

Subject: Brighton and Hove: Recovery Plan for Culture
Date of Meeting: 6th January 2021
Report of: Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture
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Ward(s) affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The TECC Committee of 24th September 2020 requested that a report be prepared covering the plans for recovery in the culture and creative sectors, where the pandemic has had greatest impact.
- 1.2 This report provides the P&R Recovery Sub-Committee with an outline of the thematic areas where projects will be developed by both the Council and external stakeholders to support the recovery over the next 24 months from April 2021.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the committee notes that the culture and creative sectors have been badly affected by the Pandemic for over nine months now, and normal activity levels are not expected to return until the second half of 2021.
- 2.2 That the committee notes the key aspects of the Recovery Plan for Culture as laid out in sections 3.4 and 3.5 below, which places the regeneration of livelihoods for thousands of creative workers at centre of a series of projects over 2021 and 2022.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Brighton and Hove is home to one of the leading creative clusters of businesses and freelance workers in the UK. Culture and the creative industries are sectors currently in crisis because their business activities are mainly public facing and therefore have not been able to function normally – or at all – since March 2020. The Council has consistently prioritised cultural and creative organisations every time we have been given discretionary funding from government, but in reality the grants we have been able to provide are small in comparison to the losses faced by businesses and individuals across the city.
- 3.2 The Council was approached by representatives from Event Professionals Independent Committee (EPIC), What's Next Brighton and Hove and the Arts and Creative Industries Commission together as single group, with a proposal to

develop a recovery plan through an intensively consultative process involving creative people from across the city. This group of partners raised £21,000 from Arts Council England and requested £8,000 from the council, which was agreed from existing budgets. They have been the founding team for the Recovery Plan. Council officers have been kept up-to-date with the developing plan and have provided input.

3.3 The objective of the plan is to regenerate culture and the creative industries after COVID, bringing wealth back into the city. The findings of the founding team have been distilled into a Recovery Plan with five thematic strands covering short-term and long-term ambitions.

3.4 The short-term thematic strands are as follows. These will be further developed over the first three months of 2021 and funding will be sought. The delivery timeline will cover 24 months commencing in the summer of 2021.

- The ENGINE ROOM is focused upon addressing entrepreneurship, business growth and creative practice support designed specifically for creative workers living and working across the Greater Brighton area. This strand will build upon and strengthen existing provision, to deliver a best-in-class programme which transforms the capability of the sector to recover and prosper.
- ENLIVEN BRIGHTON intends to employ creative and cultural businesses and practitioners to enliven the city centre, boosting the city's visitor economy and making it a more attractive and rewarding destination. This will take the form of large-scale interventions of national significance by artists. This strand is designed to attract visitors back at different times of the year. In partnership with Brilliant Brighton BID.
- The CREATIVE COMMUNITIES NETWORK is a community-led programme designed to support artistic expression in local areas across the city. Delivered through improvements in local infrastructure alongside training and support with event development, management and programming. Existing best practice from multiple sources will be drawn together to inform this workstream and provide innovative solutions for the different circumstances found across the city.
- SPACE TO GROW will join-up the city's creative spaces for professional artists and not only maximise their use but also identify ways to protect venues that are under pressure for a variety of reasons. Suitable indoor and outdoor space is an essential component of a successful cultural sector so maximising or creating fantastic venues for all forms of audience engagement is an essential part of recovery.

3.5 In addition, a long-term thematic area is as follows: This requires a longer development period when research partners will be identified.

- The CREATIVE WORKER INCOME GUARANTEE is a research project designed to explore whether targeted intervention in the form of an income guarantee can prevent talented individuals from leaving the sector for more financially rewarding opportunities. Eliminating the search for funds could allow workers to be more productive by focusing on wellbeing and creative outputs.

- 3.6 The next stage for the Recovery Plan is to appoint a project management and fundraising resource to work up each thematic area into a series of focused projects. Further consultation will be undertaken and the current working group made up of the organisations described in 3.2 above will expand into a project board operating in association with the Arts and Creative Industries Commission.
- 3.7 It is anticipated that the Plan will move into delivery phase in June 2021, subject to attracting funding from multiple sources.

Short Term Government Support Schemes

- 3.8 Organisations and individuals in Brighton and Hove managed to secure over £10 million since March 2020 from the government's Cultural Recovery Funds (CRF) distributed by ACE. This has been firstly from emergency funds announced in March 2020 followed by four recovery funding rounds, combined with the Grassroots Music Venues Scheme and capital for delayed building projects. This money has helped to support many organisations over the Autumn and Winter of 2020/21.
- 3.9 Some organisations were not successful with their CRF applications and this, combined with not being able to operate due to social distancing restrictions, has caused considerable financial distress. Several small music venues have been brought to the verge of bankruptcy. The Council has funded a training course in January 2021 to upskill cultural organisations to apply for what is expected to be the final round of CRF from the Arts Council, which has just been announced.
- 3.10 The Council also has supported the Music Venues Trust #SaveOurvenues campaign through promoting links to crowd funding on the highly followed VisitBrighton social media channels. In addition, all cultural venues have been included where possible in the Lockdown and Tier 2 grants provided to the city council by the government.
- 3.11 The Government's furlough scheme continues to be heavily used by venues where sustainable operation is not possible. This includes the city's theatres, some cinemas and in supply chain organisations. However, this scheme is expected to change again in January 2021 and increased employer contributions maybe required.
- 3.12 The city council opened the second lockdown grants scheme in November and all cultural organisations who are unable to operate because of the pandemic but have fixed overheads to cover, can apply for a discretionary grant of £2,000 if they don't have business premises. Those with premises who normally pay business rates are eligible for a grant of up to £3,000. There are also now Tier 2 business grants, but all of these sums are small in comparison to the losses being carried by many businesses and the Council is seeking to top-up grants using discretionary funds where government guidance allows for this.

