, enhance the local environment and ensure our air, streets, beaches and open spaces are kept clean and attractive.
- A well connected and planned place with good transport links and digital connectivity.
 - To ensure that developments meet the needs of all, consider health and social inequality and the specific requirements of younger, older and disabled people. Housing developments should also have easy access to employment and economic opportunities, as well as culture, leisure and outside space.
- Communities are supported and work together to improve their local area.

- To establish and maintain strong and resilient partnerships across North Yorkshire.
- To support a vibrant, thriving and resilient voluntary and community sector in North Yorkshire.
- To develop and work alongside a network of community anchor organisations to support communities to become more resilient to respond to local challenges and opportunities.

6.2 Culture contributes to the following Economy objectives and related priorities:

- Economically sustainable growth that enables people and places to prosper.
 - To support and deliver major infrastructure and regeneration projects across the county to create vibrant places, such as the £30m Transforming Cities Fund Station Gateway Projects in Harrogate, Selby and Skipton to regenerate the areas around the train station and improve links into the towns. The Revitalising Towns project will see over £4.25m invested in the three town centres of Selby, Tadcaster and Sherburn in Elmet.
 - To encourage and support an increase in good quality jobs, high value employment, wages and skills retention.
 - To ensure the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) is delivered, developing a Local Skills Action Plan to address pressing skills gaps for businesses in priority sectors.
 - To ensure that skills meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries including cyber, agriculture and bioeconomy, creative sector and low carbon sectors.
 - To attract and retain young people and working age adults to live and work in North Yorkshire.
 - To ensure that the places where people live, now and in the future, create new opportunities, promote well-being and reduce inequalities so that people have better lives, in stronger communities and achieve their potential.
- Culture, heritage, arts and sustainable tourism all play their part in the economic growth of the county.
 - To promote and improve North Yorkshire's tourism infrastructure, sporting and cultural offer, to provide high quality, year-round attractions and venues to increase visitor spend.
 - To promote accessible and environmentally sustainable tourism.
 - To provide more opportunities for more people to participate in inclusive, relevant cultural activity.
 - To increase opportunities to use engagement with culture, arts and heritage to improve health and wellbeing.
 - To promote the importance of culture in place shaping and celebrating our distinctive culture and heritage. To maximise the impacts and benefits of Selby's Priority Place status and sharing the learning and approach more widely.
 - To support a strong, connected and collaborative cultural sector.
 - To increase the digital connectivity of our council cultural assets.
- New and existing businesses can thrive and grow.
 - To support and attract new and existing businesses including in the cyber, bioeconomy and low carbon sectors.
 - To utilise improving digital infrastructure to support businesses.
- North Yorkshire has a high profile, is influential nationally and receives its fair share of resources.
 - To realise the potential of devolution.
 - To maximise access to external funding.

- 6.3 Culture contributes to the following Health & Wellbeing objectives and related priorities:
- People are supported to have a good quality of life and enjoy active and healthy lifestyles.
 - To encourage people to make informed choices about their health and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.
 - To improve mental health and wellbeing, in particular for those with severe and enduring mental illness.
 - Reduced variations in health through tackling the root causes of inequality.
 - To reduce health and social inequalities through healthy place-shaping and targeted work with groups, communities and neighbourhoods.
 - People can access good public social care across our different communities.
 - To work with community organisations to prevent, reduce and delay the need for long-term care.
 - To work closely with local NHS partners to continue to prevent hospital admission, get people home from hospital and to support people to live in their own homes for as long as possible.
 - People have control and choice in relation to their independence and social care support.
 - To support people to live independently in their home of choice by preventing, reducing and delaying the need for longer-term social care services.
 - To support people to access preventative services, technology and supported housing, which helps them to live more independently.
- 6.4 Culture contributes to People objectives and related priorities:
- People can achieve their full potential through lifelong learning and education.
 - To work in partnership with school leaders to champion educational excellence so all children attend inclusive provision that is good or outstanding, have high aspirations and are supported to achieve their full potential.
 - To strengthen our work with partners and communities to improve outcomes through our Childhood Futures programme.
 - To ensure that there are clear pathways for all people after education through the promotion of apprenticeships, training, work placements and further education including adult education.
 - People are better supported, by strengthening families or other appropriate networks.
 - To tackle loneliness and isolation.
 - To work with communities and partners in the voluntary sector to develop enriching activities and support for children, young people and families.
 - In times of hardship, support is provided to those that need it most.
 - To establish an integrated refugee and resettlement service that welcomes and supports people to settle in North Yorkshire.
- 6.5 Culture contributes to Organisation:
- Good quality, value for money services that are customer focused and accessible to all.
 - To provide good customer service and understand the needs of our customers.
 - To have a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - To ensure services provide value for money.

