

## **NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION**



**DECISION OF:** COUNCILLOR MIKE SOLOMON THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND LEISURE

**WITH ADVICE FROM:** DIRECTOR OF PLACE

**DECISION NO:** 24/25 DP 134

**SUBJECT:** ACCEPTANCE OF THE CULTURAL AUDIT AND ACTION PLAN

**KEY DECISION:** NO

**REASON:** The value of the decision is less than £500,000.

### **BACKGROUND:**

In December 2023 a Cultural Audit and Action Plan was co-commissioned by North Somerset Council and Arts Council England. The plan for North Somerset with recommended actions was developed by a consultant, following consultation with individuals and organisations living and working in North Somerset, with the purpose of underpinning the sector's continued growth from 2024-2028.

Taking into consideration that the cultural ecology is multi-faceted and fragmentary and not all individuals and organisations have full knowledge of existing activities, opportunities and support provision, it was noted that the report was a comprehensive reflection of the sector in North Somerset.

The Executive Member for Culture & Leisure, other Executive Members, Senior Managers, a number of Officers across the council, and staff from Arts Council England have been briefed on the report and accept it as a true reflection of the findings from the consultation. This Decision Notice serves to formally accept these findings in the report.

The next steps, as agreed with the Executive Member and Senior Leadership team, will be to work across a number of council departments to review the consultant's action plan, create SMART objectives and actions; identify areas which are already in train, and areas where existing resources can cover prioritised actions; then to work with key industry partners e.g. National Portfolio Organisations and Arts Council England to try to source additional external support to plug any gaps.

### **DECISION:**

It is requested that the Cultural Audit and Action Plan is approved and a prioritised action plan be taken forward as SMART objectives/actions, including actions for the council and others.

### **REASONS:**

The strategic document may help the council and partners to secure funding from the Arts Council, other funding bodies and other possible supporting partners in the short, medium

and long term. It will also foster collaborations to make more of existing resources and establish partnerships to help deliver the action plan.

### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

As the report has already been discussed with the Executive Member, other Executive Members, and the Senior Leadership team at the Council, and all agreed it is a helpful document which accurately documents the consultation findings, there is no reason not to accept it as a true record.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The report was financed by Arts Council England, with a contribution from the council's Placemaking Reserve budget.

Any future council actions will either be funded by existing budgets, if available, with external funding for gaps to be sought from other funding bodies or by supporting partners.

### **LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications from accepting the report.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Cultural Audit and Action Plan points out that culture connects to and enables sustainable development and recommends that the council could investigate opportunities through the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements.

In relation to events the council is committed to minimising negative impacts on the environment such as reducing single use plastics, encouraging sustainable travel, protecting the physical environment and / or using sustainable resources.

### **CONSULTATION**

The plan with recommended actions was developed in consultation with individuals and organisations living and working in North Somerset. A series of scheduled 1-2-1 consultation sessions were held with 21 individuals identified by Arts Council England and North Somerset Council as key individuals and organisations in the region. Four public consultation sessions were offered: at Clevedon Library, Front Room Weston, The Other Place (a project of Race Equality North Somerset) in Weston and one on Zoom for those unable to attend an in-person sessions, reaching circa 70 people. A set of six individual public consultation sessions were also offered at Portishead Library which were all taken up.

Responses were received from a range of individuals and organisations including illustrators, heritage sites and landscapes, cinemas, creative agencies, events companies, and shops.

Notes were taken at each session, which were then collated into a spreadsheet. Responses from the online audit questionnaire also fed through to a spreadsheet. Analysis of these two datasets informed the development of the Recommended Actions.

The questions for the audit were developed in consultation with Arts Council England, North Somerset Council and key stakeholders including input from Super Culture, Race Equality North Somerset, North Somerset Libraries and the West of England Combined Authority Cultural and Creative Economy Service team. The audit was made publicly available on [www.cultural-audit.com](http://www.cultural-audit.com).

Council Officers across several departments, senior leaders and Executive Members including the Executive Member for Culture and Heritage were briefed on the final report and agreed the next steps for the council.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk	Detail of risk	Inherent risk	Inherent risk treatment	Mitigating / exploiting actions	Residual risk
Council resources are not appropriately allocated.	NSC has limited revenue budget for non-statutory services, such as culture so an understanding of the sector is needed to inform gaps and potential resource allocation.	Yellow	Mitigate	Relevant council services will prioritise and make SMART actions from action plan and allocate resource accordingly. Other supporting organisations will be identified	Green
Council budgetary pressures could reduce scale and range of outcomes for some services.	Development of cultural activities for people with health and wellbeing issues and children and young people may not be implemented.	Yellow	Mitigate	Relevant council service will prioritise and make SMART actions from action plan and allocate resource accordingly. Other supporting organisations will be identified	Green
Limited opportunities to obtain external funds.	Funding applications are more likely to be successful if the council has a no strategic document for culture.	Yellow	Mitigate	The Audit and Action Plan will now form the strategic document to underpin culture funding bids	Green
Reduced impact from Arts Council Priority Place status.	Identification of shared objectives with the Arts Council would be difficult to agree without this shared document,	Red	Mitigate	The shared Audit and Action Plan and Placemaking strategies (where they exist) will now form the strategic documents to	Yellow

	thereby diminishing the impact of Priority Place status.			underpin Priority Place objectives	
Reduced socio-economic benefits of cultural sector development.	Lack of support to the cultural sector could reduce the potential to generate socio-economic benefits locally.		Mitigate	The Audit and Action Plan highlights areas for improvement, across a range of organisations to maximise cultural sector development	
Sector development is insufficient to obtain significant funding in the future.	Loss of opportunity to bid for significant funds if the capacity in the sector is insufficient.		Mitigate	The Audit and Action Plan highlights areas for improvement, across a range of organisations to maximise cultural sector development	

## EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

To reduce barriers to participation from those with protected characteristics, an inclusion advisor was appointed to work alongside the lead consultant. This led to a number of specific adaptations being made throughout the process, including the wording of the questionnaire, the wording of the invitation to public consultation, the venues selected to host consultations and the information made available to participants prior to consultation sessions. The Inclusion Strategy was developed and attached to the report as Appendix C. In addition a budget was set aside to support participation in consultations.

## CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

This project supports all four of the corporate strategic objectives:

1. Our children and young people are cared for, safe, supported, and are given equality of opportunity to thrive
2. Our communities are caring, healthy and safe, where people help each other to live well
3. Our towns and villages are thriving and sustainable places to live, work and visit
4. Our council delivers consistently good services and value for money to support our community

## APPENDICES


Cultural Audit and Action Plan.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed  Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Date: 18 September 2024

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed  Director of Place

Date: 23 August 2024