

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 3RD MARCH 2020

**SUBJECT OF REPORT: FRAMEWORK FOR HERITAGE, ARTS &
CULTURE DEVELOPMENT – WIDER ENGAGEMENT**

TOWN OR PARISH: N/A

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: RICHARD BLOWS,
TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME MANAGER**

REASON:

Sets strategic objectives for the whole of North Somerset, and for work with partners, over a ten-year horizon.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To consider and comment on the scope and content of the Heritage, Arts & Culture Strategy for North Somerset
2. To co-sponsor an all-member briefing on the strategy with the Strategic Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration Policy & Scrutiny Panel

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report sets out the main elements of the attached draft strategy, which sets strategic objectives for the whole of North Somerset and for work with partners over a ten-year horizon.

2. POLICY

The strategy supports the following elements of the new Corporate Plan:

A Sustainable and Thriving Place

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- An attractive and vibrant place for business investment and sustainable growth

A council which empowers and cares about people

- An approach which enables young people and adults to lead independent and fulfilling lives
- A focus on tackling inequalities, improving outcomes
- A community which promotes learning and employment opportunities

An Open and Enabling Organisation

- Engage with and empower our communities
- Collaborate with partners to deliver the best outcomes

3. DETAILS

This strategy has been developed in response to the request from the Executive Member for Leisure, Culture & Tourism for a more structured approach to North Somerset-wide development of arts, culture & heritage which ensures a balanced focus across the district, including on the principal towns of Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-super-Mare. Within each town there are key opportunity sites and partners with whom North Somerset Council (NSC) can work.

The consultation draft was approved by the Executive at the meeting held on January 7th 2020.

Its development follows a prolonged period during which NSC has had no formal prioritisation of this area either in its own terms or as a driver for achieving other organisational priorities.

Notwithstanding this, NSC has continued to maintain a range of services which meet a broad definition of culture, eg library service, an events team, and have brought the Tropicana back into use. Since 2018, arts, culture & heritage have also been positioned as key elements of wider placemaking & regeneration initiatives.

In addition, between 2016 & 2019 investment of over £6.3m has been secured by NSC and its partners in a range of arts, culture and heritage initiatives. This provides a baseline for securing further investment throughout North Somerset through the partnerships now in place with agencies including Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund & Historic England.

The strategy is therefore designed to:

- Ensure that the benefits of arts, culture & heritage development are felt in the towns and villages across North Somerset
- Set out an initial vision and five long-term outcomes
- Set out short, medium and long-term objectives for each outcome area
- Provide a resulting framework for increasing investment across North Somerset

- Highlight the potential of the heritage, arts & culture sector to contribute to the delivery of a wide range of other NSC priorities
- Highlight the existing baseline information about delivery, demand, participation and investment
- Describe the proposed resourcing and governance arrangements to underpin delivery

Given our starting point, the potential for locally owned initiatives and recognising the continuing pressure on NSC budgets, the framework also reflects the following “design principles”:

- That development should support the ambitions of local communities and build on existing grass roots activity
- That within the available resources, support to develop arts, culture & heritage initiatives are available to all towns and parishes across North Somerset
- That NSC’s role is as catalyst and facilitator as much as it is provider and that partner organisations will often be better placed and skilled to deliver
- That arts, culture and heritage are valuable in their own right, and for the contribution they can make to other social, health, wellbeing, economic & environmental outcomes
- That our starting point means that heritage, arts & culture development is a long-term initiative
- That therefore the support of key partners and funders needs to be sustained over the long-term

The resulting draft strategy comprises the following sections:

1. Our Vision
2. The cultural landscape of North Somerset
3. Engagement, investment & demand
4. Our approach to arts, culture & heritage development
5. Our starting point
6. Strategic objectives & actions
7. Benefits map
8. Delivering the strategy

Content will be refined and finalised following based on feedback from the engagement process described below.

The strategy will be delivered by ensuring that

- Relevant NSC service plans reflect and respond to the objectives and actions set out
- Officers leading the delivery of the plans co-ordinate their activities, bids for funding etc through a core delivery group

- NSC’s work with sector partners, funders and regional agencies is informed by the vision and objectives set out in the strategy

4. CONSULTATION

The initial consultation draft was developed with feedback from NSC officers involved in delivery of services and tested informally with partners and stakeholder groups where opportunities existed to before the Executive meeting in January 2020.

Officers are now moving into a more formal consultation phase using our “eConsult” system. The draft questions to be used include:

About the strategy

1. Do you agree that North Somerset would benefit from a strategic approach to developing local heritage, arts and culture offers?

If not, why not?
2. Do you agree with the vision long-term vision set out in the strategy?

If not, how would you change it?
3. Do you agree with the five strategic objectives we have identified?

If not, what do you think we should include?
4. Are there any short, medium or long-term actions that you would like to see added to the strategy?
5. How would you describe current access to heritage, arts & culture across North Somerset?

About you

To help us understand the responses to the consultation, can you tell us a bit more about yourself?

1. Are you responding as a member of the public or on behalf of an organisation?

If an organisation, what is its name?

2. Which of the following types of activity are you most interested in:

Archaeology / heritage / local history/ Live music/ Arts / music education / Visual arts / Galleries & exhibitions / Outdoor performance and events / Comedy / Food & drink / Historic buildings and landscapes / Parks and the natural environment / Museums / Theatre & performing arts / Dance / Libraries and literature / All / Other (please specify)

3. What would you like to see more of:

[As at point 2 above]

4. Demographic info

5. As part of the implementation of the strategy, we are planning a more in-depth, statistically significant survey of heritage, arts and cultural participation. This will be used to help us track our progress over the coming years.

