

Report to the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire Joint Committee

Date: 15 January 2009

Report of: Simon Eden, Winchester City Council, Lead Chief Executive,
Quality Places Delivery Panel

Subject: PUSH Draft Cultural Strategy

SUMMARY

One of the first pieces of work commissioned by the Quality Places Delivery Panel was a 'Cultural Strategy' – a review of the cultural offer across the sub-region to consider strengths and weaknesses. This Strategy, which was based on both desk research and a broad range of interviews, is intended to offer a basis for business planning by the Panel, to identify where collective intervention by the PUSH authorities can add value to existing cultural provision, and suggest where PUSH should promote new opportunities for culture across the sub-region.

This report outlines the key themes identified by the Cultural Strategy and seeks the agreement of the Joint Committee to those themes providing a basis for the next iteration of the Quality Places chapter of the business plan, and to assist identifying opportunities for the South Hampshire MAA to support cultural improvement.

RECOMMENDATION

The Joint Committee is asked to agree to the seven themes identified in this report, namely:-

- *Developing Excellence*
- *Promoting Access for All*
- *Promoting Participation for All*
- *Advocacy*
- *Creating Quality Places*
- *Supporting the Creative and Cultural Economy*
- *Supporting the Visitor Economy*

as a basis for PUSH's future work to improve the cultural offer across the sub-region.

INTRODUCTION

1. In June 2008 the PUSH Quality Places Delivery Panel (QPDP) commissioned Agenda UK - a consultancy with a track record of work on culture and growth areas - to prepare a Cultural Strategy for the sub-region. The aim was to provide a framework for Business Planning and future work by the Delivery Panel.
2. "Culture" was defined broadly (and following the DCMS definition) to include performing and visual arts, libraries and literature, museums and archives, built and natural heritage, sports, recreation and play, media, film and television, architecture and design, tourism and visitor attractions, and – importantly for PUSH – creative and cultural industries. The consultancy study, and subsequent debate by the Delivery Panel, have focused on those aspects of that broad range of activity which we consider will contribute most to making South Hampshire a 'quality place' to live or work in and to visit – whether building on strengths, addressing weaknesses or realising opportunities.
3. There are nationally recognised examples of culture leading regeneration, whether that be Gateshead or Liverpool in the UK, or Bilbao further afield. The PUSH sub-region differs in that it already has a reasonably robust economy and strong communities – albeit that the area underperforms by comparison with the wider South East and includes areas of economic and social deprivation which need to be addressed. Nevertheless, the lesson from many areas of the world is that culture, in all its forms, must be at the heart of truly sustainable communities.
4. The Consultants built on priority areas already identified by the QPDP and set out in the current PUSH Business Plan, and interviewed over 40 individuals across the sub-region – ranging from local authority Leaders and officers through representatives of Government Agencies (eg. Arts Council, Sport England) to cultural, leisure and recreation organisations or Universities (eg. Hampshire Cricket Club, University of Portsmouth).
5. A central principle the Consultants were asked to adopt was that of subsidiarity: their focus should be on identifying where joint work by partners and other interested parties across the PUSH sub-region could add value to the broad range of high quality activity already undertaken at a local level.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION ON CULTURE

The study recognised that the PUSH cultural offer is already strong, with facilities of national or international repute, and local authorities have sought to invest in a range of cultural activities. The Cultural Strategy discussed by the Delivery Panel sees this strength as a basis for improvement designed to embed culture at the heart of sustainable communities across South Hampshire, and to further enhance the sub-region's national and international identity and repute. The Strategy suggests a vision in which the Partnership aims:

“To put culture at the heart of South Hampshire, which will be

recognised as a national and international beacon for and capital of all forms of cultural activity, to the benefit of residents, visitors and the local economy”

6. Drawing on the work of the Consultants, the Delivery Panel have identified seven broad cultural themes for PUSH to pursue:

- ***Developing Excellence*** – a joint commitment by local authorities and other key partners to supporting and developing the sub-region’s centres of cultural excellence, including:
 - World class cultural offer (notably the sporting facilities at the Rose Bowl, Portsmouth/Gosport as Home of the Royal Navy and Southampton’s emerging Cultural Quarter)
 - Nationally/regionally significant cultural offer (for example The Point as a centre for dance and performance, Southampton and Portsmouth Football Clubs or The Mayflower Theatre)
 - Locally significant facilities and activities (such local arts centres or sports facilities serving part or all of the PUSH community)

Under this theme, PUSH should offer its support to a variety of facilities and activities, which would in turn attract support from funding bodies. It provides a framework for PUSH authorities to focus on supporting key facilities, or seeking to fill gaps in provision.

