

## REPORT TO CABINET

18 March 2020

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Cultural Prospectus</b>
<b>Presenting Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Councillor Wasim Ali – Cabinet Member Inclusive Economic Growth</b>
<b>Director:</b>	<b>Executive Director – Neighbourhoods – Alison Knight Director – Housing and Communities – Alan Caddick</b>
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	
<b>Key Decision:</b>	
<b>Cabinet Member Approval and Date:</b>	Councillor Wasim Ali – 20/02/2020
<b>Director Approval:</b>	Alison Knight
<b>Reason for Urgency:</b>	Urgency provisions do not apply
<b>Exempt Information Ref:</b>	Exemption provisions do not apply
<b>Ward Councillor (s) Consulted (if applicable):</b>	Ward Councillors have not been consulted
<b>Scrutiny Consultation Considered?</b>	Scrutiny have not been consulted Click or tap to enter a date.
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b>	Jane Lillystone Service Manager – Tourism, Culture and Leisure

### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

**That Cabinet:**

1. Approve the Cultural Prospectus (2020) and a further report be submitted agree on next steps in relation to the development of an Action Delivery Plan.

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report makes recommendations to Cabinet to consider the final Cultural Prospectus – which sets out the strategic approach and intention for cultural activity in Sandwell from 2020.

## **2 IMPLICATION FOR VISION 2030**

- 2.1 The document clearly outlines, within the Strategic Goals and Priorities, how the Cultural Prospectus will contribute directly to Ambitions 1, 2 and 8 of Sandwell's Vision 2030 (refer to 3.2.1) – including further underlying links to:
- Ambition 3: Young people to have the skills for the future
  - Ambition 4: Raising the quality of schools
  - Ambition 7: Major new housing along transport routes and employment sites
  - Ambition 9: Hosting industries of the future
  - Ambition 10: National reputation for getting things done.

## **3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 Wafer Hadley were commissioned (late 2018) to undertake the development of a Cultural Prospectus – working within four key principles to shape Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) emerging strategy for delivering culture in the Borough – against the backdrop of creating the new service area for Tourism, Culture and Leisure. The main areas included the following principles:
- Show alignment with Vision 2030
  - Reflect the public service ethos of SMBC
  - Talk directly to potential delivery partners
  - Be shaped by the needs of the community.
- 3.1.2 Wafer Hadley's initial consultation was undertaken from January 2019 – and involved consultees from a wide range of disciplines across the Borough and beyond. The engagement process had a very practical focus and the research/findings have been used to underpin the final draft Prospectus.
- 3.1.3 An initial draft report was produced at the end of the first phase (May 2019) to allow for a period of discussion and reflection – ensuring that the draft content was shared with the sector and stakeholders in a final round of consultation, prior to final approval and wider publication.

## 3.2 Key Points

3.2.1 The final draft report has a clear strategic focus, showing how each goal/priority contributes to the delivery of the Vision 2030 Ambitions – whilst establishing key points of difference from Sandwell’s unique perspective – and further demonstrating how the proposed goals/priorities relate to community need and potential development opportunities. This approach also seeks to create a frame of reference for the delivery of cultural programming in Sandwell.

Within the final draft report – the three overarching cultural goals are highlighted below:

### **Cultural Goal 1 – A Great Place to Live and Visit**

*Key contribution to Ambition 8: Create environments in the six towns where people choose to live*

### **Cultural Goal 2 – Improved Life Chances for Young People**

*Key contribution to Ambition 1: Raising aspirations and resilience*

### **Cultural Goal 3 – Better Health and Wellbeing**

*Key contribution to Ambition 2: Healthier for longer and safer*

3.2.2 Under each goal there are associated findings and priorities. The findings and recommended priorities are based on Wafer Hadley’s analysis of the data insight gained through the research and consultation process (details of consultees, information and data sources are included at the end of the Prospectus).

