

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee **Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Committee **12th July, 2006**

Report Title **Review of the Cultural Strategy-Final Report**

Summary This is the final report for the Scrutiny Review of the Cultural Strategy.

For further information please contact:

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers Report to Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 10th January 2006

Cultural Strategy (2003-06)

Agenda and Notes of the Cultural Strategy Review Panel

Papers provided on request

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

Other Committees

Local Member(s)

Other Elected Members Cllrs McCarney, Compton 'An excellent report which has my full support.', Dodd 'Happy for this to proceed' and Stanley' fine-I don't recall talking about access to culture for ethnic minorities. Its no good having literature or web sites in English if we are excluding some of our residents because of language barriers. We need to be inclusive and I wondered had you any thoughts on how we can engage people who might normally not get involved.

Cabinet Member Cllr Colin Hayfield

- Chief Executive
- Legal Jane Pollard
- Finance
- Other Strategic Directors Graeme Betts, (AHCS), David Carter (P+D)
- District Councils This report was circulated amongst all five boroughs and districts. No comments were received.
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals Monica Fogarty, Emma Andrews, Edwina Cordwell

FINAL DECISION No

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet Recommendations from this scrutiny review, where appropriate will be passed onto the Cabinet for consideration and action
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Agenda No

Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12th July 2006.

Review of the Cultural Strategy-Final report

Report of the Cultural Strategy Review Panel

Recommendations

1. That the final report of the review of the Cultural Strategy be approved;
2. That the report be passed onto Cabinet with the following recommendations:
 - a) That no steps be undertaken to replace the current cultural strategy 2003-06 with another strategy;
 - b) That future work in this area be referred to as Culture, Leisure and Sport;
 - c) Notwithstanding 2. a) above the current cultural strategy be assimilated in the overall promotion of culture leisure and sport within the development of the local area agreement and existing community strategies;
 - d) That amongst the options being explored to develop services in this area; consideration be given to the feasibility of a County Wide Cultural 'Champions' Forum and a website portal providing a single point of access for all cultural, leisure and sports activities within Warwickshire.
3. That an update on the progress of the recommendations contained in the report be submitted to the January meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 10th January 2006, a report was presented to the Committee on 'Taking the Cultural Strategy Forward'. As a result of the report, the Committee authorised that a Panel of three members be set up to investigate issues further and report back to the Committee. This report is the final review of that Panel and encapsulates the key findings and recommendations of the Panel during its two-month investigation.

2. Background

- 2.1 In 2003 the County Council formally adopted the Warwickshire Cultural Strategy 2003-06. The strategy was prompted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Best Value Performance Indicators which asked all local authorities whether they had a cultural strategy or not. A strategy was duly developed in partnership with the five borough and district councils and following consultation with stakeholders.
- 2.2 The cultural strategy defined culture in its broadest term encompassing arts, heritage, libraries, leisure, sport, natural and built environment and tourism and focussed on the following four themes:
- Taking Pride in Warwickshire
 - Growing the Grassroots
 - Increasing Cultural Activities
 - Investing in Culture
- 2.3 Notwithstanding the existence of a strategy, it was felt that the strategy had not had the impact that was originally envisaged both inside the County Council and outside in Warwickshire as a whole. This limited impact together with the higher profile accorded to culture through the CPA and other key developments led to the then Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards (LTHS) to request that the Committee review this area.
- 2.4 Proposals for the review were accepted on 10th January 2006 and Councillors Compton, Dodd and Stanley were nominated onto the three councillor Panel. Officers from the Performance and Development Directorate and LTHS developed, in consultation with Councillors, an outline of the objectives, methodology and timescales. (Attached as appendix 1)

3. Findings and Recommendations

- 3.1 The first meeting of the Panel was held on 27th February 2006. Given the tight timescales it was agreed that the Panel would focus on collecting evidence in order to achieve the following objectives:
1. Assess the purpose, relevancy and success of the Current Strategy.
 2. What level of priority should be accorded to Culture within the County Council? Is a Strategy required to ensure that strategic and service development reflect the priority assigned to Culture by the County Council?
 3. How are best practice Councils' promoting Culture within their areas?
 4. Identify the improvements that are required to ensure that culture is promoted in accordance with the priority that has been accorded to it by the County Council.