If you would like to help us gather this important baseline and are happy to be contacted, please enter a contact email here.

6. Would you like to receive information about heritage, arts & culture projects taking place across North Somerset?

As part of this wider engagement process, officers would like to offer all members the opportunity of attending a briefing on the strategy and of providing feedback that can shape the final draft and the resulting delivery plan.

It has been suggested that the briefing could be offered jointly by this Panel (CCO) and SPEDR Policy & Scrutiny panels, reflecting the wide-ranging impact that heritage, arts and culture can have on NSC's strategic objectives.

This approach also has the support of Cllr Charles as the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure & Tourism.

Beyond this initial engagement phase, officers are also planning a more comprehensive "participation survey", using approaches to secure a more representative sample of respondents, to provide more detailed information on existing activity levels, demand for new types of provision, spend and geographical distributions.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As previously reported to the Executive, funding of £65,000 over 2020/21 and 2021/22 has been identified to allow the creation of a fixed term development post to support implementation of the strategy. Recognising Arts Council England's investment in Weston-super-Mare, the focus of this post will be on identifying priorities and supporting development in the other towns and villages of North Somerset.

A further £50,000 has been identified to provide initial match funding to secure investment for key initiatives.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

There is no legal requirement to adopt of strategy of this type but equally no obstruction to NSC doing so.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

By recognising parks, recreation grounds and natural open spaces as cultural assets the strategy seeks to provide a further basis for their active management and development, in turning emphasising their positive environmental value. Officers will also explore the potential of linking to initiatives such the [Green Open Homes](#) programme as a means to promote high quality design solutions to climate change.

In addition, the scope of future commissioning from heritage, arts & cultural organisations should include asking them to develop creative responses to the climate emergency, including helping us to communicate key messages about the actions we need residents, visitors and employers to take.

Finally, increasing public access to a North Somerset heritage, arts & culture offer creates opportunities to encourage greater use of public and sustainable transport solutions and to promote the option to “visit local” as opposed to traveling further afield.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

The objectives of the strategy have been designed to align to the priorities set out in the new ten-year plans of Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund who will be focusing on outcomes related to placemaking and health & wellbeing, alongside their core funding objectives.

9. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has not yet been undertaken. The public participation process described above will be designed to provide an opportunity for significant issues to be identified.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The outcome areas set out in the strategy and the draft actions are designed to reflect the potential cross-cutting impact of heritage, arts & cultural activity including by:

- Promoting health & wellbeing, including mental health
- Improving educational outcomes and retaining talent in North Somerset
- Supporting placemaking and the development of local identities
- Supporting employment, economic growth & inward investment
- Raising the regional, national and international profile of North Somerset

AUTHOR

Richard Blows, Transformation Programme Manager

APPENDICES

Draft North Somerset strategy for Heritage, Arts & Culture Development

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None



“Internationally Recognised, Locally Cherished”

**A strategy for heritage, arts & culture development across
North Somerset**

2020 to 2030

Author

Richard Blows

Transformation Programme Manager

4 Dec 2019 v0.12 DISTD RB

1. Our vision

North Somerset is recognised as a distinctive destination for heritage, arts & culture, serving residents and visitors alike and contributing to the economic growth of the area.

What we mean by heritage, arts & culture

Our approach is based on a broad definition designed to allow local communities to define, celebrate and build their own cultural identities.

Activities have no priority or relative status, in many cases are likely to be “multi-disciplinary”, and could encompass:

- Archaeology
- Arts, music & community education
- Galleries
- Historic buildings and landscapes
- Museums
- Libraries
- Local history
- Live music
- Outdoor performance and events
- Parks and the natural environment
- Theatre & performing arts
- Visual arts
- and associated “creative industries” businesses

The inclusion of “creative industries” reflects the frequent cross-over of practitioners and skills between the cultural and creative industries sectors and the inter-dependencies between them.

Sport and leisure, whilst also vitally important, are covered by other, complementary development strategies.

Why heritage, arts & culture matter

Defined in these broad terms, heritage, arts & culture are an essential part of the fabric of communities. They provides access to ideas and experiences that can excite, entertain, educate and challenge.

Based on our own local experience and best practice from elsewhere, we also know that they can make an important contribution to other community and organisational priorities shown below:



As a vital component of place-making, the cultural sector has an important role in economic growth and sustainability, helping to create lively, vibrant and dynamic places to live, with the potential to attract new residents, visitors and investors, which in turn boost the local economy.

The most recent research¹ into the economic impact of the arts & culture has determined that:

- the annual economic contribution of arts & culture is now £10.1bn, higher than the UK agricultural sector's and roughly equal to that of cities such as Liverpool and Sheffield, and sustains over 137,000 jobs
- More widely the sector supports £23bn in value and 363,713 jobs through supply chains and spending by employees
- Productivity in the arts and culture industry between 2009 and 2016 was greater than that in the economy as a whole, with gross value added per worker at £62,000 for arts and culture, compared to £46,800 for the wider UK economy.

Research also highlights that the UK's geography of creativity isn't only about 'hip creative cities' but that creative communities have developed in different parts of the country and that they collaborate in networks which transcend traditional cluster and administrative boundaries. Reflecting this, the research also shows that that:

- Arts and cultural organisations frequently form part of a wider creative economy, fuelling regeneration in an area, which in turn contributes to addressing social and economic inequalities. 69% of surveyed organisations felt that they are part of a 'creative cluster' in their local area, 52% were involved in local regeneration networks and 46% had had buildings regenerated as a direct result of their actions
- 82% of surveyed organisations reported that they provided support for local artists and businesses, helping recipients to develop skills that make them more productive and employable in the commercial creative industries.

