

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CULTURAL PROSPECTUS, SHARING SESSION

Portway Lifestyle Centre, 16/01/20

WAFER HADLEY

CULTURAL INSIGHT

## 1. PARTICIPANTS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Abigail Kellas	Commonwealth Games Team
Alison Knight	Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, SMBC
Andy Jones	Voluntary Sector Support
Caron Wright	Multistory
Chris Ash	Libraries and Archives
Corinne Caddy	Events @Sandwell
Danny Singh	Sandwell & Birmingham Mela
Dawn Maleki	Youth Service
Dawn Winter	Libraries and Archives
Erica Martin	Sport and Leisure
Francis Land	Black Country Touring
Frank Caldwell	Museum and Arts Service, SMBC
Gerry Ritchie	Market and Town Centres Group
Hayley Insley	Regeneration, SMBC
Helga Lutz	Green Space Development, SMBC
Jane Hanney	Museum and Arts Service
Jayne Weaver	Parks, SMBC
Jenny Smith	Creative Black Country
Jerrel Jackson	Creative Academies Network & Sandwell Cultural Education Partnership
Kelly Johnson	Arts Council England
Laura Gilyead	Events @Sandwell
Manny Sehmbi	Communities, SMBC
Margaret Way	West Midlands Growth Company
Mark Davies	Chance Glassworks Heritage Trust
Matt Lloyd	Infamous Arts
Nicola Leavy	Sport and Leisure, SMBC
Nigel Collumbell	Housing, SMBC
Rachel Allchurch	Transforming Local Services, SMBC
Rob Marlow	Sport and Leisure, SMBC
Salla Virman	West Midlands Combined Authority
Sarah Farmer	Public Health, SMBC
Sophie Slade	Chance Glassworks Heritage Trust/Heritage Arts
Stephen Kilvington	Commonwealth Games Team
Stuart White	Business Excellence
Sunish Patel	Sandwell Valley Country Park
<b>Facilitators:</b>	
Daniel Hadley	Wafer Hadley
Kate Wafer	Wafer Hadley
Jane Lillystone	Tourism, Culture and Leisure

## 2. SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK ON CULTURAL PROSPECTUS

Participants discussed the draft of the Cultural Prospectus and fed back on three areas as below:

"WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT THE PROSPECTUS?"	
Providing a much-needed strategic reference point	<p>By stating SMBC's direction and priorities on culture, the Council has encouraged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership opportunities – for instance around the Commonwealth Games</li> <li>• The ability to find shared goals and priorities between strategies and stakeholders</li> <li>• A more positive image for Sandwell, showing ambition for culture</li> <li>• A direction for optimum use of Sandwell's existing cultural assets</li> <li>• A rationale that will enable prioritisation</li> </ul>
Asserting the importance of community-based work	<p>Sandwell's approach is focussed 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.</p>
Looking outwards as well as inwards	<p>It is exciting for Sandwell to consider how it can use culture to attract more visitors, businesses and new residents. The opportunities around improving quality of life and the attractiveness of place are an important feature of the prospectus.</p>

"WHAT WILL BE MOST CHALLENGING TO ACHIEVE?"	
Resources need to be in place to deliver the ambition	<p>There is some anxiety that the vision for culture may be delayed or stall for want of resources. The strategy recognises an existing lack of capacity in the sector, and this is before the cultural sector has raised its game to deliver on Vision 2030. Linked to this is the need for a cultural leadership team or working group that can pursue cultural goals collaboratively and look at increasing income.</p>
Stimulating demand in the community is a challenge	<p>As well as improving <i>supply</i> of cultural opportunity, there is a recognition that demand needs stimulating in the community. This is linked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding audience need across a diverse population</li> <li>• Working on community buy-in for specific projects</li> <li>• Employing effective communications to stimulate demand</li> <li>• Tapping into work around the inclusive economy</li> </ul>

<p>The overall leisure economy has to develop alongside cultural content</p>	<p>Sandwell's infrastructure for free time and leisure needs to develop, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Night-time economy</li> <li>• High street economy</li> <li>• Spaces for cultural engagement</li> <li>• Events that can engage communities and families</li> </ul> <p>In addressing this challenge, culture needs to work closely with regeneration.</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>“ARE THERE ANY OMISSIONS?”</b></p>	
<p>Questions to be resolved in the document or in further partnership working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can we define ‘culture’ more fully? Perhaps making reference to Arts Council England new strategy to be published at end of January</li> <li>• Does the term ‘young people’ mean that schoolchildren and pre-school are excluded from the strategy's focus? If not, can we change the wording?</li> <li>• Can we assert Sandwell's identity more clearly and explore the relationship with the six towns?</li> <li>• Can we define more fully how the diversity within the Borough affects the strategy?</li> <li>• Can we show current links to other strategies?</li> <li>• Can we set out some collaborative next steps?</li> </ul>