Objective 1- Assess the purpose, relevancy and success of the Current Strategy.

- 3.2 Before the Panel ascertained the purpose, relevancy and success of the current strategy it sought to define culture. After lengthy discussion the Panel found that the term 'culture' and 'cultural' were loose terms and were not particularly helpful. Thereafter at future meetings of the Panel (and for the remainder of this report) the term Culture, Leisure and Sport was used as it was felt that this best encapsulated what the cultural strategy was about and, more importantly, it was a phrase that was more understandable by the public.
- 3.3 The purpose of the Strategy is to
- Generate support for the wide range of cultural projects and initiatives on our county.
 - Focus on our vision 'to create a rich cultural life in Warwickshire which brings communities together, fulfils individual potential and contributes to a healthy environment and economy'
 - Improve the quality of life of everyone who lives, works in or visits our County.
- 3.4 These objectives of the Strategy are pursued through the four key themes (see 2.2 above).
- 3.5 In seeking to ascertain the relevancy and success of the strategy the Panel sought to establish the influence that the Strategy had had on both service planning and provision within the County Council and the extent to which the Strategy had shaped the delivery of services at a borough/district level.
- 3.6 In terms of service planning and provision within the Council it was noted by the Panel that the Strategy has been a key-driving document within LTHS. However correspondence with other departments suggested that the strategy has had a very limited impact on service planning and provision within County Council departments. The reasons for this primarily stem from the fact that the document was seen as a departmental strategy (for LTHS) rather than one, which had corporate applicability. In addition to the limited impact there also seemed to be limited awareness of the Strategy' existence or what was contained therein.
- 3.7 This lack of impact, however, does not necessarily mean that cultural, leisure or sport activities are not pursued by other departments of the Council. The Panel were aware of the good work that is being undertaken by the Children, Young People and Families directorate and also of the work that is undertaken by Environment and Economy to maintain footways and pathways. However in both of these cases the Panel felt that work was undertaken in spite of the cultural strategy rather than as a result of it.
- 3.8 An underlying flaw that the Panel established at a very early stage was the lack of 'specific measurables' attached to the cultural strategy. Whilst all those (internally and externally) who provided feedback to the Panel mentioned the usefulness of the process which led to the strategy and the laudable aims contained therein, all referred to the absence of an action plan

as a key weakness of the Strategy and one which had the greatest impact in ensuring that the strategy would have a negligible impact.

3.9 This was a view that was echoed by the Boroughs and Districts. A copy of the responses received are attached as appendix 2 but in essence the view of the Districts can be summarised as:

- The content and the process leading to the production of the strategy was good.
- However the Strategy had had a very limited impact on service planning and provision at District/Borough level.
- The Strategy had been weakened by the absence of any action plan or follow up work on implementation.
- Alternative vehicles for the promotion of culture, leisure and sport should be explored.
- All welcomed the opportunity to undertake further partnership work in this area.

Objective 2- What level of priority should be accorded to Culture within the County Council? Is a Strategy required to ensure that strategic and service development reflect the priority assigned to Culture by the County Council?

