

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE:	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE:	15 April 2010
DIRECTOR:	Annette Bruton
TITLE OF REPORT:	Vibrant Aberdeen: The Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen (2010-2015)
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/10/031

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report brings before the Committee the proposed final draft of 'Vibrant Aberdeen'- The Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen (2010-2015). It seeks the committee's endorsement of the strategy and approval to develop an Aberdeen City Council action plan.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- i. Endorses the final draft of 'Vibrant Aberdeen' – The Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen (2010-2015).
- ii. Provides approval to develop an Aberdeen City Council action plan based on the Cultural Strategy and instructs officers to bring this to the appropriate committee for consideration.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

'Vibrant Aberdeen' will be delivered within budgets already identified and is based on the assumption that there are no additional funds available from the Council. The various external funding opportunities available will be explored on an ongoing basis.

A key theme within the Strategy is about utilising available resources to maximise additional investment.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The report links to outcome 13 in the Single Outcome agreement - We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity. The Strategy will serve to enhance the City's strong cultural tradition and further develop cultural life and tourism for the benefit of practitioners, residents and visitors.

The report also relates to all the key aims set out in the Arts, Heritage and Sport strand of the Community Plan.

- Culture will become part of everyday life for citizens of all ages and visitors to our City.
- To support cultural activities which have a positive impact on the social, economic and cultural development of the City.
- To foster a strong, diverse and independent creative community.
- To encourage access to and participation in the City's cultural life.
- To develop productive and sustainable City partnerships within and beyond the cultural sector
- To strengthen support for and ownership of the City's distinctive Cultural character.

'Vibrant Aberdeen' has been designed to help deliver all the Cultural objectives set out in Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking:

- Support arts venues to bring the best and most innovative performances to the City
- Recognise the contribution of Sport, Culture and Arts to promoting the area as a tourist destination
- Promote the City as a tourist destination
- Recognise the role of Sport and Arts in tackling anti-social behaviour

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no additional Legal, Resource, Personnel, Property, Equipment, Environmental or Health and Safety implications at this stage.

6. REPORT

6.1 'Vibrant Aberdeen' Background

'Vibrant Aberdeen' has been developed by the Cultural Forum as a partnership document which provides a cultural vision and strategic framework for the entire City.

In these terms, there was an identified requirement for the development of a collective strategy, based on research and extensive consultation which presented an honest analysis of the city's current cultural health. From this, objectives for the future could be established to create a framework identifying specific cultural forum actions and also providing a structure from which cultural organisations and individuals can develop their own respective action plans.

The development of 'Vibrant Aberdeen' initially began through a range of strategy workshops including a session specifically for elected members. These sessions provided a base level of information which allowed for the development of a basic draft.

This draft was further developed through the formation of a strategy sub-group comprising nominated members of the cultural forum. Following a final

workshop session, a consultation draft was completed and endorsed for public consultation by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on the 8th of October 2009.

6.2 Public Consultation Process

The public consultation began immediately following the Committee's decision to endorse the consultation draft and concluded on January 31st 2010.

The consultation took various forms, including public surveys, question and answer sessions and individual feedback meetings and provided the highest and most detailed level of engagement and feedback the City has delivered in relation to the issue of cultural development.

Over 320 members of the public provided feedback through on-line survey's while question and answer sessions were well attended including a session delivered in partnership with Transition Extreme and Creative Cultures Scotland which attracted an audience of over 50 representatives from the cultural sector who currently sit outwith the Cultural Forum.

In addition to this, Creative Cultures Scotland, as a partner within the Cultural Forum, also utilised social networking tools such as Twitter and Facebook to receive extensive feedback on the consultation draft.

Along with consulting with residents of the City, the consultation draft was also presented to key national cultural partners. This resulted in extensive feedback from senior officials within the Scottish Government, Visit Scotland and Museums and Galleries Scotland.

6.3 Development of Final Draft

Following the conclusion of the consultation period all the feedback received was collated and analysed. The results from the consultation was generally positive towards the consultation draft with responses both constructive and in context. In particular there was a positive response for the adoption of a partnership model to create a strategy and for setting an ambitious vision for the future of culture in the city.

The ethos in developing 'Vibrant Aberdeen' has been to create a document which is representative of both the cultural sector and residents in the city and fully incorporates the results of the public consultation into the final draft.

In particular, feedback indicated that there was difficulty fully understanding the consultation draft due to its length, layout and reference to corporate terms such as the Single Outcome Agreement. Other main areas highlighted included the number of objectives and the need to gain a clearer understanding of the role of the Cultural Forum within the delivery of 'Vibrant Aberdeen'.