### **Headline Key Findings**

<b>Goal 1: A Great Place to Live and Visit</b>	
1.1	Commitment to Community
1.3	Inward and outward-facing cultural activity
1.4	Sandwell currently has the lowest levels of cultural engagement in England
1.6	Making the most of events
1.10	‘Heart and Soul’ – what can Sandwell offer the UK in and around the Commonwealth Games
1.11	Using culture to attract external investment
1.12	Developing strategic capacity
<b>Goal 2: Improved Life Chances for Young People</b>	
2.1	Children and young people in Sandwell face multiple challenges
2.2 / 2.7	Participation in culture offers unique development opportunities for young people / Young people that show creative talent should have improved routes for progression
2.3	Long-term approaches are needed for high quality work with vulnerable young people
2.4	Creativity and culture in schools is an important part of the picture
2.5	Work with families is a high-volume route to engagement with children and young people
<b>Goal 3: Better Health and Wellbeing</b>	
3.1	Levels of health deprivation in Sandwell are high
3.2	National evidence shows a link between creative participation and good health

3.3	NHS England is investing in social prescribing, opening the door to partnerships with the cultural sector
3.4	Public health policy-makers in Sandwell recognise the link between cultural participation in the community and improved health and wellbeing
3.5 / 3.6	There is an opportunity for cultural providers to enhance existing networks and assets / The public interface including liaison, co-ordination and delivery, is hugely important in this model

An overview of the priorities – in response to the findings are highlighted below:

## Priorities

### **GOAL 1: A Great Place to Live and Visit**

*1A. Emphasise community focus as the central concern of the cultural sector*

*1B. Use culture as a tool in place-making*

*1C. Use culture to boost external attractiveness*

### **GOAL 2: Improved Life Chances for Children and Young People**

*2A. Provide more cultural participation opportunities for children and young people*

*2B. Support the development of strategic capacity in work with children and young people*

### **GOAL 3: Better Health and Wellbeing**

*3A. Establish the cultural sector as an essential partner in social prescribing*

*3B. Develop culture's role in health and wellbeing strategy*

## 3.3 Considerations

3.3.1 The Tourism, Culture and Leisure (TCL) team is a newly created division – encompassing award-winning parks and leisure centres, high-performing libraries, an iconic range of museums/heritage sites, the launch of a new events team/programme and green open spaces; the 'jewel' in the crown being Sandwell Valley Country Park.

3.3.2 Over the next four years, the profile of the West Midlands will be significantly raised at a local, regional, national and international level – as global communities are drawn to the region in celebration of the UK City of Culture 2021 (Coventry) and the hosting of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games (CWG); where Sandwell is set to host the swimming and diving events in a new world-class Aquatics Centre. This presents an incredible opportunity to create a 'step-change' for Sandwell – one that delivers inclusive social, cultural and economic benefits towards creating a lasting legacy, and one that supports and inspires local communities and the region as a whole.

3.3.3 As a new overarching division, TCL will be aiming to maximise the benefits from these opportunities as a catalyst and driver of change towards delivering the priorities from the Corporate Plan *Big Plans for a Great Place* –

*The Sandwell Plan (2020-2025)* and supporting/linking into the *Inclusive Economy Deal (2020)* – contributing to the delivery of the CWG Legacy Workstreams and raising the profile of Sandwell as a great place to live, visit, work and invest.

## 4 THE CURRENT POSITION

### 4.1 Cultural Prospectus Sharing Session

4.1.1 A draft copy of the Prospectus was shared with the wider sector and internal stakeholders in a final round of consultation, *Sharing the Cultural Prospectus* workshop on 16 January 2020 – hosted by SMBC and facilitated by Wafer Hadley. The primary aim of the session was to capture observations/ comments on the proposed findings and draft strategic goals – prior to finalising the report and obtaining formal approval/wider publication.