- 3.10 In discussing the level of priority that should be accorded to culture, leisure and sport within the County Council, the Panel had lengthy discussions as to what the reasons for such prioritisation should be. Was the promotion of culture, leisure and sport an objective per se or should culture, leisure and sport be used as an 'enabler' towards the achievement of other objectives.
- 3.11 The discussions above must be seen within the context of national developments. In general there has been a higher profile assigned to culture as evidenced by the creation of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the subsequent requirements that local authorities produce 'cultural' strategies. This has since been supplemented by developments within the CPA where future inspections will comprise a 'cultural' block.
- 3.12 There is, therefore, a need to promote culture, leisure and sport within the County. In itself, the promotion of culture, leisure and sport can help in the social, economic and environmental well being of an area and its residents. In addition as an enabler, culture, leisure and sport can also assist in the delivery of other objectives such the health agenda, establishing cohesive communities or assisting in the regeneration of specific or whole areas. It is this latter role as an enabler that has proven most useful for councils. In terms of priorities and resources, cultural services tend to be low on the list of priorities and this reflects the public mood which tends to place greater emphasis on education and the environment than it does on the promotion of cultural activities.
- 3.13 It is, however, far easier to justify the promotion of culture, leisure and sport when it is demonstrated how the promotion of such activities helps to achieve

the objectives that residents feel are important. Thus, for example, Nottingham has used the promotion of culture, leisure and sport to bring communities together and avoid some of the tensions that were experienced during 2001 in northern cities. Manchester has used the promotion of culture, leisure and sport to assist in the regeneration of the city centre and other run down areas.

- 3.14 Although the Panel recognised the importance of culture, leisure and sport per se, it was felt that the promotion of culture, leisure and sport should be towards the enablement of other objectives-and therefore the level of priority that should be accorded by the Council should be dictated to a large degree by the extent to which it contributes towards the delivery of overall objectives. This along with the fact that there is no longer a DCMS requirement for a cultural strategy has meant that the Panel are of the opinion that a new cultural strategy is not the right way forward and that alternative vehicles for the promotion of culture, leisure and sport should be used. These alternatives are explored in more depth in paragraphs 3.19 to 3.23 below.

Objective 3-How are best practice Councils' promoting Culture within their areas?

- 3.15 During discussions at meetings of the Panel, the difficulties in obtaining best practice information were highlighted. Best practice authorities in the sphere of culture, leisure and sport tended on the whole to be unitary urban authorities. It was therefore agreed that comparisons would be made with the neighbouring shire authorities.
- 3.16 Subsequent desktop research revealed the difficulty in obtaining cultural strategies which, in itself, suggested the relevancy of prior cultural strategies and the profile that was accorded to culture within those areas. Of the two that were obtained, Worcestershire and Leicestershire it was noticeable that action plans were either appended to the document or referred to within the main document.
- 3.17 Discussions were also held with the DCMS. A telephone conversation with the Department revealed that for comparative purposes, the best practice cultural strategy authorities were regarded as Dorset, Essex and Hampshire. All of these cultural strategies contained measurable targets to ensure that the strategy was transformed from a paper document into one that had a positive impact with the community.
- 3.18 However in terms of future development, it was noted that the DCMS was moving away from stand alone cultural strategies which, it was felt, did little to incorporate culture leisure and sport into mainstream council activities. Instead it was felt that a far better option, and one that was being employed increasingly by authorities was to 'marble cake ' culture leisure and sport into 'live' outcome-driven documents such as local area agreements and community strategies.

Objective 4 Identify the improvements that are required to ensure that culture is promoted in accordance with the priority that has been accorded to it by the County Council.

- 3.19 In analysing the effectiveness of the Strategy, the role and priority of culture and best practice elsewhere, the Panel were mindful of the fact that improvements would need to be identified to address deficiencies and promote culture, leisure and sport within agreed priorities.
- 3.20 During initial investigations, it became evident that the current cultural strategy had not been successful. Whilst there were a number of factors that contributed to this, the existence of a 'stand alone' strategy was not conducive to the promotion of the County Council objectives. Nor does it accord with current thinking within the DCMS and it is therefore recommended that no steps be undertaken to replace the current cultural strategy.
- 3.21 For the sake of transparency and communication, it is recommended that the term culture be replaced with culture, leisure and sport. Furthermore it is also suggested that rather than viewing the promotion of culture, leisure and sport per se, developments in this area be aligned to the achievement of other community objectives. Culture, Leisure and Sports objectives are far more likely to be implemented within the context of local area agreements than they are through stand alone cultural strategies.
- 3.22 In proposing local area agreements as a vehicle for the promotion of culture, leisure and sport, the Panel were mindful of recent thinking which stresses the importance of profile and championing such cross cutting issues to ensure that they are not lost within the four blocks. Accordingly it is proposed that the feasibility of a website portal for cultural activities in Warwickshire and a Champions Forum be investigated to ensure that the issues of culture, leisure and sport are both promoted on a general level and 'marble caked' into the development of the local area agreement.