- A well-led and managed, financially sustainable and forward-thinking council
 - To deliver a successful transformation programme now and in the years to come, maximising the benefits of bringing eight councils into one to improve services for residents.
 - To operate on a commercial basis where it is appropriate to do so and invest in council owned assets to drive revenue generation opportunities to fund Corporate Plans.
 - To use data to inform decision making by councillors and officers.
 - To ensure technology, organisational development and the corporate estate supports innovative, enterprising and inclusive working.

- A carbon-neutral council.
 - To ensure that the council's property and assets support our climate change objectives through improved energy efficiency of our properties including heating, ventilation, water use, electricity use, for power and lighting.
 - To ensure that wherever possible council waste is reduced, reused and recycled, and to reduce our use of single use plastics.
 - To embed climate change into every service and into policy and decision making so that taking climate responsible actions becomes 'business as usual'.

- One council, where colleagues work together to achieve our ambitions and support each other.
 - To build on our diverse and inclusive culture, where colleagues are supported, valued and everyone can reach their full potential.
 - We listen to each other, providing open engagement, sharing ideas and acting on what we say.
 - We are an employer of choice, with our ways of working and attractive career pathways providing learning opportunities for everyone.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 Alternative options considered were to have no cultural strategy. Having no strategic focus would significantly reduce the efficiency of realising ambitions for our communities and sector, making it harder to identify partnerships and apply for external funding. No strategic framework would increase risks around duplication and lack of focus. Lack of strategic focus would also significantly reduce our ability to link to the Mayoral Combined Authority and maximise the benefits from devolution.

8.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 8.1 This strategy has been developed in collaboration with other services, sector partners and communities, and will provide opportunities to improve outcomes for all by working together to maximise positive impacts across cultural and council priorities.

9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 No direct financial implications arising from the adoption of this Strategy, although individual activity and actions may have financial implications. Any such actions will have funding identified as part of the action planning process. Support for delivery will be from the Culture & Archives team, with core costs currently included within departmental service budgets.

- 9.2 NYC currently allocates cultural grants of £251k per annum reflecting a number of legacy arrangements from the former district Councils. The grants programme has been reviewed and it is proposed that cultural grants awarded from 24/25 will be aligned with priorities identified within the Cultural Strategy, with appropriate performance indicators, to support delivery of the new Strategy across the County and to ensure value for investment for our communities.
- 9.3 External grant funding will also be sought to support delivery of the strategic priorities.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this strategy.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 An equalities impact screening has been completed and a full impact assessment is not required. The Cultural Strategy promotes accessibility, inclusion and diversity and is underpinned by the belief that cultural experiences and opportunity is for everyone (see Appendix B).
- 11.2 The Cultural Strategy will be available in a range of different formats to ensure accessibility. These will include:
- Print
 - Large print
 - Easy read
 - Digital
 - Image captioned
 - Video version
 - Recorded version.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 A climate change screening has been completed. This proposal does not warrant a full CCIA to be undertaken at this stage (see Appendix C).
- 12.2 Climate change impact assessments will be carried out for each funded project related to the strategy.

13.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Cultural Strategy will directly inform North Yorkshire Council's Culture & Archives Service Plan, and provide structure and direction to the team, and partners. The Strategy will support delivery of wider Council priorities as outlined above. Performance against the strategy will be reported regularly as part of the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.

14.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

14.1 The Cultural Strategy will form part of the Council's policy framework and will be reviewed annually.

15.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 This proposal reduces service risk. It provides for a more efficient way of operating and links to wider community and cultural sector priorities.

16.0 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

16.1 No direct implications. Staffing resource to support delivery of the Strategy will be provided through the Culture and Archives staffing team.

17.0 CONCLUSIONS

17.1 The Cultural Strategy is a comprehensive plan, which has been developed collaboratively following wide engagement. The Strategy will provide focus to the work of the Council across a range of objectives and priorities, ensuring equitable access to the benefits of culture, arts and heritage and as a major contributor to wider health, economic and place-making objectives.

18.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1 To provide a structured approach to cultural service delivery and wider cultural development in North Yorkshire, to maximise the value and benefit of cultural participation.

19.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

19.1 That Executive recommend to Council that the North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy is adopted, including the shared objectives relating to collaborative working with City of York and the Mayoral Combined Authority.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Appendix A : North Yorkshire Cultural Strategy

Appendix B : Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix C : Climate Impact Assessment

Nic Harne, Corporate Director (Community Development)

County Hall, Northallerton

14.10.24

Report Author – Danielle Daglan, Head of Culture and Archives

Report presenter – Danielle Daglan

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.