



**Prosperous Communities
Committee**

14th September 2021

Subject : Development of a Cultural Strategy for West Lindsey

Report by:

Assistant Director of Planning and Regeneration
and Assistant Director of Commercial and
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Purpose / Summary:

In early 2020 the Council received a recommendation as part of the Corporate Review which recommended that the council consider the development of a Cultural Strategy.

Officers have reviewed the current position and suggest five work streams in order to develop our approach and cultural offer. Whilst it is recognised that this is not yet a Cultural Strategy by definition, these are the building blocks required to move us towards an improved cultural offer.

The five proposed work streams are:

- Events
- Strategic Relationships
- National Portfolio Organisation Status
- Trinity Arts Centre Investment
- Role of culture in placemaking

Members have previously agreed to support work on the development of a Cultural Strategy by earmarking £250,000 to reserve fund.

The paper sets out a recommendation for spend against an element of the budget allocation.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. Prosperous Communities Committee approves the five work streams set out at 3.1 and the associated action plan (appendix 1) noting the suggested reporting lines for each action.
2. That Prosperous Communities Committee recommends to Corporate Policy and Resources that approval to spend from the Cultural Strategy Reserve is given for new fixed term officer capacity £85,000 and support of up to £25,000 to develop our approach to securing National Portfolio Organisation status.
3. That Prosperous Communities Committee supports the submission of a bid for £5m of funding and recommends to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and that £62,000 of the Cultural Strategy Reserve be used to develop the bid to secure funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for capital investment, activities and events works at Trinity Arts Centre up to £5,000,000

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

Procurement of technical support will be in line with appropriate standing orders and legal advice will be secured from Lincolnshire Legal Services to support the contracting process.

Financial :

Cultural Strategy Reserve of £250,000 in place. This report seeks approval to

- Commit £85,000 to recruit to a new role of Events and Marketing Co-ordinator (for 24 months)
- Commit up to £25,000 in capacity support to develop our approach to securing National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status
- Use the Cultural Strategy Reserve to support work to develop a bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for capital works, activities and events of up to £5,000,000 for Trinity Arts Centre, £62,000

A Band 8 resource including on costs totals £83,400. A budget of £85,000 will provide £1,600 for the costs of associated ICT.

Up to £25,000 is requested for capacity support.

Up to £62,000 (£55,900+10% contingency) be used to resource the submission of a £5m bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

The remaining reserve balance would therefore be £78,000.

FIN REF: FIN/66/22/TJB

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

Newly established Events and Marketing Co-ordinator role, Band 8 for 24 months to be recruited to on open market.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

NB: Please explain how you have considered the policy's impact on different groups (for example: young people, elderly, ethnic minorities, LGBT community, rural residents, disabled, others).

Data Protection Implications :

None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

Improving the efficiency of the Trinity Arts Centre in a way in that positively contributes to and maintains the heritage of the building will be a key element of any planned regeneration and refurbishment works to the building. A series of baseline metrics will be determined in order to measure progress.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

The capacity of culture to build civic pride within a community is widely recognised and recently cited within The Arts Council England’s latest publication ‘A High Street Renaissance’ which built on the findings of the Grimsey Review. Children and young people engaged in cultural activity are more likely to play an active role in their communities as they grow, becoming community leaders of the future.

Health Implications:

The ongoing development of an Integrated care System (ICS) in Lincolnshire recognises the importance of the wider determinants of health. Culture is recognised as a wider determinant and our work towards an improved offer for the district will see health and wellbeing benefits for our residents.

RISKS AND MITIGATING ACTION:

In assessing how to take forward the opportunity identified within the Peer Review around culture in the district, we have identified timescales, strategic partnerships, capacity and funding as key risks. The action to mitigate the risks of not maximising the benefits of culture are set out within the action plan at appendix 1. This will continue to be monitored by the Commercial Board.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Background

- 1.1 In early 2020 the council worked with the Local Government Association on a Corporate Peer Challenge which sought to review the five core components that are critical to council's performance and improvement.

These are:

- Understanding of the local place and how that influences priority setting
- Leadership of Place
- Financial planning and viability
- Organisational leadership and governance
- Capacity to deliver

- 1.2 As part of a suite of recommendations, the Peer Challenge suggested that the Council should consider the development of a Cultural Strategy citing 'there is much potential to align and increase the use of, and maximise income from, the districts existing and planned cultural assets, such as the Trinity Arts Centre and the planned multiplex cinema.

2. Current Position

- 2.1 Since the peer challenge concluded, officers have been working to understand and develop proposals to maximise the potential opportunities that a Cultural Strategy could deliver and to understand the journey that the council must take to achieve a clear strategic position.
- 2.2 Overseen by the Commercial Board, this has led to the compilation of a Cultural Research Report in June 2021(Appendix 3) which identified cultural activity already taking place across the district and suggested key themes for further work with some consideration of how this may be taken forwards.
- 2.3 It is clear from this work that there is already a strong portfolio of events across the district, both within the council and run by our partners. There is much potential to improve the reach, expand the audience, align the outcomes and add value to our existing cultural activity.
- 2.4 However, a true Cultural Strategy is much more than a strong, well-co-ordinated events programme. The LGA toolkit 'A Cultural Strategy in a box' (2020) states;

'Culture is who we are. It is our heritage and future. It is how we live our lives and express our identities. It is art, music, film fashion, design, even gaming. But it is much more; it is what defines us and how we are changing'.

