
Culture and Creative Industries Strategy Update

Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 22 August 2024

Lead director: Mike Dalzell



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report updates the current position on the draft strategy and notes how it links to other major initiatives and emerging government policy. It is nearing completion with regards to priority themes and objectives but remains a work in progress with some sections that still need to be fleshed out in more detail. So comments from Scrutiny members are particularly welcome. Work has only just started on the design of a document, imagery, infographics etc so the attached represents the current version of the draft text.
- 1.2 The intention is that the strategy be published in the autumn, perhaps launched via the Leicester Business Festival. It would be an interactive PDF document on the council website and elsewhere, with live links to other key documents and a series of video clips etc as well as having a small print run.

2. Overview

- 2.1 The work has been ongoing for some time but was paused early in 2024 while the council took stock of our own position and decided how to progress elements such as the investment at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery, the future plans for Haymarket and the use of UKSPF in support of the strategy. These are all now much clearer.
- 2.2 The work has been overseen and funded by a partnership involving the Arts Council England (contributing £20k) and both city universities (contributing £5k each) alongside the council (£20k). Initial research and engagement work was led by consultancy Fifth Sector.

3. Report

- 3.1 The creative industries have been growing at more than twice the rate of the economy for many years and that their contribution to the UK economy (now more than £125bn) outstrips the combined value of the life sciences, aerospace and automotive sectors. The new government has an appetite to reform our skills system (a theme picked up in the draft strategy) and to prioritise creative and vocational subjects in the national curriculum.
- 3.2 Historically the significance of the creative industries to the UK economy has tended to be underplayed by central government, particularly the Treasury. However the Spring 2023 budget for the first time identified Creative Industries as

one of five 'high growth' sectors. There is an increasing consensus that facilitating investment and developing appropriate skills programmes is needed to maintain the UK's global advantage in music, arts, advertising, literature and other parts of the wider digital economy (such as gaming).

- 3.3 More locally, various versions of economic strategy over the years have also tended to downplay the importance of the creative economy. This is something that should be reviewed in the next iteration of such strategies for growth and the launch of this Cultural and Creative Industries strategy will lend weight and help to evidence why that should happen.
- 3.4 The city council over the last decade has invested at scale to improve our own cultural offer at Jewry Wall, Leicester Museum and Art Gallery, KRIII Visitor Centre, Phoenix, Curve, via the Heritage Panels and Story of Leicester initiatives and via new festivals and events such as Bring the Paint And Light Up Leicester.. The council has also actively grown our creative economy offer, especially via investment in workspace (Makers Yard, LCB, Pilot House, DOCKs etc) and in business support programmes and promotional campaigns. This investment is considered a key lever to make our local economy more productive, create better paid employment opportunities and maximise graduate retention and talent attraction. All the above is referenced in the strategy.

8 Big Ideas

- 3.5 The strategy is for the city and the broad group of stakeholders who can help drive investment and activity. It isn't a 'council' strategy as such, though clearly we have a key role in driving it. Following the initial engagement and research exercise, a review concluded we could simplify and focus on a small number of key priorities. These crystallized as 8 Big Ideas and are summarised in the attached Appendix One. A focus on tackling inequalities in engagement, participation, governance, leadership and workforce is embedded throughout the draft text which is attached as Appendix Two.
- 3.6 At the heart of it is a recognition that whilst we are already a significant creative economy we have great scope to grow. A key objective is to grow the creative workforce by 25% over the next five years from 15,600 to 20,000.
- 3.7 The strategy is not an overly detailed work programme but concentrates on some key projects and measurable outcomes. Different implementation groups will be needed to drive the various themes and to review progress across the life of the strategy. That detail will be worked up to sit alongside the final version but the shape of much of it is already clear. The council itself will be key to driving several of the themes.
- 3.8 The strategy is also designed to lever resources and influence policy in other programmes. The Inclusive Heritage theme of the strategy sets out our ambitions for the National Heritage Lottery Fund 'Place' programme. The work on Creative Clusters will lay the ground for a substantial programme bid to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), now expected in spring 2025. Support for creative industry networks, initiated through the current UKSPF programme, will hopefully be strengthened by whatever replaces it and be a strand of future

economic growth policy. Work on the talent and skills pipeline theme will help to determine priorities for future skills programmes that can be tailored towards the creative sector via funding that is highly likely to be devolved. A new Arts Council funded Creative People and Place's programme opens in September 2024 with an opportunity for a consortium bid up to £3m.

3.9 More broadly, the new government's interest in the power of arts and drama and in supporting technical and vocational skills creates scope for the local educational and skills supply networks to reimagine course curriculums and how programmes are offered. DMU has already taken an initiative to fund research looking at the gaps between local learning supply and the needs of the cultural and creative economy. Historically Leicester has been a primary producer of talent for the cultural economy and the strategy has ambition to recapture that position and profile.

3.10 The government's plans to tackle economic inactivity herald a shift to a model championing closer integration of health services with those tackling worklessness. There is opportunity for the city to develop programmes building on the use of culture and arts experiences to improve life chances and the employability of key groups including offenders, refugees, the long term sick, SEND and care leavers.

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

tbc

5.2 Legal implications

tbc

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

tbc

5.4 Equalities Implications

tbc

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Not applicable

6. Background information and other papers:

Not applicable

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix One: Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy - Summary 8 Big Ideas

Appendix Two : Cultural and Creative Industries Strategy Draft text

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

No

10. If a key decision please explain reason

Not applicable.