¹ "Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy"; Arts Council England 2019

Analysis of the wider creative industries sector² has estimated a Gross Value Added (GVA) of £101.5bn in 2017. This increased by 53.1% between 2010 & 2017, outpacing the 29.7% increase in the economy as a whole during the same period. Employment in the creative economy is estimated at 3.12m jobs, or 1 in 11 of all UK jobs. The south west has experienced one of the greatest increases in creative occupations in the UK and is estimated to have the fourth largest number of people employed after London, the South East and the North West.

More locally the Government's Industrial Strategy has recognised the creative industries sector in the West of England as a key growth opportunity.

The West of England Local Industrial Strategy identifies that the region hosts a 'world renowned creative sector. From globally-recognised studios and broadcasters to smaller independent producers, West of England businesses generate a huge range of content for all types of platforms, all over the world. Creative, cultural and digital industries are identified as one of the key sectors able to contribute to the regions innovation eco-system which can bring together key industries and businesses across a range of sectors to drive research, development, productivity and commercialisation.

A sense of the scale of heritage, arts & cultural resources available to us in North Somerset is provided in Appendix 1. In addition to organisations, events and sites, economic gain through heritage-led regeneration has been kickstarted in Weston-super-Mare town centre with the Heritage Action Zone & High Street Heritage Action Zone initiatives. Our intention is to roll-out the successful features across the district as legacy.

These schemes also reflect the significance of heritage tourism in North Somerset, specifically in relation to our Victorian seaside resorts. This forms a part of a larger set of heritage destinations with 11.97 million visits to historic properties in the south west in 2017/8, 17% of all visits to historic properties in England.

Across the region demand within the creative sector for studio and workshop space is increasing but cannot be met by Bristol alone. This creates an opportunity to attract sustainable development into North Somerset.

With momentum growing in North Somerset around key investment programmes including Weston Town Centre Regeneration and Junction 21 Enterprise Area, the opportunity to capitalise on the wider growth of the creative economy is very timely.

Alignment with strategic priorities

Developing North Somerset's cultural and creative sectors can help deliver the following strategic objectives for NSC and partners:

1. North Somerset Council Corporate Plan 2020 to 2024 [subject to final sign-off of the new Corporate Plan]

² Creative Industries Council, 2019

A Sustainable and Thriving Place

- A great place for people to live, work and visit
- An attractive and vibrant place for business investment and sustainable growth

A council which empowers and cares about people

- An approach which enables young people and adults to lead independent and fulfilling lives
- A focus on tackling inequalities, improving outcomes
- A community which promotes learning and employment opportunities

An Open and Enabling Organisation

- Engage with and empower our communities
- Collaborate with partners to deliver the best outcomes

2. North Somerset Council Economic Plan:

- Develop the cultural and creative sectors as key growth drivers for North Somerset
- Increase spending by day visitors and staying visitors, and reduce the gap in visitor expenditure between North Somerset and West of England
- Enhance the visitor economy and build the area's cultural identity

3. North Somerset Council Heritage Strategy:

- Protect and enhance North Somerset's heritage; using it to inform and inspire the future of the district

4. North Somerset Council Library Strategy

Library provision is recognised as contributing to seven outcomes critical to the individuals and communities in their areas:

1. cultural and creative enrichment
2. increased reading and literacy
3. improved digital access and literacy
4. helping everyone achieve their full potential
5. healthier and happier lives
6. greater prosperity
7. stronger, more resilient communities

5. West of England Combined Authority's Cultural Strategy objectives of:

1. Defining the role of culture in driving economic growth in the West of England including

- aligning development with the West of England Local Industrial Strategy
- driving inclusive growth in Cultural, Creative Digital and Tourism economies
- linking to placemaking and investment across the regional economy
- identifying opportunities for skills development that will attract and retain talent
- reflecting the diversity of our offer, the benefits of a rural/urban/coastal mix and increasing pace of change

2. Articulating the role of culture in supporting wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion in the West of England

3. Supporting investment by identifying new mechanisms for funding and delivery of cultural activity in the West of England including identifying

- shared priorities between the four unitary authorities, WECA and Arts Council England
- infrastructure and support required to sustain and develop the cultural sector
- new funding mechanisms or co-ordination structures that might overcome obstacles

6. West of England Local Enterprise Partnership:

- Make the West of England the place of choice for talented, creative workers and affluent visitors
- Create places where people want to live and work, through delivery of cultural infrastructure and essential infrastructure
- Build the creative sector alongside our unique...heritage and cultural vibrancy of Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare

7. West of England Local Industrial Strategy

- Contribute to the innovation eco-system which can harness creative industries to drive research, development, productivity and commercialisation.

- Support the development of sustainable thriving places by optimising its asset that offer opportunities and enhance the quality of life for communities across the region.
- Ensure that pipeline businesses benefit from the West of England Creative Scale-up Programme

8. Bath & Bristol Cultural Destinations:

- Support and promote the development of Weston’s cultural and leisure economy as part of the wider city region cultural offer

9. Arts Council England:

- Creative People – ensure that every person can develop and express creativity throughout their lives
- Cultural Communities – build a collaborative approach to culture helps villages, towns and cities across the country to thrive
- A creative and cultural country – ensure that England’s cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international

Since 2016, significant development work has taken place with strategic partners, based on these shared commitments to arts, culture and heritage development. As a result, we now have a solid foundation for building partnerships with other public service providers and funders including:

- Arts Council England
- Bath & Bristol Cultural Destinations
- Historic England
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust
- West of England Combined Authority
- Visit Bristol
- Visit Somerset

2. The cultural landscape of North Somerset

Banksy’s ‘Dismaland’ exhibition put Weston and North Somerset on the map, attracting unprecedented international attention, 150,000 additional visitors and an estimated £20m into the local economy in five weeks.