6.4 Final Draft

The Executive Summary of the final draft of 'Vibrant Aberdeen', contained at Appendix One, is the text format that it is proposed for public presentation of the Strategy on the basis that it provides a clear and concise summary which is easily accessible for all.

Pending Committee endorsement, the final graphic design for the document will be developed in line with the design used in the consultation draft which was very well received. Additionally the final design will be made available in various formats which ensure the document meets various presentation guidelines and is accessible for all.

It is proposed that the detailed format document of 'Vibrant Aberdeen' will be more commonly utilised within the cultural sector of the city, for engagement with local, national and international partners and within the Cultural Forum.

This latter, full strategy document has been made available in the Member's Library.

6.4.1 Final Draft: Analysis

As previously detailed, 'Vibrant Aberdeen' has been developed from extensive research and consultation. This has been collated to present an analysis of the City's cultural strengths and weaknesses along with the opportunities and threats in regards to future development.

This section of the final draft provides an objective appraisal of the City's cultural framework, which is derived from a necessary balance between research based evidence and the feedback from the cultural sector and residents of the City.

6.4.2 Final Draft: Aberdeen's Vision

The final draft presents a vision of Aberdeen becoming a 'vibrant, creative and ambitious city'. This has been developed from the draft vision of Aberdeen becoming a 'vibrant, cosmopolitan and internationally acclaimed creative city'.

The consultation demonstrated a consensus of opinion which suggested the vision outlined in the draft document was too long, that the city was already cosmopolitan in its demographics and that achieving an internationally acclaimed cultural status was not realistic in the proposed time-line of the document.

The vision is, nonetheless, both ambitious and truly reflective of the City and its clear will to become more vibrant, to promote creativity and to increase its level of cultural ambition.

6.4.3 Final Draft: Objectives

The final draft presents the five overarching objectives of 'Vibrant Aberdeen'. These objectives have been refined from the nine which were contained in the consultation draft however remain representative of the key cultural requirements that were identified during the development of 'Vibrant Aberdeen'.

The five objectives are to:

- Establish a cohesive cultural sector.
- Increase community engagement in cultural activity.
- Improve the city's cultural profile.
- Increase investment in culture.
- Effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of culture.

Within 'Vibrant Aberdeen' each objective is complimented by the inclusion of the identified requirements to provide clarity on the rationale behind each objective.

6.4.4 Final Draft: Cultural Forum Actions

Following the results of the public consultation specific Cultural Forum actions have been included in the final draft. These actions not only provide specific tasks but increase the level of clarity on the potential role and functions of the Cultural Forum within the 'Vibrant Aberdeen' framework.

The Cultural Forum Actions are:

- Develop and expand the role and functions of the Cultural Forum.
- Deliver extensive research into cultural participation in Aberdeen.
- Lead potential bid for UK City of Culture 2017
- Commission research into external investment in Culture.
- Record and monitor the impact of 'Vibrant Aberdeen'.

6.4.5 Final Draft: Individual Action Plans

As 'Vibrant Aberdeen' is a partnership document, it does not provide an action plan for each partner. Instead it provides a framework for the development of individual action plans. The strategy has been consciously been created in a way which will allow all partner organisations within the Forum to create individual action plans which can incorporate existing plans.

It is proposed that, should the strategy be endorsed by the Committee, that approval for the development of an Aberdeen City Council action plan around the 'Vibrant Aberdeen' framework be provided.

6.4.6 Final Draft: Table

Presented within 'Vibrant Aberdeen' is a table which details the objectives, requirements, cultural forum actions, the role of individual action plans and the desired outcomes. This table was developed to provide a clear and concise picture of 'Vibrant Aberdeen' which is both accessible and easy to understand. This follows on from public feedback that with the consultation draft there was often difficulty clearly understanding each aspect of the strategy.

6.5 Next Steps

Assuming that the Committee endorses the Strategy and subsequently approves the creation of an Aberdeen City Council action plan, this work will be incorporated within the Service and Team Plans for the coming year, progress against which, will be reported to the future Committee meetings as appropriate

Concurrent with this, the Cultural Forum will begin planning the implementation of its specific actions, initially involving developing a time-line for delivering each action and identifying the role of partners.

Monitoring of these actions will be incorporated within the remit of the Forum and reported on an annual basis to Committee, along with any updates or issues which require Committee approval on an on-going basis.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Education, Culture and Sport Committee – 27 August 2009 – Cultural Strategy Update.

Education, Culture and Sport Committee – 8 October 2010 – Vibrant Aberdeen: Draft Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen City 2010-2015