



To: Executive Councillor for Arts and Recreation  
Report by: Head of Arts & Recreation  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 13/1/2011  
Wards affected: All Wards

## **CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL'S DRAFT ARTS STRATEGY 2011 - 2014 Key Decision**

### **1. Executive summary**

1.1 This new Arts Strategy provides a vision for the Council's role within city arts activity and indicates priorities for managing its engagement with the arts over the next three years. The strategy clarifies why the Council should support and use the arts as a tool for delivering on its objectives and has identified four key priorities:

- 1) Access for all to art
- 2) Engage & enable local communities
- 3) Enhance the city's reputation & identity
- 4) Protect the environment

1.2 The strategy outlines how the Council's influence extends beyond its own direct provision through to other strategic partners and stakeholders who are collectively responsible for defining the arts for Cambridge referred to as "the Ripple Effect". It has identified three key methods or "ripples" for working in the arts to achieve its vision:

- 1) Direct Provision
- 2) Partnership Working
- 3) Advocacy & Development

1.3 An Action Plan at the end of the report shows how the Council will use these three ripples or ways of working to deliver on its four arts priorities.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

2.1 To approve the draft Arts Strategy for public consultation from January – March 2011 after which time a final draft will be produced for scrutiny and approval.

### **3. Background**

3.1 A formal strategic direction for the Council's arts engagement has been absent since 2007 when the former Arts Plan (2002 – 2007) expired and this has been felt across the arts community. This new strategy provides a revitalised approach to the arts, which confirms the Council's commitment to engaging with the arts within the parameters of a challenging local, economic and social context.

3.2 The strategy does not seek to provide a direction for the arts for the whole city but to outline and steer the Council's role within that city as a significant and influential stakeholder.

3.3. The strategy identifies the strengths of the city's arts provision which include a broad range of high quality arts provision, a highly valued programme of open access community activity and significant support to third sector providers through grant aid and advocacy. However, it acknowledges that the Council's engagement with the arts to date has largely been through some significant direct provision and partnerships with many historic, rather than strategic, partners and grantees. It identifies a need for a clear vision for the arts, a developed approach to partnership working and a better understanding of local need to develop the potential for the arts to deliver on its priorities.

3.3 The strategy's priorities align directly with the proposed objectives for the new Arts & Recreation Portfolio Plan.

3.4 In January 2010, the Council launched a period of research & consultation to inform this new strategy. This included:

- A basic audit of city arts provision undertaken by officers
- Benchmarking with other cities with regard to arts venue & event provision
- Examining the results of the 2007 MRUK Residents' Survey & recent market research at Council arts events
- Researching other relevant local & regional strategies & research reports
- Internal consultation with Council colleagues
- External consultation with major strategic stakeholders, grantees and arts providers including local venues, Cambridge University, Anglia Ruskin University, Arts Council England, and the Council's run arts practitioner network the Cambridge Arts network (CAN)
- Limited research into public opinion through a questionnaire & focus groups via the Judge Business School

## **4. Implications**

### **4.1 Financial**

The Strategy seeks to identify how the Council's existing resources can be utilised more effectively to achieve its aims.

### **4.2 Staffing**

The Strategy reflects upon recent changes to corporate and section structure and seeks to encourage a "one Council" approach to the delivery of priorities.

### **4.3 Equal Opportunities**

The priorities specifically identify a commitment to ensuring and promoting equality of opportunity in accessing the arts. A full EQIA of the Strategy will be undertaken during the period of public consultation in Jan – Mar 2011.

### **4.4 Environmental Implications**

The priorities specifically provides a revitalised commitment to using the arts as a tool for promoting environmental sustainability and outlines ways to minimise the carbon consequences of arts activity.

### **4.5. Future strategies & policies**

The Strategy and its priorities will inform policies and plans with regard to delivery of its activities with relevance to the arts including a proposed review of Leisure Grants in 2011.

There is a need to share the new draft Strategy with external stakeholders as soon as possible.

## **5. Background papers**

These are listed as footnotes in the strategy

## **6. Appendices**

Cambridge City Council's Draft Arts Strategy 2011-2014

## **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name: Elaine Midgley, Arts Development Manager  
Author's Phone Number: 01223 - 458633  
Author's Email: [Elaine.midgley@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Elaine.midgley@cambridge.gov.uk)