The event was a striking demonstration of the potential for culture and the arts to drive economic regeneration. It fired imaginations around the growth of Weston’s cultural offer and has helped to give Weston and North Somerset the confidence and ambition to strengthen their cultural offer in new and exciting ways and capitalise on the creative sector revival sparked by the event.

Whilst it was a unique event, the work undertaken since has revealed the extent to which North Somerset has a diverse cultural sector. A selection of that offering has been provided in the appendix, along with an indication of the wide range of organisations and partnerships responsible.

Whilst we have many notable organisations, other activity has a low profile locally and regionally and is delivered by small organisations which are often poorly networked and lack organisational resilience. The links between the sector and the wider evening and leisure economies are also underdeveloped and it is therefore often undervalued for its potential economic impact.

However, this also means that the opportunity for rapid growth is that much greater.

3. Engagement, investment & demand

Current detailed information about investment, participation and potential demand is limited, reflecting the lack of priority given by North Somerset Council over the past decade to the role and potential impact of heritage, arts & culture.

However, the data available to us demonstrates that:

Engagement & participation

- the North Somerset audience for a broad-based offer is larger than the national average
- the potential spending power of that audience is higher than the national average
- this audience contains within it a higher than average number of people likely to volunteer in some capacity, creating a potential pool of skills, knowledge and expertise
- this audience is not being fully served in North Somerset and therefore engagement – and economic impact – is being lost to Bristol and to a lesser extent Bath
- active participation across all art forms is higher than the national average
- individual organisations are seeing increasing audience numbers
- over nine million people live within a two-hour travel time of Weston-super-Mare, a catchment reflected in visitor data for many of our partners

Investment & employment

- a minimum of £6.36m investment was secured for arts, culture and heritage projects across North Somerset between 2016 and 2019
- that investment generated further “Gross Value Added” worth £8.2m to the local economy
- at least 1,500 people are employed in the arts, cultural and heritage sector in Weston super Mare alone

Future demand

- Long term population growth with the potential to create new audiences
- The decline of the retail economy and the growth of the “experience economy” – “doing things, not buying things” – is creating opportunities for innovative approaches to heritage, arts & culture development
- More widely a vibrant and successful heritage, arts & culture offer drives development of the wider leisure, evening and night-time economies
- An overheating Bristol property market is creating demand outside the city for affordable studios, workshops and property

4. Our approach to heritage, arts & culture development

This strategy is not designed to specify the particular “types” of activity or provision that we wish to see in North Somerset.

Rather we want to encourage the development of “local offers” that embody a common set of core values and properties set out below:



This approach reflects the fact that whilst North Somerset Council has, and embraces, a central role as civic leader and placemaker, it is also constrained by limited resources.

We believe that NSC has two important roles to play

1. To nurture its own remaining “cultural services” including libraries, events, venue management and green spaces
2. To act as an advocate, catalyst, broker and facilitator working with its partners to achieve change

This localised approach can already be seen in the way heritage and the historic environment provides a local identity with each area within North Somerset strongly influenced by local style and materials.

