

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Community and Leisure Committee

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

**Reporting officer:** Cultural Manager

**Subject:** Cultural update and Action plan

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

This report is an information paper to reflect the cultural activity that has taken place since the ratification of A Creative Gravesham - An Arts and Culture Strategy in September 2020. This includes an Action Plan proposed for 22/23.

### **Recommendations:**

1. That the paper is recognised as a reflection of the activity that has taken place and the plans and actions are approved for 22/23

## **1. Context and Reflection**

- 1.1 A Creative Gravesham – An Arts and Culture Strategy was ratified in September 2020 including the delivery plan for the first year of the strategy. The strategy identified 5 priorities:-
  - 1.1.1 Delivering a cultural and creative community
  - 1.1.2 Supporting and developing artists and creatives
  - 1.1.3 Establishing a vibrant and aspirational arts and cultural events programme
  - 1.1.4 Enhancing and promoting our assets and heritage
  - 1.1.5 Developing our children and young people creatively
- 1.2 Each priority has identified activities and outcomes that reflect our aspirations over the next 5 years.
- 1.3 Despite the pandemic the past year has seen some significant achievements in the 5 priority areas the highlights of which include:
  - 1.3.1 Delivering a cultural and creative community

- 1.3.1.1 Ratification of the strategy and distributed to both arts and community partners as a signpost of our intentions and aspirations.
  - 1.3.1.2 The Make It Grants contributed to the building out of Covid activity delivering 5 grants creating new work in September 2020 and 5 artists grants as part of the Bloomin' Lovely Festival in summer 2021. Engaging artists and enabling partnerships with external organisations.
  - 1.3.1.3 Continued planning of the St George's Arts Centre including developing a programme for the first year of operation
  - 1.3.1.4 Strong programming of St Andrew's Arts Centre including as a rehearsal space for work commissioned by GBC and supported by Arts Council England.
  - 1.3.1.5 Identifying 'pop-up' spaces for use including the windows of the Riva bar, the plinth on the pier and the railings in St Andrew's Gardens.
  - 1.3.1.6 Increased use of Gravesham Borough Market as an installation space during the Fringe Festival.
  - 1.3.1.7 The added activity across the cultural sector including Estuary 21 co commissions and the Fringe Festival attracted interest from artists outside the borough who are beginning to think of Gravesham as potential relocation area.
  - 1.3.1.8 Our outside spaces especially Fort Gardens have been programmed throughout the summer and have embedded themselves in the firmament of flexible and agile spaces from which to deliver our arts and culture programme.
- 1.3.2 Supporting and Developing Artists and Creatives
- 1.3.2.1 Several new pieces of work have been developed in the borough supported by GBC through the Make It Grants and larger co – commissions for England's Creative Coast and Estuary 21
  - 1.3.2.2 Encouraging start with using matched funding strategically to leverage funds from other organisations.
  - 1.3.2.3 Significant assistance throughout the pandemic by Economic Development has enabled local artists and organisations to survive and plan for the future.
  - 1.3.2.4 Ongoing meetings of the Gravesham Arts Salon networking group to establish a cultural diary. Estuary Fringe offered a potential framework.
  - 1.3.2.5 Consistent direction of travel for culture to be flexible and able to respond to external influences including during discussion regarding the new venue.
- 1.3.3 Establishing a vibrant and aspirational arts and cultural events programme

- 1.3.3.1 A successful bid from Gravesham Arts Salon enabled a hybrid Estuary Fringe Festival to take place both live and online with over 30 events working with multiple artists and attracting over 10,000 engagements both live and online.
- 1.3.3.2 Successful funding for the Windrush event and ongoing partnerships with diverse groups throughout the borough.
- 1.3.3.3 Developing hybrid models of cultural delivery through using alternative spaces and online platforms.
- 1.3.3.4 Joined up working with Sports and Recreation offering arts workshops as part of the Summer Fun programme in the Fort Gardens and Heritage site
- 1.3.3.5 Sustainable focus for Make It Grants.
- 1.3.4 Enhancing and promoting our assets and heritage
  - 1.3.4.1 The Milton Chantry 700 activity has been undertaken and one of the Bloomin' Lovely grants has established an onsite installation. New internal displays, live character sessions introduced adding to the visitor activities. Ongoing activity in St Andrew's highlighting it's historical significance including a new opera by Fat Lady Opera - 12 Points of Tide referencing the Beaufort Windscale, Sir Francis Beaufort is commemorated by his daughter in St Andrew's
  - 1.3.4.2 New apps are being identified to enhance the visitor experience.
  - 1.3.4.3 Use of the newly re-imagined barrack room at the Chantry with live historical interactions which has attracted enthusiastic and significant numbers of visitors as part of the Summer Fun Day programme.
  - 1.3.4.4 Criteria for some Make it Grants for Bloomin' Lovely were specific to the heritage sites and have resulted in installations at Fort Gardens and the Chantry.
- 1.3.5 Developing our children and young people
  - 1.3.5.1 Ongoing work with the Gr@nd especially their programme for Estuary 21.
  - 1.3.5.2 Development of application for both Re:Generation 2031 and Kickstart to offer placements in digital culture and artists project support through Gravesham Arts Salon.
  - 1.3.5.3 Work with Royal Opera House Bridge to develop a Creative Schools Network that meets once a term to discuss the cultural direction of local schools and where the arts and creative community can support.