4. Recommendations

- 4.1 That the final report of the review of the Cultural Strategy be approved;
- 4.2 That the report be passed onto Cabinet with the following recommendations:
- e) That no steps be undertaken to replace the current cultural strategy 2003-06 with another strategy;
 - f) That future work in this area be referred to as Culture, Leisure and Sport;

- g) Notwithstanding 2. a) above the current cultural strategy be assimilated in the overall promotion of culture leisure and sport within the development of the local area agreement and existing community strategies;
- h) That amongst the options being explored to develop services in this area; consideration be given to the feasibility of a County Wide Cultural 'Champions' Forum and a website portal providing a single point of access for all cultural, leisure and sports activities within Warwickshire.

4.3 That an update on the progress of the recommendations contained in the report be submitted to the January meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Councillors:

Josie Compton
Richard Dodd
Mick Stanley

July 2006

Cultural Strategy Review

Introduction

In 2003 the County Council formally adopted the Warwickshire Cultural Strategy. The Strategy was developed in conjunction with all five Boroughs/Districts following extensive consultation with stakeholders and in accordance with guidance from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

To date the Strategy has had a limited impact on the County Council's strategic planning and reference to corporate priorities and the Strategy have been implicit rather than explicit. In examining the efficacy of the Strategy, the time is also opportune to review the priority with which the Authority assigns to culture particularly in the light of the new CPA framework which will give greater emphasis during assessment on cultural services than was previously the case. In examining the Strategy at this time regard will need to be given to the Modernisation agenda both at a local and national level.

Membership

Councillors Compton, Dodd and Stanley.

Objectives

- What level of priority should be accorded to Culture within the County Council? Is a Strategy required to ensure that strategic and service development reflect the priority assigned to Culture by the County Council?
- Assess the purpose, relevancy and success of the Current Strategy.
- How are best practice Councils' promoting Culture within their areas?
- Identify the improvements that are required to ensure that culture is promoted in accordance with the priority that has been accorded to it by the County Council.

Methodology

The Panel will research and collect evidence principally through three select committee sessions and will co-ordinate, assess and analyse information through further meetings where appropriate. The information gathered at the meetings will be supplemented by briefing papers and background information.

To achieve the objectives, the Panel will seek to draw upon the expertise of several departments to ensure that the findings and recommendations of the Panel are well reasoned and backed up by evidence. Accordingly the key departments that will be required are:

- LTHS
- PTES
- Education
- Performance and Development
- District Councils

Timescale/Timetable

Investigations to be completed by 28th April 2006.

Report to Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee 12th July 2006.

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Review Panel authorised by Committee	10 th January 2006
Briefing 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree objectives, methodology and timescale. Arrange format and content for future meetings • Obtain background and context to review. • Finalise dates for future meetings 	tbc (late February)
Briefing 2 Assessing the current situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What level of priority should be accorded to Culture within the County Council? Is a Strategy required to ensure that strategic and service development reflect the priority assigned to Culture by the County Council? • Assess the purpose, relevancy and success of the Current Strategy. 	tbc (early March)
<u>Briefing 3</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are best practice Councils promoting Culture within their areas? • Identify the improvements that are required to ensure that culture is promoted in accordance with the priority that has been accorded to it by the County Council. 	tbc (mid March)
Final Meeting Analysis of findings and recommendations	April
Report to full committee	12 th July 2006

Resources

Officer Support provided:

- Technical/Expertise: LTHS
- Policy/Administrative: Corporate Review Officer

Contacts

WCC- Bill Basra, Corporate Review Officer, GC51 Shire Hall, Warwick. Tel: 01926 476828.
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North Warwickshire Borough Council

Within your email of 8th March, you refer to the fact that "some of the work in promoting culture lies at district level". Whilst this is undoubtedly true, I think the County Council has to accept that, within the public sector, the majority of this activity is undertaken at district/borough council level. This is certainly the case in Warwickshire.