Consultation Draft

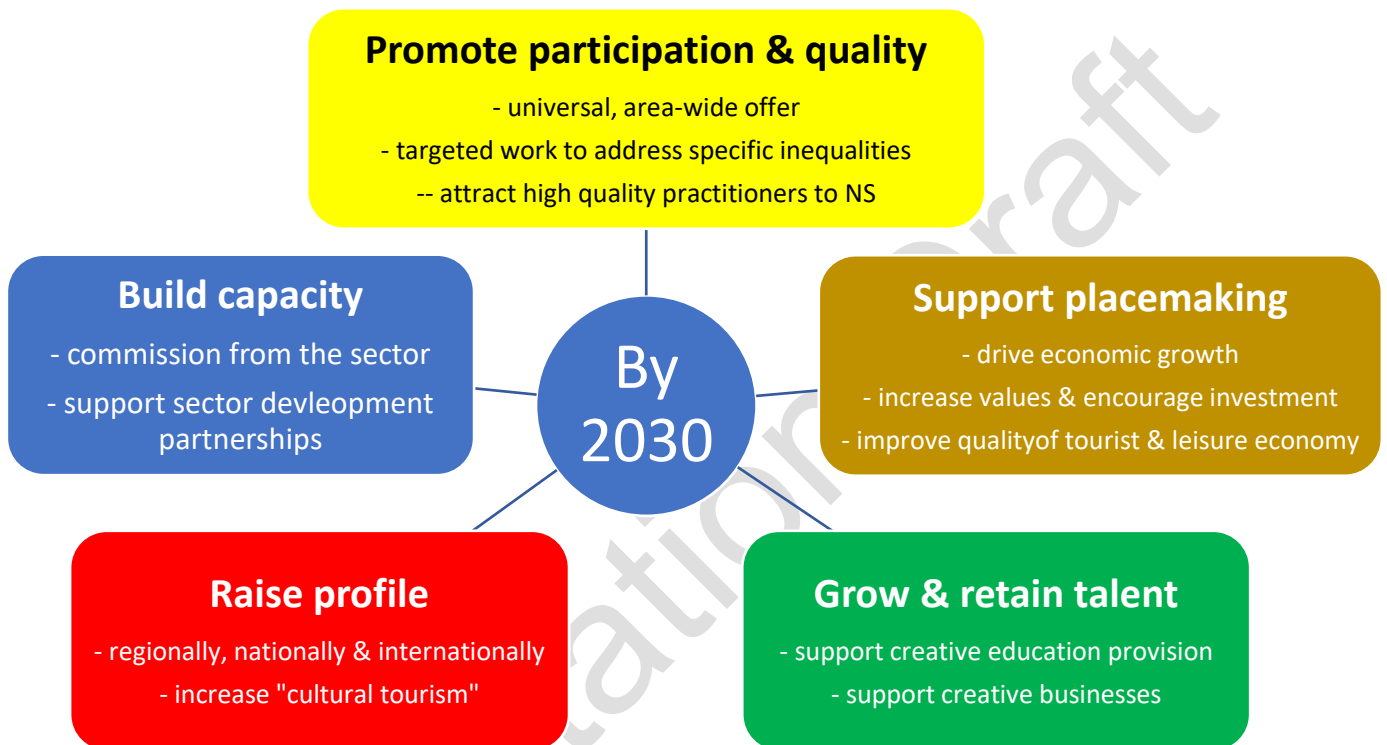
5. Our starting point

The table below summarises some key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by stakeholders in the drafting of the strategy.

Strengths	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage, arts & culture are now a priority of NSC’s political leadership • Alignment with partner strategic objectives as above • Strong grass roots sector across North Somerset • Strong support from Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund & Historic England • “In North Somerset” campaign provides a local focus • Successful creative social enterprise models • Weston College as a centre of excellence in creative disciplines • Improving transport infrastructure • Recognition of heritage, arts & culture in NSC’s “placemaking” approach to regeneration and growth • Strong alignment to WECA priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vibrant community arts sector active across North Somerset • The proposed development of the “Clevedon Cultural Quarter” • Weston Heritage Action Zone & High Street Heritage Action Zone • The “Culture Weston” initiative as a model for development elsewhere in North Somerset • Increasing population (including students and younger people) • Lack of affordable studio & workshop space in Bristol • Relocation of creative practitioners from Bristol • New apprenticeship pathways • Working with West of England universities and their specific expertise • Weston Town Council’s formation of a Heritage, Arts & Culture Committee, providing a focus for collaboration
Weaknesses	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmentation of heritage, arts & culture sector in some areas • Limited knowledge about the value, impact and scale of the existing sector • Limited opportunities for public investment • Historically, North Somerset has not been strongly associated with “culture” • Limited funding & resources to deliver the strategy • Lack of easily accessible “what’s on” information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of resilience within cultural sector • Limited ownership of the long-term ambition • Limited development capacity with NSC • Negative perception of WsM in NS and the wider sub-region • Lack of understanding / support for aims & objectives of the strategy • Lack of joined up approach & common purpose between NSC departments • Unknown levels of support from private sectors, sponsors & the general public

6. Strategic objectives & actions

Reflecting the analysis set out above, to achieve our vision of North Somerset being recognised as a “distinctive destination for arts, heritage and culture, serving residents and visitors alike and contributing to the economic growth of the area” we will pursue five strategic objectives.



The sections below set out the intended outcomes and propose short, medium and long-term actions for each outcome area.

Objective 1: Promote Participation & Quality

by encouraging an approach to heritage, arts & culture that is vibrant, diverse, participatory, sometimes challenging and socially engaged

Outcomes

- North Somerset has a diverse heritage, arts & culture offer which reflects local communities, their priorities, histories and partnerships
- This offer is supported by initiatives to make and receive high quality arts, cultural and heritage products
- Heritage, arts and culture are recognised as contributing towards building social and community cohesion, closing of social, health & economic inequalities and increasing employability
- Regional, national and international artists, makers and musicians come to – or are resident in - North Somerset
- North Somerset's historic and natural environments are recognised as “stages” for events as well as cultural assets in its own right

Actions

Short-term (0-2 years)

- Complete the mapping of North Somerset's heritage, arts & cultural offer and current levels of participation
- Identify shared and local priorities through engagement with communities and partners
- Work with organisations specialising in socially engaged practice to scale up intervention which can tackle social, economic and health inequalities
- Broker links between heritage, arts & culture providers and agencies working in health & wellbeing to develop new initiatives, eg through social prescribing
- Raise the local profile and improve promotion of existing heritage, arts & culture assets and activities, focusing on increasing year-round participation
- Promote North Somerset's diverse heritage, arts & culture offer through local regional and national platforms & media
- Maximise sponsorship and advertising opportunities increase revenues from events
- Build community involvement in the regeneration of heritage assets, eg through North Somerset's Historic Environment Record & Know Your Place
- Develop and strengthen vehicles for community participation and networking eg North Somerset Heritage Forum

Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Work with partners to develop our most significant assets into a network of high-quality spaces supporting a diverse range of programming and events
- Work with partners to commission work that can be delivered across North Somerset, including by identifying opportunities for local businesses to engage or partner with cultural organisations
- Encourage further heritage-led regeneration and investment across the towns and villages of North Somerset
- Work with partners to commission long-term joint initiatives between cultural, health and care providers that support “social prescribing” responses to health & wellbeing issues
- *Work with key partners to develop a cultural quarter and creative economy hub in Clevedon³*
- Ensure that investment in transport infrastructure encourages greater, environmentally sustainable access to the offer across North Somerset
- Continue to deliver existing programme of cultural events/activities in libraries and identify new opportunities
- Continue to bid for opportunities and/or funding to deliver heritage, arts & culture programmes, for example in libraries through author events; touring performance events etc