4.1.2 We were also keen to hold discussions around partnership working – in relation to the development of a Borough-wide Action Delivery Plan – and co-generating ideas for a shared cultural programme. A copy of the outcomes from the feedback/sessions and participation list have been included in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

A broad outline of the feedback and ideas generated:

#### ***Feedback on the draft Cultural Prospectus***

<p><b>Group discussions/ workshops and QA session</b></p>	<p>‘What excites you about the Prospectus?’</p> <p><i>“Sandwell’s approach is focused on the community and avoids many of the pitfalls of ‘high art’ and ‘high culture’. It offers an opportunity to redefine what culture means for Sandwell’s communities, taking account of the enormous diversity across the Borough”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Providing a much-needed strategic reference point</li> <li>- Asserting the importance of community-based work</li> <li>- Looking outwards as well as inwards</li> </ul>
	<p>‘What will be most challenging to achieve?’</p> <p><i>“As well as improving supply of cultural opportunity, there is a recognition that demand needs stimulation in the community.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resources need to be in place to deliver the ambition</li> <li>- Stimulating demand in the community is a challenge</li> <li>- The overall leisure economy must develop alongside cultural content</li> </ul>
	<p>‘Are there any omissions?’</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Questions to be resolved in the document or in further partnership working</li> </ul>
<p><b>‘Idea Generation’</b></p>	<p>A Great Place to Live and Visit</p>	<p>Top 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Mini-Event Festival</b> <i>(a large-scale outdoor cultural festival supported by a range of arts</i></li> </ul>

*and cultural mini-events across the Borough)*

**- Cultural Leadership Board**  
*(promoting collaborative working for culture across the Borough)*

**- Open Heritage Events**  
*(Cultural and craft events at open properties – including homes/facilities etc.)*

## 4.2 Final Draft

- 4.2.1 Following the Sharing Session – key comments and observations have been incorporated (where feasible) into the Prospectus, and the final draft copy is now ready to act as a foundation for future action planning.
- 4.2.2 The next steps, through the development of an Action Delivery Plan, will need to be flexible and fluid – able to respond quickly to a changing social/ health environment, diverse community needs/benefits and potential funding streams; including new advances in technology. We recognise the importance of acknowledging/referring to external strategies (i.e. Arts Council England, Sport England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund), as well as incorporating links to other strategies and priorities from/with key stakeholders and potential delivery partners.
- 4.2.3 We also recognise that Sandwell’s identity needs to be more clearly defined – making Sandwell ‘more visible’ – by celebrating our distinctive localness (and the relationship with/across the six Towns), cultural diversity, industrial heritage and our pride (a sense of place) in being part of the Black Country and the wider West Midlands region; making more of what we already have in Sandwell, through activating and amplifying Sandwell’s uniqueness.
- 4.2.4 The definition of culture within the final report has been broad, embracing all those activities that SMBC currently supports, including visual arts, theatre, participatory arts, heritage, parks and libraries – to name just a few. As partnerships and activity develops in the Borough, we would expect the way we define culture to broaden year on year, reflecting increasingly wider audience involvement and increasingly innovative cultural sector responses – particularly through the inclusion of wider sports/leisure activities and major events (i.e. cultural programming pre-during-post the 2022 CWG).

## 4.3 Wider Context

- 4.3.1 Ensuring that the Cultural Prospectus and Action Delivery Plan are embedded within SMBC’s corporate plans:

- **Inclusive Economy Deal 2020**

Through the potential Tourism/Cultural Deal – and supporting the overarching themes:

- Good Jobs & Opportunities
- Your Neighbourhood
- Community Engagement
- Your Health.

- **Big Plans for a Great Place – The Sandwell Plan 2020-2025**

Aligned to the strategic outcomes:

- The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People
- People Live Well and Age Well
- Strong Resilient Communities
- A Strong and Inclusive Economy.

4.3.2 Mapping out links between the Cultural Prospectus to the development and implementation of an overarching *Tourism and Visitor Growth Strategy for Sandwell* – connecting into the wider West Midlands regional strategies (West Midland Combined Authority/Growth Company) and cross-working/supporting Sandwell’s Inclusive Economy Deal – by creating Tourism Offers that grow the creative/visitor economy and promote our cultural identity and diversity through the following themes:



4.3.3 Embed legacy planning for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games within the Cultural Prospectus Action Delivery Plan – identifying partners, local commissioners, external agencies, service providers and funding streams (i.e. Birmingham 2022 Cultural Programme/Black Country Consortium Ltd) – towards developing/delivering a cultural and engagement programme, *Our Commonwealth Family*, over the next three to four years across the Borough.