**2. 2022/23 represents a great opportunity for GBC culture to press forward with the priorities identified in the Cultural Strategy. A full action plan is included in the background papers for this report and the highlights for each priority are outlined below**

2.1 Delivering a Cultural and Creative Community

- 2.1.1 Further engagement with members and partners to align policies with cultural aspiration and regeneration
- 2.1.2 Full programme through the creative cluster of St Andrew's and St George's
- 2.1.3 Securing budget funding for grants and match funding to leverage funding from other sources
- 2.1.4 Developing work on St Andrew's Waterfront to establish it as a destination area, including St Andrew's 150
- 2.1.5 Increase the number of 'pop-up' spaces with focus on Northfleet and developing the plinth on the pier.
- 2.1.6 Exploring the potential for artists to work permanently in the market to increase footfall and establish arts activity.
- 2.1.7 Establish a drop in space in St George's to be run for and by artists to include community activity
- 2.1.8 Apply for an artist in residence in St George's Arts Centre to work in the community and develop their own practise.
- 2.1.9 Greater engagement with national arts organisations and funders to showcase Gravesham as an excellent place to make work.
- 2.1.10 To explore developing a volunteer network across the culture portfolio, building on the Woodville volunteer programme.
- 2.1.11 Finalising of the plans for the new venue.
- 2.1.12 Partnering with organisations who have enhanced digital skills to develop hybrid models of delivering our plans.
- 2.1.13 Development of the outdoor programme through enhanced infrastructure and use of spaces.

2.2 Supporting and developing artists and creatives

- 2.2.1 Preparation of future plans with partners to ensure that funding opportunities can be exploited in a timely and relevant way responding to our priorities.
- 2.2.2 Developing our matched funding criteria ensuring it corresponds with our priorities.
- 2.2.3 Greater engagement with arts organisations and partners outside the borough to establish shared visions.

- 2.2.4 Working closely with Economic Development to support the sector and embed it within the regeneration programme.
- 2.2.5 Working with Creative Estuary to deliver and cultural placement to support artists and create an online diary and a dedicated culture website.
- 2.2.6 Building in other platforms when planning activity and embracing and enhancing our digital output for culture.
- 2.3 Establishing a vibrant and aspirational arts and cultural events programme
  - 2.3.1 Apply for one more year of single funding for the Fringe festival to establish the final model before applying for long term funding in 2022/23
  - 2.3.2 Identifying other spaces for activity and building the cultural events programme across the portfolio.
  - 2.3.3 Building other funding bids to external organisations to ensure sustainability
  - 2.3.4 Greater and more timely partnership with partners to bake in diversity. Consideration given to a network.
  - 2.3.5 Developing our digital programme to improve access and broaden the scope of activity
- 2.4 Enhancing and promoting our assets and heritage
  - 2.4.1 Greater engagement with Heritage Lottery Funding bodies to develop funding applications.
  - 2.4.2 Continued exploration of visitor apps to enhance the experience
  - 2.4.3 Exhibitions built around local exhibits in appropriate locations.
  - 2.4.4 Development of heritage plan to bring sites to life.
- 2.5 Developing our children and young people and creatively
  - 2.5.1 Create a grants budget and a panel with specific criteria to encourage young artists to make work and remain in the borough.
  - 2.5.2 Appoint Gravesham Arts Salon placement through Re:Generation 2031 and work with Kickstart on a placement in the culture team.
  - 2.5.3 Work more closely with The Gr@nd to establish a panel of arts professionals who can mentor young people wishing to enter the sector.
  - 2.5.4 Development of Education and Outreach remit to include work across culture and leisure
  - 2.5.5 Embed learning opportunities into grants funding criteria

### **3. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

#### 3.1 Cultural Action Plan 2022/23

Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications in this report.
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	The activity to date has been met through existing budgets. A report with the full budgetary requirements for 2022/23 will be presented.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	GBC has committed to the Cultural Strategy and this action plan forms part of that strategy and the priorities identified. There is a risk that the aspirations identified in the strategy would not be met were this action plan not ratified.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i>
	<p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <a href="#">personal data</a> or <a href="#">special category data</a> or <a href="#">criminal offence data</a>? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p>
	<p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice?</p>
	<p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a>.</p>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. no</p>
	<p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. yes - enhanced partnership working built into the action plan</p>
	<i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	Commitment to Place - enhancing the cultural offer
<b>Climate Change</b>	The Cultural Strategy and Action plan supports the climate change agenda through developing alternative platforms for delivery allowing for flexibility and accessibility for example digital and online.
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	The activity and performance programmes encourage engagement from the community and can reduce antisocial behaviours.
<b>Digital and website implications</b>	There are no digital implications
<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	There are no specific implications