Long-term (4-10 years)

- Engage and work with communities to understand local cultural needs/aspirations and ensure that this is reflected as far as possible in NSC service offers
- Work with key partners to bring regional, national and international cultural organisations to North Somerset
- Work with key partners to position North Somerset cultural assets on the international stage to increase volume of national and international visitors
- Improve engagement with and interpretation of heritage assets e.g. brown signs, Blue Plaque scheme
- Improve access to heritage assets, including through virtual access to specific sites
- Develop a more strategic approach to the library cultural offer, securing greater investment and working with partners to commission work that can be delivered across North Somerset Libraries and libraries in the West of England

³ Items in italics are also contained in the North Somerset Economic Plan 2017 - 2027

Objective 2: Support placemaking

by strengthening the links between development of the cultural sector, the “leisure economy” and wider placemaking initiatives

Outcomes

- The cultural sector is recognised and invested in as a significant driver of economic growth and regeneration
- It is supported by, and supports, a wider network of successful creative industries and “creative clusters” across North Somerset
- That growth is supported by an enabling activity from NSC functions such as economic development and licensing & regulatory services
- Engagement with North Somerset’s “cultural offer” is enabled through good transport links, high quality accommodation and vibrant leisure economy
- We have a clear understanding of the economic value and impact of the sector

Actions

Short-term (0-2 years)

- Confirm the current economic value of the cultural sector and model the impact of future development
- Clearly position our “cultural offer” as part of broader inward investment campaigns and marketing and as a recruitment and retention tool for businesses
- Ensure that business support programmes cater for creative and cultural businesses from pre-start up to scale up.
- Promote “meanwhile use” of empty shops for pop-up events, exhibitions, concerts, as local community museums etc
- Ensure that licensing and related processes support both the cultural and wider leisure economy agendas
- Improve signage and way finding to and between cultural assets in towns across North Somerset
- Develop and promote walking and cycling as a means to access cultural opportunities, for example by completing the Strawberry Line extension
- Complete the opening of the coastal path, including at the Tutshill Sluice between Weston and Clevedon
- Position local food and drink manufacturers as part of the wider “creative economy” and as an essential element of events and programming

Medium-term (1-5 years)

- *Support the development of a strategic and integrated approach to the visitor economy and destination management across the West of England*
- *Work with tourism businesses to improve their offer and upgrade facilities to attract staying visitors*
- Use processes such as Conservation Area (re)designation to increase engagement and understanding of the positive economic value of heritage
- Create suitable workspace opportunities for the cultural and creative sectors
- Increase the supply of studios, workshops and easy access workspace across North Somerset
- Improve access to cultural opportunities through new transport links and interchanges, eg Portishead Rail Link, MetroWest, Weston Station environs, Strawberry Line extensions, and consider opportunities to leverage economic value out of new cultural offer.

Long-term (4-10 years)

- Support the development of specific “cultural identities” of different parts of North Somerset as part of wider placemaking initiatives

Objective 3: Foster and Retain Creative Talent

by creating pathways for the development of cultural and creative talent and encourage its retention in North Somerset

Outcomes

- North Somerset is seen as a destination of choice for students in faculties related to the arts, cultural, heritage and creative sectors
- Local people have access to pathways through which they can find and develop their own talents
- Institutions offering high quality educational experiences have a presence and deliver programmes in North Somerset
- Local cultural and creative industries employ and retain local creative talent

Actions

Short-term (0-2 years)

- Map our creative business sector, capturing the many freelancers and independents working in the sector
- Map current availability of incubator/studio space and understand current and future needs

- Develop existing community initiatives to provide “non-traditional” routes into the cultural and creative sectors
- Promote apprenticeship training and support our creative and cultural businesses to use apprenticeship funding to generate employment pathways
- Develop training and employment pathways related to the heritage and conservation sectors
- Support creative businesses to grow and employ local talent
- Encourage creative and cultural businesses to engage with curriculum planning and careers information, advice and guidance

Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Work with our education partners to develop and promote new accredited training pathways or those wishing to work in the cultural and creative sectors
- Identify and develop specific sectors which can support talent development, eg by supporting live music
- Encourage engagement by schools in the wider development of North Somerset’s cultural offer
- Explore sector-based skills academies in the creative and cultural sectors
- Work with creative and cultural businesses to develop business models which support economic inclusion

Long-term (4-10 years)

- Provide incubator and move-on space across North Somerset to support “home-grown” creative and cultural industry development
- Work with key partners to bring regional, national and international creative industries to North Somerset

Objective 4: Raise the regional, national and international profile of North Somerset

by promoting it as a centre for innovative heritage, arts & culture

Outcomes

- North Somerset is recognised as
 - a destination with a reputation for award-winning innovative arts, cultural & heritage practice
 - the home for at least one nationally significant cultural organisation
 - the host for at least one nationally significant festival
- “Town of Culture” status or equivalent has been secured for one town in North Somerset by 2030

- Organisations, businesses and residents across North Somerset cross-promote creative & cultural activity through networks, business to business activity, supply chains etc.

