

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee

Agenda Item 55

**Subject:** ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan Update

**Date of meeting:** 12<sup>th</sup> January 2023

**Report of:** Donna Chisholm

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**For general release**

### **1. Purpose of the report and policy context**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on activities and next steps in relation to the ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan.
- 1.2 In 2020, given the significant impact the pandemic was having on the creative community, a plan for cultural recovery was led and produced by that community with input and support from the council. The plan was called the ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan and this report summarises key outcomes from this project.
- 1.3 This report also outlines next steps as the plan comes to an end in December 2022.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee notes the report.

### **3. Context and background information**

- 3.1 Brighton and Hove is home to one of the leading creative clusters of businesses and freelance workers in the UK.
- 3.2 In June 2020 the Council was approached by representatives from Event Professionals Independent Committee (EPIC), What Next Brighton and Hove and the Arts and Creative Industries Commission together as a single group, with a proposal to develop a recovery plan through an intensive consultative process involving over 100 creative workers from across the city.
- 3.3 As a result of the consultation the ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan was produced with several key aims and five thematic strands. The key aims were to create paid work and professional opportunities for creative workers in the city, to develop a more inclusive cultural offer and to encourage partnership working to strengthen the creative sector in the long term.

- 3.4 The five thematic strands included:
- 3.4.1 The **Engine Room** focused upon addressing the business capability of the cultural sector.
  - 3.4.2 **Enliven Brighton** intended to employ creative and cultural businesses and practitioners to enliven the city centre.
  - 3.4.3 The **Creative Communities Network** was designed to support arts in local areas in the city particularly where there may be barriers to engagement.
  - 3.4.4 **Space To Grow** focuses on the role of cultural spaces in the city and the need to understand demand for these spaces, and assess how these spaces could be protected.
  - 3.4.5 **Creative Worker Income Guarantee** - a research project designed to explore whether targeted intervention in the form of an income guarantee can prevent talented individuals from leaving the sector
- 3.5 The plan was produced in December 2020 and covered a two year period until December 2022.

### **The Delivery of the Plan**

- 3.6 A Project Manager was responsible for the management of the projects under each strand, and there was a Governance and Working Group structure that enabled ideas generation through to project accountability. Where working groups sought delivery partners for projects these were advertised and commissioned in line with the Council procurement processes.
- 3.7 Leaders of cultural organisations and freelance creatives, worked alongside officers from the council and other partners to design and deliver project activity. This shared responsibility between the council and sector and other partners was recognized as a key strength in the interim evaluation of the project.
- 3.8 The ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan was ambitious, and final activity within each thematic strand was influenced by a number of factors, including national lockdowns and the available funding sources that could align to need and opportunity.
- 3.9 Each thematic strand has delivered activity, this activity is wide ranging and included walking tours, a community festival, a cultural leadership support programme, temporary art installations in the city, bespoke research, online training, improvements to the Culture in Our City website. The full evaluation report highlights activity in more detail and is attached as an addendum.
- 3.10 Interim evaluation of activity up to June 2022, highlights that over 50 organisations had been involved in the project, employing 324 artists and

creative workers - most of them freelancers. The plan raised £550,000 to support projects around the city, including 25 new commissions and 24 events, welcoming audiences of more than 12,000

- 3.11 The evaluation recognized a characteristic and key success factor was the collaborative approach and the capacity to build on the assets within the cultural community to create activity. The evaluation provides a positive reflection of the ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan, and outlines areas for development as well. These are outlined in the Evaluation Summary and Full Report attached as addendums.
- 3.12 The plan has created a valuable collaborative platform for the council to work with the cultural sector, providing access to networks and knowledge and the ability to work in partnership on city wide challenges. This work has also gained national recognition with participants of the Governance and Working Groups being invited to discuss the model at national events and in industry press.
- 3.13 Working groups responded quickly to funding opportunities to support collective cultural recovery with wider social and economic impact such as the Welcome Back fund. Partnership applications to Arts Council England and others were also successful, this model of joint fundraising will be important in the future given the limited funding available across all sectors.
- 3.14 There is still live activity being led by the Governance and Working Groups, this includes research for Space to Grow examining the needs around cultural space in the city, and research on the Creative Worker Income Guarantee scheme. In addition there is a Working Group leading the re-allocation of the World Re-imagined budget that will meet original aims and align to local interest.

### **January 2023 and Beyond**

- 3.15 The Governance group has taken on board the recommendations made in the report and it is now currently finalizing a new structure to continue areas of work from the ABCD Plan with long term themes and develop new strands of activity for 2023 and beyond. The key purpose of the new structure will be 'to maximise the power of collaboration to achieve strategic ambitions and create more equitable opportunities across the creative & cultural sector in Brighton & Hove'.
- 3.16 The key features of the new structure will be a smaller, diverse Governance Group. The Governance Group will develop a pool of allies from across all sectors in the City to collaborate with and learn from. Those involved in the new structure will contribute to wider areas of policy development and strategic planning in the city where culture can play a positive role or could be impacted.

## **Establishing a New Direction**

- 3.17 In June 2022 an open meeting was hosted by the ABCD Plan with the cultural sector with 50 attendees, the day was used to help understand what priorities should be focused on for the last period of the ABCD Plan project and beyond. There were five areas prioritized by attendees these were: Economic & Social Value of Culture, Creative & Cultural Space, Inclusion & Anti-racism, Young People and Cultural Leadership & Decision Making.
- 3.18 It will be the role of the next governance group to test these priorities with a wider group of stakeholders and design a plan to support delivery. Given that cultural organizations and freelancers are still facing challenging conditions, having had little time to recover before facing a cost of living crisis, there may be further priorities that also support the capability of the sector to evolve and prosper in uncertain times.
- 3.19 Whilst the initiative was sector-led the council has played a key role, from leading, facilitating and practically supporting the project management of the ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan.
- 3.20 The University of Sussex has committed to recruiting a part-time Project Manager to support a new structure, the council and Brighton Dome and Festival will contribute towards the cost of this role. In addition, several arts organisations who receive regular funding from Arts Council England will also contribute funds towards supporting ongoing freelancer engagement in a new structure.
- 3.21 The council will have an officer representation on the new Governance Group to support, inform and create alignment between the new body and wider city objectives.

## **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

Not applicable.

## **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan was instigated by the cultural sector and it involved consultation and collaboration with over 150 members of the affected community. Events were designed to be inclusive with access and representation built within the design. The governance team for the new structure will be responsible for ensuring ongoing involvement from the cultural community.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1.1 Significant collaborative cultural recovery activity took place in the city thanks to the formation and delivery of the ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan. Whilst Covid delivered unwelcome circumstances to all those working in culture, members of the creative community have laid the foundations for a more collaborative and agile way of working in the future. Council officers

will continue to work closely with the new collaborative platform to meet city ambitions.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report which is for noting

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted (21/12/22):

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications from this report which is for noting.

Name of lawyer consulted: Joanne Dunyaglo Date consulted (20/12/22)

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 The projects within the ABCD Cultural Recovery plan were delivered to ensure equal opportunities to all activities and involvement in developing the plan.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 This report is for noting and there are no sustainability implications within it.

## **11. Other Implications**

### **Social Value and procurement implications**

- 11.1 The ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan was an example of collaboration between the public, private, cultural and third sector.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **1. Appendices**

1. ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan Evaluation Report Executive Summary
2. ABCD Cultural Recovery Plan Evaluation Report, up to June 2022