Resilience in the Cultural Sector

- 3.13 Some of the city's key organisations have been able to continue with socially distanced performances or have presented work online since June. Whilst this

presents a small proportion of the normal programme from the culture and events sectors, these are examples of determination to provide opportunities to engage with culture during a time of insolation for many residents.

- 3.14 Brighton Dome collaborated with grassroots venues in the city to produce a series of live music events, raising £13,000 for these small businesses. In addition, since June they have supported 18 digital free events, attracting an online audience of 17,652 people. Their 50 pay-per-view events have attracted over 2,000 ticket buyers.
- 3.15 Brighton Fringe produced an Autumn season which ran from 1st to 31st October. They sold 12,680 tickets to over 700 performances which were a mixture of online and live events.
- 3.16 Artists Open Houses Winter season took place online from 21st November to 31st December. Houses and studios were open for socially distanced visits from 5th to 13th December. Over 500 artists were able to use this traditional Christmas event to sell their work online and to invite customers into their studio spaces under COVID secure conditions.

Looking Ahead

- 3.17 In November the TECC Committee approved the outdoor events programme for 2021/22 which is exceptionally busy. Much of this is reliant on the mass vaccination programme advancing to the stage where it is legally possible to hold large public gatherings from May 2021.
- 3.18 The city's May Festival programme is currently planning to go ahead, with organisations planning for several scenarios. At worst, socially distanced performances will take place at indoor and outdoor venues. At best, the vaccination programme will have progressed to the point where venues can approach normal capacity, with some caveats in place.
- 3.19 It is anticipated that the city's visitor economy and its cultural events will benefit significantly from the UK staycation market over the second half of 2021 and into 2022.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Given the significance of the cultural and creative sectors to the city, it is appropriate for the city council to collaborate with external stakeholders on the development and delivery of a recovery plan. Where required, we will lead this work to support credibility and strategic focus within the five thematic areas, as well as undertaking additional recovery actions through the Arts and Creative Industries Commission.
- 4.2 Recovery planning and delivery will be widespread in 2021, as many parts of the UK try to come back from the economic and social damage done in 2020. The Council is working with stakeholders to progress rapidly with the cultural recovery plan to ensure we are ready to attract people and funding into Brighton and Hove as opportunities arise.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Recovery Plan process has been led by the external founding team who, through their respective organisations, represent the views of large numbers of businesses and creative workers in the city. The consultation process they undertook, which was funded by ACE and the city council, led to the five thematic areas outlined in points 3.4 and 3.5 above. The process was made up of 17 open-invitation workshops, led by carefully recruited facilitators, which took place in September 2020.
- 5.2 Drafts of the Recovery Plan have been circulated for feedback to those who took part in the workshops. In addition, the founding team have continued to consult with people leading cultural organisations in the city who have a major stake in recovery.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The development of a recovery plan for culture is an important step forward for the city. With the mass vaccination programme underway across the UK, we can plan with some degree of certainty that we will move beyond the current crisis in the second half of 2021. Confidence will be rebuilt in residents and visitors that performances are safe and that cultural celebrations are possible, indeed essential. New skills are required in the sector to attract finance, build collaborations and to generate new opportunities.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. It is assumed that any actions arising from the recovery plan which do have cost implications for the council will be brought back to committee for consideration

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Jessica Laing Date: 18/12/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report which is for noting.

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland Date: 09/12/20

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The group of partners responsible for undertaking the consultation process for the recovery plan took a proactive approach to ensuring diversity in the range of views included. Consultation facilitators with diverse backgrounds were recruited, applications for all paid roles in the process were accepted in a variety of formats. Each open-invitation consultation session had BSL interpreters available as well as Otterai transcription services. Sessions were recorded and had independent note takers to ensure equal access to discussion and follow-up.

- 7.4 As the thematic areas of the recovery plan are developed, equalities impact assessments will be carried out. This is a normal occurrence for projects attracting public sector funding from major UK bodies.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 The shock sustained by the culture and creative sectors can lead to positive outcomes if opportunities are seized for changes to operating and business models. This will include pursuing zero waste options at venues and the effective use of technologies to reduce travel for artists and audiences. The Recovery Plan will consider greater sustainability in how the sectors come back from COVID and how audiences or participants will choose to engage with cultural activity in future.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 None.

Any Other Significant Implications: None

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.5 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.6 The recovery plan will fully assess the risks and opportunities for the city as part of the next stage of development.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 Public Health, combined with the wellbeing and prosperity of the city's residents, is at the heart of the Recovery Plan. The plan focuses on building a strong economy in the city, sustaining employment and creating opportunities for community cohesion, as well as celebrating creative brilliance. All of the events, training, and gatherings associated with the plan will be in accordance with both government and public health guidance.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 In 2019 a study from the University of Sussex revealed that the creative and cultural industries in Greater Brighton generated more than £1.5 billion in annual turnover. This figure increased by 22% in the five years to 2019. The number of people working for creative businesses has increased by almost 20% in five years, to more than 16,000 employees at over 6,100 companies. Over half those are based in the city of Brighton & Hove. It is of critical importance that the cultural and creative sectors are supported in the short term through an effective plan for recovery.

- 7.9 The Council is focusing in the short term on enabling income generation through a supportive and flexible approach to use of Council land for outdoor events in 2021, by funding upcoming training and by distributing government funding quickly to those who need it. The Recovery Plan sits alongside those direct actions and will address what is needed to improve knowledge, build strong businesses, and broaden to positive impact of participation in culture to communities badly affected by the pandemic.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Draft Document: Brighton and Hove: The Recovery Plan for Culture

Background Documents

1. none