Actions

Short-term (0-2 years)

- Position North Somerset's "cultural offer" as part of the vision and brand concept linked to wider West of England development and the innovation strand in the WoE Local Industrial Strategy
- Continue to build positive relationships with key regional agencies

Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Use regional and national platforms to actively promote North Somerset as a place with ambition for its heritage, arts & culture sector
- Promote North Somerset's diverse heritage, arts & culture offer through all available platforms and media
- Support partners to attract national and international practitioners to work in North Somerset, and win industry wards
- Publicly celebrate the success of such initiatives
- Secure a significant national festival / event for North Somerset
- Raise the profile/improve promotion of libraries as venues for cultural activities

Long-term (4-10 years)

- Establish new cultural partnerships across North Somerset where the demand exists for them
- Secure the permanent presence of a national arts, culture or heritage organisation in North Somerset
- Work with key partners to position North Somerset cultural assets on the international stage to increase volume and value of visitor spend

Objective 5: Build Capacity

by creating the right conditions for the sustainable development of the cultural sector itself and supporting innovative delivery models

Outcomes

- The cultural and creative sector is financially sustainable and less fragmented
- It has the skills, knowledge, experience and resources required to thrive and grow
- It has the capacity for strategic planning and engagement
- Robust cultural development partnerships exist which can champion quality and ambition, strategic decision-making and lever investment
- New models of delivering heritage, arts & culture have been designed, tested and disseminated across North Somerset and beyond

Actions

Short-term (0-2 years)

- Establish the Culture Weston initiative for Weston super Mare
- Apply Quartet Community Foundation's philanthropy model to the cultural sector
- Improve shared understanding of local and regional audiences
- Appoint an arts & creative industries specialist within NSC, with a specific focus on achieving our strategic objectives in areas outside Weston-super-Mare

Medium-term (1-5 years)

- Use the Culture Weston initiative as a template for their local partnerships elsewhere in North Somerset where demand exists to do so
- Support applications by local organisations to access development funding
- Support the application of successful delivery models in other parts of North Somerset
- Continue to form and build partnerships with local and strategic cultural partners, for example with libraries in the West of England & local arts organisations, and with Arts Council England, Reading Agency, Literature Works and others nationally
- Continue with work to make library physical spaces more flexible, thereby extending the range of activities that can be delivered from them

Long-term (4-10 years)

- Increase the number of national and international arts professionals working with North Somerset organisations to share their knowledge, skills and experience

Consultation Draft

7. Benefits map

This table sets out a selection of key performance indicators and maps them to our strategic objectives.

	SO1: Raise participation & quality	SO2: Foster Talent	SO3: Increase Capacity	SO4: Drive Growth	SO5: Raise profile
Increased overall levels of participation	Y	Y			Y
Increased participation in specific groups / communities	Y	Y			Y
Increased level of positive media coverage of events	Y	Y		Y	Y
Increased retention of arts / creative students in NS post qualification		Y		Y	
Increased offer of creative apprenticeships		Y			
Increased supply of affordable studio, workshop & incubator space		Y		Y	
Increased employment in the creative and cultural sectors		Y		Y	
Increased number of cultural & creative businesses (by DCMS definition)		Y	Y	Y	Y
Increased revenues into creative and cultural organisations	Y		Y	Y	
Increased spend per participant			Y	Y	
Measurable investment in / expansion of cultural organisations			Y		
Increased value of creative & cultural sector				Y	
Increased overall value of leisure and town centre economies				Y	
Increased employment in the creative and cultural sectors		Y		Y	
Principles of “Culture Weston” approach embedded in Weston and other towns		Y	Y	Y	
Clevedon Cultural Partnership established			Y		
Increased awareness of heritage/cultural offer					
Increase philanthropic investment in the cultural sector			Y		Y

8. Delivering the strategy

North Somerset Council

Despite significant reductions in funding and staffing, NSC has maintained involvement in the planning and delivery of what can broadly be described as “cultural services” since 2010.

These include events management, heritage & archaeology, libraries, the management of community buildings and parks & open spaces

In addition, functions including economic development, regeneration, public health and children’s services have recognised the potential of contribution of heritage, arts & culture to achieving their objectives. This is reflected in service commissioning and successful bids for external funding.

Finally, corporate strategic planning resources have been committed to the development of this strategy and oversight of its delivery.

These arrangements have now been formalised through the creation of a delivery group designed to co-ordinate service planning and delivery, and to ensure that we secure the maximum benefit from our own activity.

Wider partnerships

However, this strategy cannot be delivered by North Somerset Council alone. It must involve a wide range of arts organisations, partner organisations and community leaders if it is to be successful.

NSC will work with existing partnerships such as those active in Clevedon and Weston and commit resources to supporting developments in those areas where local organisations have ambitions build local offer.

As an example, in Weston, NSC & ACE SW have collaborated with members of the town’s heritage, arts and culture sector to establish “Culture Weston”. This initiative provides the focus and capacity for the local delivery of the objectives set out in this strategy and ensure that the sector is fully integrated into the wider regeneration and growth of the town. Once embedded we expect that the model could be extended to other parts of North Somerset over the life of this strategy.

To support the development of these partnerships NSC will

- continue to co-ordinate its own work through an internal strategy delivery group comprising officers working across this agenda
- ensure that relevant NSC service plans reflect the long-term objectives of the strategy and contribute towards its delivery
- invest to provide core strategic and operational capacity
- work with town and parish councils to help deliver their aspirations to develop local arts, culture and heritage offers
- support other local networks to contribute to the design and delivery of “local offers”
- involve representatives of the heritage, arts & culture sector, locally and regionally in strategic planning and decision making

- advocate for the sector and for North Somerset's distinctive offer in regional, national and international arenas

Resources

This strategy has been prepared reflecting the limited additional funding available from North Somerset Council and recognising that securing partnership funding will be essential for it to be successfully implemented.