4.3.4 Develop cultural opportunities, alongside the development/delivery of wider TCL projects – as part of a potential Cultural Compact – that can support the overall leisure economy and that can work closely with regeneration to stimulate growth and community cohesion across the Borough, including:

- Night-time economy
- High street economy
- Spaces for cultural engagement
- Events that can engage communities and families

**Tourism, Culture and Leisure linked projects:**

- Reimagining Sandwell Valley Country Park as a key visitor destination

- Supporting the role of our six Towns as ‘gateway hubs’ – through the Transforming Local Services programme and supporting the Heritage Action Zone and Towns Fund
- Development of a Sandwell Visitor/Heritage (Archives) Centre
- Potential partnership projects towards improving the canals network, green spaces and natural assets – with the Canal and River Trust, Chance Heritage Trust, our role in the Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark and the recommendations from the Green Space Strategy.

#### 4.4 **Next Steps**

- 4.4.1 Setting-up a Cultural Leaders Working Group (internal and external) – establishing shared priorities between strategies and stakeholders, towards pursuing cultural goals collaboratively (i.e. to co-create/co-deliver a holistic vision for cultural opportunities in Sandwell), and sourcing combined funding and investment opportunities across the Borough.
- 4.4.2 Developing/implementing the Action Delivery Plan – including confirming delivery mechanisms, sources of funding, resource capacity and key outcomes/ targets.
- 4.4.3 Develop a Cultural Funding Plan – linking into the development and launch of an overarching Fundraising Strategy for the Tourism, Culture and Leisure Service. Considering the need for ongoing investment in people, communities and partners, alongside the creation of a new delivery cultural infrastructure. This will enable a more strategic approach – encouraging flexibility, risk-taking and innovation – by investing more strategically, through supporting a wider-range of artists/performers/creatives (individuals/groups) and incubator ‘start-ups’ – including those who are less established (i.e. to help tackle some of the inequalities around who can access funding/support).
- 4.4.4 Explore the potential for creating a Cultural Compact – a lead advocate for the cultural and creative industries sector within Sandwell. Using the foundation of the Cultural Prospectus to formalise broader cultural/creative aspirations and priorities across the Borough – underpinning the corporate plan and inclusive economy deal – and securing partnerships/investments between the cultural sector and other key sectors.



## **5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

- 5.1 From January to May 2019, Wafer Hadley's work focused on a research review and consultation process with internal/external stakeholders in Sandwell Borough and across the wider region. Each consultee took part in a depth interview of up to one hour over the period January to March 2019. A full list of the consultees for the initial draft copy of the Cultural Prospectus are included at the end of the document.
- 5.2 A draft copy of the Cultural Prospectus was shared with the wider (regional) sector and internal stakeholders in a final round of consultation – culminating in a workshop session, *Sharing the Cultural Prospectus*, hosted by SMBC and facilitated by Wafer Hadley. The primary aim of the session was to capture observations/comments on the proposed findings and draft strategic goals – and these were incorporated (where feasible) into the final draft. A copy of the outcomes from the feedback/sessions and participation list have been included in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.
- 5.3 An Evaluation Framework will be developed to ensure that consultation is ongoing – establishing quantitative and qualitative data/research and feedback measures/outputs. The Framework will also include Theory of Change principles, enabling the Action Delivery Plan to articulate a shared mission, refine strategic direction and provide a road map for impact measurement.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 7 There is an option of doing nothing and not taking forward the work or the recommendations done to date. This is felt to be counter-intuitive and would not align with our ambitions and aspirations for Sandwell – as articulated in both the 2030 Vision and the Corporate Plan.

## **8 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Facilitating the Sharing Cultural Prospectus workshop sessions and support on the development of the Action Delivery Plan is expected to cost the Council up to a maximum of £5,850. This will include officer time, production and printing of communication materials and venues for consultation sessions.
- 8.2 All cultural programming/projects or other outcomes in relation to the Prospectus, will be covered from within either existing revenue budgets or funded through external grants and fundraising streams/campaigns.