With regard to your specific questions, I shall take them in the order in which they were presented in your email:

1) The County Cultural Strategy has had very little impact or influence on service planning and/or provision in North Warwickshire. The process through which the Strategy was produced was of far more value than the document itself. This is particularly true in respect of the partnership between the County Council and the districts through which the Strategy evolved and in respect of the work undertaken locally by the consultants who helped to develop the Strategy.

The eventual document, however, presented more of a vision for culture, rather than a Strategy for cultural provision and development. Unfortunately, the Strategy failed to clearly identify the priorities, objectives and targets for cultural development in Warwickshire. It had no defined outcomes, no action plan, no mean by which to monitor, review and evaluate (measure) its achievements (or otherwise). It contained no sense of accountability and, therefore, no sense of common ownership.

The County Cultural Strategy, however, did provide a partial context for work subsequently undertaken by external consultants in North Warwickshire, who were commissioned to produce a Strategic Review of (the Borough Council's) Leisure Services. Whilst this process has not reached a definitive conclusion, due account was taken of the county perspective. Of greater significance has been the North Warwickshire Community Plan (now the Sustainable Community Plan) and the lead it has given in respect of culture's contribution to the achievement of local objectives and priorities for community safety, health and well-being, young people and inter-generational work, the environment, social inclusion, etc.

2) I find it very difficult to comment on how culture has been promoted within the county. I am certainly unaware of any significant activity led by the County Council in North Warwickshire.

3) The level of priority that has been accorded to culture to date has been low. Its significance is beginning to be realised nationally (for it has always been valued at a local, community level - and not just in North Warwickshire) in respect of the potentially enormous and positive contribution that it has to make to community cohesion and development, capacity building and social inclusion, again most particularly in the areas of community safety, health and well-being, young people, the environment, the economy, education and lifelong learning and so on. It is no surprise, therefore, that CPA will, in future, include a cultural services block. I also expect to see "culture" feature within Warwickshire's Local Area Agreement, given its ability to impact in the Children and Young People, Healthier Communities and Older

People, Safer and Stronger Communities and Economic Development and Enterprise "blocks". It is perhaps through CPA and LAAs, as well as through Community Partnerships and county and district "cultural champions"/portfolios, that the profile of culture will be raised.

Given the foregoing, and the fact that the original Strategy was produced in partnership between the County Council and the five boroughs/districts, I would welcome the opportunity for the authorities to meet again in order to discuss these points.

Nuneaton and Bedworth

The creation of a cultural strategy for Warwickshire was a valuable exercise in that it brought those key managers in local government across Warwickshire involved in the delivery of the service together. It also helped us discuss common issues / problems and develop joint ideas.

The strategy however ran into trouble when the government rationalised the strategies required by local government and Culture was one of those axed.

The development of an action plan for both Warwickshire and each district really needed to be produced after publication but no further meetings happened.

In terms of Nuneaton and Bedworth we were reorganised at the time of the strategy publication and elements of Culture were removed from my remit. Also Recycling Targets took precedent in terms of my own and the Council's priority. Since then some areas Of Culture have again returned, although apart from a service development plan we still do not have a long term action plan.

A cultural strategy also needs to point to other strategies and is not much use on its own as it is an overarching document. We have since produced an Arts Strategy, Strategy for Play areas and working on a Strategy for Parks, the parks service is restructured to local communities, our Museum has MLA accreditation, the Civic Hall was refurbished, and the Leisure Trust has a business plan. Therefore we are in much better shape than when we last looked at creating a Cultural Strategy Document.