## 4. IDEA GENERATION

Participants worked in pairs to generate ideas around the proposed *Our Commonwealth Family* programme, aligning their ideas with the three cultural goals within the Cultural Prospectus. The whole group then had a brief chance to assess ideas and star any they particularly preferred. While stars below do not necessarily equate with the relative strength of an idea, they do give an indication of immediate priorities or ideas with immediate appeal.

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE AND VISIT		
MINI-EVENT FESTIVAL	A large-scale outdoor cultural festival supported by a range of arts and cultural mini-events across the Borough. Taking culture to the people.	*****
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.	****
STORYTELLING IN THE PARK	Locals' stories are dramatised and performed, telling the history of the park. Workshops to create props.	
FAMILY FESTIVAL	Curated and produced by young people supported by cultural professionals. The Festival would twin the six towns with Commonwealth countries and build in skills development for the participants.	**
JOURNEYS	Tracing journeys into and out of Sandwell over a period of time. Telling stories about where everyone has come from.	***
TOWN CENTRE FESTIVALS	Bring people into town centres, for evening markets, involving international food and music. Involving young people and students. Aimed at invigorating night-time economy, encouraging participation.	
WATER	Harnessing emotions around water and engaging creatively with communities and make art around water along canals etc.	
LIGHTHOUSES	Use lighthouses around the world as a means of developing cultural connections	
NEW ARCHIVE	Build a new archive at Chance Glassworks	
SMALL CONVERSATIONS	Community meetings to establish what cultural activity would appeal to the local community	*
NON-COMMONWEALTH	Non-Commonwealth celebration events and recognition, picking up on comments in the room on the need to explore ideas around 'Commonwealth' critically and responsively.	
MUSIC AND DANCE EVENTS	Annual events based in town centres, expanding on the Shape Festival	***

CULTURE PATHWAY	Development of a Sandwell culture pathway from Birmingham to Sandwell, using new technology.	
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#### IMPROVED LIFE CHANCES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

FESTIVAL OF FOOD AND DRINK	Including lots of competition, e.g. dancing, walking, cycling, swimming, unusual sports such as Kabaddi. A Sandwell 'national team' drawing from town competitions.	*
CHALLENGES/COMPETITIONS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE	Such as 'who has read the most in the UK'.	
COMMUNITY QUILT PROJECT WORKING ACROSS SCHOOLS	Exploring 'what Sandwell means/is' to participants	
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH EXCHANGE		**
CONVERTING COMMONWEALTH GAMES VOLUNTEERS TO 'CULTURAL AMBASSADORS'	Ambassadors would be linked to a specific site with role descriptions.	***
SPOKEN WORD EVENTS	Spoken word/poetry events for young people to give them opportunities for performance around the CWG.	

#### BETTER HEALTH AND WELLBEING

FORGOTTEN 'OLYMPIC GAMES'	As per Paris 1902: Pigeon shooting, van driving etc.	
SPORTING SANDWELL	Each town picks a sport from the CWG which culminates in one celebratory event which brings the towns together.	*
ORAL HISTORIES	Collecting memories and stories from local people. Use the archives as a hook and a prompt. Intergeneration working.	**
OVER 60S SPORTING EVENTS	Looking at breaking world records	
DIVING PROGRAMME	To inspire people relative to the Olympics and next CWG	***
OUR SPORTING HISTORY	Stories of well-known individuals in sport (e.g. Goldbury) from the Borough. To inspire a new generation.	
POOL THEATRE	Immersive theatre game centred around swimming pool. Community choir.	
RIFLE RANGES	Sandwell's historic rifle ranges rebuilt for CWG shooting competitions	

## 5. NEXT STEPS

5.1. Wafer Hadley to work with SMBC on a final version of the Cultural Prospectus for submission to relevant Council committees and portfolio holders.

5.2. In parallel with this process, but without waiting for the Cultural Prospectus launch, SMBC to set up a Cultural Leaders Working Group to further ideas discussed at the meeting, with a focus on fundraising for the Commonwealth Games period.

5.3. Action planning for the Cultural Prospectus to flow from the initial Cultural Leaders Working Group discussions.

5.4. The Cultural Prospectus will have a formal launch after due process at the Council.