- ***Promoting Access for All*** – ensuring all facilities are accessible to all sections of the community, and that the community is aware of the wide cultural offer.

A key priority for PUSH is ensure equality of opportunity for all our diverse communities, and this and the following theme on participation are intended to recognise the role culture can play in improving social and physical well-being.

Work already begun on a ‘cultural audit’ offers the basis for a web-based information service, which should be part of a broader collective approach to providing information and enhancing access to facilities and activities for all sectors of the community.

- ***Promoting Participation for All*** – encouraging participation in all forms of cultural activity. The ‘Find your talent’ pilot supported by PUSH is an early example of the joint initiatives possible which bring culture into our diverse communities.
- ***Advocacy*** – ensuring that the case for culture being at the heart of sustainable communities is made to local authorities, developers and other key partners. It will be particularly important to embed culture in our planning framework, and work is being commissioned on how s.106 Developer Contributions can be best used to promote cultural activity.
- ***Creating Quality Places*** – ensuring the highest standards of urban design are adopted in existing and new settlements.

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment are already working with the QPDP to develop a consistent approach to design within the local planning framework, and the Delivery Panel has also worked with the Solent Centre for Architecture & Design and planning colleagues to develop a programme of design training, now being delivered.

- ***Supporting the Creative and Cultural Economy*** – ensuring the conditions exist to allow creative and cultural businesses to thrive and contribute to PUSH’s economic vision, a task undertaken alongside colleagues on the Economic Delivery Panel.

The QPDP are working closely with Hampshire Economic Partnership’s Creative Industries Task Group on this topic. The Panel has already agreed support funding to Creative Industries Business Advice Service (CIBAS) – a specialist service based in Portsmouth, whose services will be rolled-out across the sub-region.

The University of Portsmouth have been particularly active in promoting creative industries, and they are working alongside the Delivery Panel, with David Arrell, one of the University’s Pro Vice Chancellors, sitting on the Panel.

- ***Supporting the Visitor Economy*** – ensuring that the economic and cultural potential of visitors to the sub-region is fully recognised. The Strategy has identified particular opportunities for more integrated marketing and management of key aspects of the visitor offer already within the sub-region, as well as supporting the development of existing and new opportunities.

7. Each of these themes provides a basis for identifying detailed actions for the QPDP to pursue through the next draft of the Business Plan. In many instances this will build on work already in hand, for example to promote good design or improve the availability of information to the public. In other cases, the Cultural Strategy suggests interventions which could enhance the cultural offer of the region – be that supporting the development of new facilities or co-ordinating tourism marketing across the sub-region.
8. The thread of different cultural activities may run through several of these themes, for example PUSH authorities could work together on programmes designed to promote excellence, access or participation in sport, performing arts or museums. Equally, national priorities such as the 2012 Olympiad can be reflected across themes as diverse as the Visitor Economy (where Tourism South East are already funding a PUSH project) or community participation through the Cultural Olympiad.
9. The Joint Committee will recall that PUSH has been identified as a ‘Priority Place’ by the national Living Places Partnership (Joint Committee Report pj-080916-r04-sed, ‘South East Living Places Partnership Support for PUSH’). DCLG, DCMS and the South East cultural agencies have committed to supporting the improvement and development of the cultural offer in Priority Places, and the themes and Strategy provide a basis for deciding how best that commitment can be taken up by the QPDP.
10. These themes should be underpinned by a focus on performance management

and improvement for local authority and other services. The Delivery Panel have already acknowledged the importance of working with colleagues in other Panels to ensure culture is an integral part of thinking on planning, economic development or other relevant topics.

NEXT STEPS

11. The current business plan for the Delivery Panel already includes work on several of these themes; for example on design, cultural and creative industries or accessibility of cultural activity. The work on the Cultural Strategy and discussions in the Panel have helped refine the focus of activity and identify where we can best 'add value', and will form the basis for the next round of business planning.
12. As part of that business planning, the QPDP will consider the resource implications of proposed actions. Some work, for example on design, is already funded by external agencies, and there is some provision in the current business plan for other activity. Further resources may be available through funding from the cultural agencies or other bidding programmes. Much of the work being taken forward is, however, likely to draw primarily on officer time from PUSH authorities, and perhaps seek the re-focus some streams of local funding. For this reason, member authorities will need to be involved as that work is taken forward.

RECOMMENDATION

The Joint Committee are asked to agree to the seven themes identified in this report as a basis for PUSH's future work to improve the cultural offer across the sub-region.

Background Papers: PUSH Cultural Strategy – Agenda UK (available through contact below)

Reference Papers: None

Enquiries:

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