The tide is also turning as Culture as a non statutory service is moving forward with Children's Services, Crime and Disorder - Diversion of youth activities, The health agenda maintaining healthy activities and tackling obesity, older people services and their leisure needs, Regeneration and pleasant environment- livability. If that's not enough as you mention CPA will also have a Cultural Services block to increase the profile.

Community Plans and Local Area Agreements will also demand better leisure time activities and more joined up thinking between agencies. I am not sure that headings in current headings in the Warwickshire Cultural Strategy still apply given the above which will now influence all future Corporate Plans and Strategic thinking.

At present we do work with County Cultural Services, but I am certain that we will, and must work more closely with County and other districts in the future. This was shown when a meeting on the Children Services took place in Nuneaton in February where we shared best practice and common goals. I would therefore welcome a meeting to consider Culture again and links to tackle the new agenda.

Rugby Borough Council

Following the 2000 DCMS announcement that LA's be required to produce Cultural Strategies, I was therefore eternally grateful therefore when Chris and his WCC team co-ordinated the development of a County wide document. It was at the time the optimum solution both financially and in terms of staffing resources. The fact that the DCMS pulled the plug on the need for Cultural Strategies some 2 months before the statutory deadline, if I remember correctly, probably speaks volumes as to why conflicting messages are being given and received at all levels.

Has the Cultural Strategy influenced service planning?

I have to confess that within Rugby it would be marginal. RBC produced its 2003 - 2008 Leisure Strategy, and 2003 Tourism Action Plan, both comprehensive documents with Action Plans on 10 cultural sections, early on in the Cultural Strategy process.

To cover the needs and differences in each of the Boroughs and the County, it is probably inevitable that the document will end up being written in broad principles, with each authority developing individual Action Plans. The RBC's Action Plans are in accordance with the Cultural Strategy priorities, and this has been re-affirmed through the review of the Leisure Strategy undertaken at the end of 2005. My view is that the key driver will always be what is required at a local level, and therefore LSP's and LAA's will be of more relevance, where the county and the respective Borough should be working together to influence outcomes at the local level. The County Council may have a requirement to have a strategy to confirm how it intends to inter react with its individual partners at a local level.

How has culture been promoted within the county?

I believe in general terms that all partners do a fair job, I have a good overview in the south of the County, as I am Head of Leisure in Rugby Borough, live in Warwick District, and my wife works in Stratford District! Invariably level of financial resources committed is a strong influencing factor. My perception of WCC, is that it is very strong on the promotion of the arts, heritage, and life long learning elements, but less so on sports development. For example the WCC reluctance to engage financially with the Greater Warks Sports Partnership is difficult to understand, when all the Districts are signed up and it is the key Warks sports partnership

Level of Priority?

I think it is increasingly critical, to achieving a healthy, safe and balanced community, and the inclusion of a CPA Culture Block indicates that the government is also coming to appreciate the long term benefits

Stratford District Council

The telephone response from Stratford was short and stressed the limited impact that the strategy had had on service planning and provision within that District

Warwick District Council

a) We feel that the strategy has had very little influence on service planning in Warwick District in respect of Leisure. the Community Plan for Warwick District has received a higher profile and therefore a higher priority in this area.

b) We do not feel we can comment on how well culture has been promoted in the County we can only comment on Warwick District.

c) Culture is in a difficult position as a non statutory service which means that it often misses out to other statutory service in budget planning and priority setting by elected members. There is a need for an increased awareness of what "culture" includes and the benefits it can bring to a community. As an example the culture group of the Warwick Partnership found that the projects it was proposing for inclusion in the Community Plan could address all 5 of the themes i.e. Fair, Healthy, Cohesive, Prosperous and Safe - the contribution of culture to the areas we live in need to be made more strongly to local people and elected members.