- 8.3 Strengthening Sandwell’s ability to lever external investment and grant funding will be key in adding value to both inward and outward cultural activity. The Prospectus recognises an existing lack of capacity/resources within the sector, and across the Borough. A Cultural Funding Plan is being developed to support delivery going forward. This will essentially consider the need for on-going investment in people, communities and the cultural infrastructure – in particular, what the priorities for public sector expenditure should be (especially in the context of potential future budget restrictions), and how to diversify the funding base via alternative fundraising mechanisms.

## **9 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no specific legal issues or implications arising from the contents of this report.

## **10 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the development work for the Action Delivery Plan.

## **11 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 There are no specific data protection implications arising from the contents of this report.

## **12 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 12.1 There are no specific crime and disorder implications arising from the contents of this report.

## **13 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS**

- 13.1 Outlined within section 8.3.

## **14 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)**

- 14.1 The proposals contained within this report will aim to enhance the health and wellbeing of residents – specifically referenced as *Goal 3: Better Health and Wellbeing*, towards establishing the cultural sector in Sandwell Borough as an essential partner in social prescribing and developing/ embedding culture’s role in health and wellbeing strategy.

## **15 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND**

15.1 There are no specific issues affecting the Council's managed property or land arising from the contents of this report.

## **16 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

16.1 For many years, Sandwell has led the way on community engagement in culture. Its commitment to working at the grassroots, producing cultural activity that reflects local need, is visible in every strand of culture – where the work of arts and heritage organisations across the Borough, from the largest to the smallest, is focused on local community impact.

16.2 However, Sandwell currently has some of the lowest levels of cultural engagement (ranked 324 out of 325 local authorities in England). The research findings, from the report, indicate that this is likely to relate to the quantity and availability of cultural provision. Interestingly, other local authorities with similar levels of deprivation, have higher cultural engagement scores, but these are often in areas where culture has been a theme in regeneration or community development.

16.3 Two positive directions can come from this analysis. Firstly, it can be used as an argument for a scaling-up of cultural participation and secondly, it can be used to support and lever external investment.

16.4 Over the next few years, there will be major opportunities through substantial growth and new investments within the Borough – set against several key emerging strategies/priorities – for Sandwell to punch above its current weight. A key driver will be the hosting of the Birmingham 2022 CWG – as a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity to create a 'step-change', in relation to Sandwell's perception and visibility on a global stage. With the potential for a million visitors to the region and up to 1.5 billion spectators from around the world – Sandwell's ability to be the 'heart and soul' of the Black Country, particularly in the lead up and legacy period of the Commonwealth Games, could see it make gains in differentiation and awareness among visitors.

16.5 The challenge will be on how we develop the strategic capacity to co-curate and co-deliver a holistic vision for culture in Sandwell – towards developing new cultural initiatives and encouraging more events that not only improve our resident's health and wellbeing, but also enhances Sandwell's image and grows the visitor economy.

16.6 The Cultural Prospectus is a foundation document – a contextual framework, which sets out a strategic approach and intention for cultural activity in Sandwell Borough from 2020 onwards. It proposes that culture should be at the heart of the social, economic, health and environmental changes that will benefit all communities – aligned with our corporate ambitions and aspirations for Sandwell; as articulated in both the Vision 2030 and Corporate Plan. The next key steps will be the development of an Action Delivery Plan and the potential opportunity to explore the creation of a Cultural Compact, as a lead advocate for the cultural and creative industries sector within Sandwell and the wider West Midlands region.

## 17 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Final Copy of the Cultural Prospectus 2020

Appendix 2 – Cultural Prospectus – Sharing Session January 2020

## 18 **APPENDICES:**

Appendix 1 – Final Copy of the Cultural Prospectus 2020

Appendix 2 – Cultural Prospectus – Sharing Session January 2020

**Alison Knight**  
**Executive Director**