Partnerships themselves will need to be self-financing, raising substantial sums for the delivery of specific projects and to support their own core costs.

For its part, NSC has committed funding and officer time to enable

- strategic leadership and better co-ordination of arts, culture and heritage development activity across North Somerset
- the appointment of an arts and creative industries development specialist to support the delivery of key projects and work with partners
- match-funding to support a small number of key initiatives
- “meanwhile use” in buildings and on sites owned by the council to support innovation and experimentation by arts, cultural and creative organisations.

Monitoring & review

This is a long-term plan for the successful heritage, arts and cultural regeneration of North Somerset and has been defined over a ten-year period.

This approach will be balanced against the need to deliver significant impact in the first three years.

The short-term actions identified above reflect the need to gather baseline information against which future impact can be assessed.

We will also review models for assessing the impact of heritage, arts and culture investment available from external sources. The review will cover those developed by the sector itself, the available economic data and complementary frameworks such as the “[Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)”, developed by the New Economics Foundation.

We will also use our partnership structures to monitor activity on an ongoing basis against the objectives and actions set out above.

These reviews will also examine the local regional and international context to make sure that the visions and strategy remain valid.

Appendix: North Somerset's heritage, arts & culture offer

This appendix provides an overview of some of North Somerset's heritage, arts & culture assets and an indication of the range of organisations responsible for them.

Education

- High performing schools across North Somerset
- North Somerset Music Service
- Weston College, specifically its creative arts and creative industries (further & higher education provider)

Events & festivals

- Balloon Fiesta
- Beach Race, Weston (RHL events)
- National Scooter Rally (bi-annual, South West Scooter Clubs)
- North Somerset Pride (Weston Pride)
- Open Doors heritage days (North Somerset Council)
- Weston Air Festival (North Somerset Council & REM Events)
- Weston Carnival

Film

- Curzon Cinema, Clevedon (community trust)
- TV & film locations (various)

History & Heritage

- Ashton Court Estate & Mansion
- Birnbeck Pier, Weston (privately owned)
- Cadbury Iron Age Hillfort (National Trust)
- Castle Batch, Weston super Mare (North Somerset Council)
- Clevedon Pier (charitable trust)
- Helicopter Museum, Weston (independent trust)
- Leigh Court (privately owned)
- Locking Castle, Weston super Mare (on private land)
- Middle Engine Pit (charitable trust)
- Portishead Open Air Pool (community trust)
- Tyntesfield and Clevedon Court (National Trust)
- Victorian Weston super Mare (various private and public owners)

- Victorian Clevedon (various private and public owners)
- Weston Museum (Weston Town Council)
- Worlebury Iron Age hillfort (North Somerset Council)
- Over 50 local history & archaeology groups (voluntary sector)
- 1,076 listed buildings (various)
- over 9,000 recorded archaeological sites and buildings of local interest (various)

Independent sector

- A thriving live music scene in Weston super Mare (various)
- Cafes such as Loves in Weston offering music, performance poetry and exhibitions

Libraries & literature

- Library network (North Somerset Council, Town Councils & Libraries West)
- Links to Robert Southey & the Romantic Poets
- Weston Literary Festival

Multi-disciplinary & socially engaged practice

- boomsatsuma creative (social enterprise)
- Clevedon Cultural Partnership (community partnership)
- Terrestrial (charitable trust)
- [Theatre Orchard](#) (charity & “National Portfolio Organisation”)

Natural and historic environment

- Brean Down (National Trust)
- Brean Down Way cycle path between Weston and Brean
- Clevedon & Portishead coastal areas
- Forest of Avon
- Goblin Combe
- Historic Parks & Gardens (various)
- Lake Grounds, Portishead (North Somerset Council)
- Leigh Woods (National Trust)
- Nature reserves and woodland (various)
- Salt House Fields, Clevedon (Clevedon Town Council)
- Sand Bay (National Trust)
- Strawberry Line and Festival Way
- SW Coast path extension between Brean & Portishead

- The Mendip Hills AONB (various)

Performance & exhibition spaces

- All Saints Church, Weston (CofE)
- Backwell Playhouse
- Blakehay Theatre (Weston Town Council)
- Clevedon Theatre Shop (independent trust)
- Grand Pier, Weston (privately owned)
- Italian Gardens, Weston (North Somerset Council)
- Lake Grounds, Portishead (North Somerset Council)
- Playhouse Theatre, Weston (North Somerset Council)
- Portishead Folk Hall (North Somerset Council)
- Princes Hall & Clevedon Community Centre (Community Association)
- Salt House Fields, Clevedon (Clevedon Town Council)
- Scotch Horn, Nailsea (North Somerset Council)
- Somerset Hall, Portishead (North Somerset Council)
- The Old Town Quarry, Weston (Weston Civic Society)
- Tropicana, Weston (North Somerset Council)
- Weston Museum (Weston Town Council)
- Winter Gardens (Weston College)
- Village halls (offering spaces for art exhibitions, music, performance, films) (various)

Theatre

- Living Spit (theatre company)
- Theatre Orchard (charity)
- Portishead Players (community group)
- Weston Operatic Society (community group)

Visual arts

- Barley Wood studios
- Chelvey studios
- Chew Valley arts trail
- Creative Craft collective Nailsea
- North Somerset Arts (charitable trust)
- Paul Blakemore (photographer)

- Portishead “Around the Houses” arts trail
- Quarry Artist’s studios, Weston (co-operative)
- Weston Museum Photography Club (Weston Town Council)

Creative industries

- The Stable (Community Interest Company)

Consultation Draft