- 2.5 It is recognised that having a cultural strategy in place, as well strategic partnerships to support delivery increases the likelihood of securing larger and longer term funds from organisations such as the Arts Council.
- 2.6 At present, the Council's relationship with the Arts Council runs operationally through the Trinity Arts Centre and through the Mayflower 400 programme, both of which receive project specific Arts Council Funding. In the past WLDC held National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status, the route to more sustainable funding, but this status was lost over a decade ago. It is recognised that in order to successfully grasp the opportunity of 'culture', we need to understand how to build towards a strategic relationship with the Arts Council, and ultimately regain NPO status.
- 2.7 The Trinity Arts Centre is the jewel in the crown of West Lindsey's cultural assets, flanked by our leisure offer and underpinned by our officers working passionately to maximise our commercial income whilst delivering community and economic benefits. Through the recovery planning for our venues, an opportunity to secure funds for much needed investment in the Arts Centre which could, if successful enhance our offer further. This work is the subject of further papers to the Commercial Board.
- 2.8 Included within our portfolio of events across the district are our weekly markets in Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor, along with our regular farmers and specialty offerings. Work to consider the future of markets across the district is underway with support from Quarterbridge, an expert in their field. Early findings as part of phase one of this work make it clear that for any future operating model to be a success, it will require a long term, strategic and well managed event and activation strategy. As we move into phases two and three of this work the role of our cultural offer in the future of the markets will continue to be explored and defined. A decision on the contract currently in place with Marshall's Yard will be required by December 2021.
- 2.9 It is recognised that cultural activities have a positive impact on the wider determinants of health. District Councils are committed to developing an ambitious agenda for improving health and wellbeing in Lincolnshire and the importance of the wider determinants are recognised through the ongoing development of an Integrated Care System (ICS) in Lincolnshire. Our Communities Team are already engaged in grass roots activities and funding opportunities that contribute to our cultural offer and it is understood that the benefits of this work could be increased through improved joint working and co-ordination.
- 2.10 The development of our cultural offer sits side by side with our Place Shaping and Visitor Economy ambitions. The Council's bid for Levelling Up Funding proposes a new cultural facility in Gainsborough Town Centre, developing our ambitions for an improved night time economy. Alongside improved public spaces and regenerated physical environments in recognition of the potential that culture can bring to our place making agenda. Alongside our regeneration plans a refresh and review of the

Visitor Economy Strategy in autumn 2021 is required. This work will be supported by the LGA's Economic Advisor Programme will identify opportunities to grow the cultural offer in pursuit of economic outcomes.

3. Next Steps – our journey towards a Cultural Strategy for West Lindsey

3.1 Having been informed by the Cultural Research Report, a number of discussions and working sessions across Management Team, Commercial Board and across the services involved in all aspects of cultural provision, it is proposed that 5 work streams are commenced in order to develop the council's cultural offer and move us towards a Cultural Strategy. The proposed workstreams are:

- Events
- Strategic Relationships
- National Portfolio Organisation Status
- Trinity Arts Centre Investment
- Role of culture in placemaking

3.2 Events

The aim of this workstream is improve the co-ordination and marketing of events across the district, including those delivered by the council as well as external partners and organisations. There is real potential to improve the reach of events across the district and to align our marketing and maximise the benefits of the wide-ranging events programme.

3.3 Strategic Relationships

As set out above we are clear that we need to invest time and resources into understanding the full range of potential strategic partners across the Cultural field. This will support the development of appropriate, ensure that we work collaboratively to develop shared aims and ambitions and align our opportunities to best plan our future investments.

3.4 National Portfolio Organisation Status

Having previously held this status with the Arts Council, work is required to understand our options, which is likely to include applying for NPO status as a district council, or as an arts venue e.g Trinity Arts Centre. We will work with industry experts to consider our options and what is required of the organisation to secure NPO status once again.

3.5 Trinity Arts Centre Investment

In recognition of the current and potential key role that the Trinity Arts Centre plays in the cultural offer of West Lindsey, this work stream will seek to develop a long term business case to seek investment in the regeneration of the building. Initial work has commenced to develop the funding application proposal as set out in appendix 2 and we are seeking Members support to progress this work to a formal bid.

3.6 Role of culture in placemaking

We firmly believe that our strong heritage offer and community passion for our historic assets is a lever for levelling up, regeneration and growth across the district. This work stream will ensure a refreshed Visitor Economy Strategy builds on opportunities for culture and our plans for district wide growth and regeneration consider how culture can play a key role.

- 3.7 Whilst it is recognised that at this point in time, summer 2021, these themes of work do not yet come together to deliver a comprehensive cultural strategy, the action plan at Appendix 1 establishes a clear, shared work programme that can be monitored and measured through the Commercial Board with reporting lines back to Prosperous Communities Committee and Corporate Policy and Resources Committee as appropriate.

4 Decisions Required

4. Prosperous Communities Committee approves the five work streams set out at 3.1 and the associated action plan (appendix 1) noting the suggested reporting lines for each action.
5. That Prosperous Communities Committee recommends to Corporate Policy and Resources that approval to spend from the Cultural Strategy Reserve is given for new fixed term officer capacity £85,000 and support of up to £25,000 to develop our approach to securing National Portfolio Organisation status.
6. That Prosperous Communities Committee supports the submission of a bid for £5m of funding and recommends to Corporate Policy and Resources Committee and that £62,000 of the Cultural Strategy Reserve be used to develop the bid to secure funds from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for capital investment, activities and events works at Trinity Arts Centre up to £5,000,000

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

Appendix 2 – NLHF Funding application proposal

Appendix 3 – WLDC Cultural Research Report