

Report of: Executive Member for Community Development

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	24 November 2016	All

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SUBJECT: 'Inspiring Islington' Arts Strategy 2017-2020

1 Synopsis

- 1.1 This report presents the Council's new Arts Strategy 'Inspiring Islington' (2017-2020) which has been developed following a programme of research and consultation with the borough's Arts Sector, Corporate Departments, other public sector bodies and potential future investment partners.
- 1.2 The strategy recognises the considerable contribution that the Arts and engagement in high quality arts provision can make to the council's wider priorities including employment and skills, quality of life and well-being and sustainable economic development.
- 1.3 The strategy sets out the Council's vision and approach to working in partnership with and supporting the sustainable development of the borough's arts sector, in order to maximise the social and economic impact of the arts over the next three years.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To agree the Arts Strategy 'Inspiring Islington' attached as Appendix 1.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Arts are at the heart of Islington's identity and sense of place. The borough is a centre of, and for, cultural excellence and although the second smallest borough in London has one of the richest arts infrastructures in the country. The borough is home to more than 15 theatres and dance venues, the country's only dedicated literature and freedom of expression house, 19 live music venues and 75 community and other arts organisations.
- 3.2 Islington is home to 26 Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisations (NPO's), the third highest in England. Between 2015 and 2018 ACE will invest £41.8 Million in Islington's enviable arts infrastructure. Since 1999, the borough's creative sector has grown by 47% and represents approximately 25% of the business in Islington employing more than 20% of the local labour force. In 2016 it was estimated that the borough's theatres and dance venues alone employed more than 380 people, provided training opportunities for a further 24 local residents

and generated more than £81 Million into the local economy. Of this approximately £44 Million of additional leisure spend was generated supporting a range of additional service industries in the borough.

4 The Council's Arts Service

- 4.1 The Council's Arts Service is a small and responsive unit consisting at present of 2.5 full time members of staff. Additional capacity is provided by the current Special Projects officer. As part of the proposed re-organisation of the Chief Executives division, the Special Projects Officer post will be integrated fully into the service as Cultural Development Officer with a particular focus on supporting the on-going development of the arts infrastructure, including creative workspace and management of the film location service.
- 4.2 The Council is clearly not the main provider or indeed investor in Arts and Cultural programmes in the borough it does however have a critical role in supporting the sector to respond to the needs of local residents and visitors to the borough in order to unlock social and economic benefits. The focus of the Art Services' work is to enable, connect and support the sector by brokering relationships, negotiating partnership working, researching and sharing intelligence, developing strategy to align limited resources and generating increased inward investment by levering-in additional funding into the borough.
- 4.3 A good example of this approach to partnership working can be seen in the services Creative Apprenticeships Programme. Between 2013-16 Islington Arts Service created 39 opportunities for 16-24 year old NEETs to undertake Apprenticeships and Internships across 18 of Islington's arts organisations. £50K of S106 funding levered £92K grant funding from Creative & Cultural Skills and £221K contribution from the arts businesses to support pathways into employment for young unemployed Islington residents.

5 Research and Consultation

- 5.1 In developing this strategy the Arts Service has consulted with a broad range of corporate, community partners and potential investment partners in order to better understand and respond to the needs of the sector and other council services work in achieving the Council's wider corporate objectives.
- 5.2 In order to ensure that the Council and the wider arts sector can continue to successfully secure support and investments from a range of potential partners, it is also imperative that the strategy is aligned to wider regional and national arts policy frameworks. The most significant and relevant are the recent Department for Culture Media and Sports' The Culture White paper, Arts Council England's Great Arts for Everyone and the new Mayor of London's emerging Cultural Strategy. Inspiring Islington identifies key shared agendas with these regional and national policy frameworks and the Arts Service will continue to work closely and in partnership with these agencies in order to secure benefits for local residents and the borough's arts infrastructure.

6 Vision and Key Priorities

- 6.1 The vision articulated in the Arts strategy is to '*Inspire Islington through the arts*', to celebrate the intrinsic value of the arts to illuminate and enrich residents lives whilst simultaneously championing their instrumental value in promoting individual and community capacity building, providing employment and training, contributing to place-shaping and a sense of belonging, building community cohesion, improving the well-being of Islington's residents and driving the local economy.
- 6.2 Many of Islington's residents are able to avail themselves of the borough's arts infrastructure and the programmes of events and activities they provide. The strategy however recognises that there are many residents who do not currently engage or experience more barriers to engaging with the arts and therefore are less able or likely to benefit from the social and economic benefits that they offer.

- 6.3 As a result the strategy places emphasis on working with the sector and other corporate and community partners to actively engage those residents experiencing disadvantage, facing complex social issues or indeed subject to structural inequalities. The strategy actively prioritises work targeting children and young people, BAMER residents, disabled residents and elders
- 6.4 The Strategy identifies four key priorities and associated objectives for the Council's arts development function between 2017 and 2020:
- 6.5 **Engagement:**
Increasing opportunities for engagement in the arts – Inspiring Islington through extraordinary arts experiences.
Objectives:
- To provide high quality opportunities for local residents, in particular children, young people, those with disabilities, elders and those from BAMER communities, to actively engage with, and take part in, the arts as audiences, participants and producers.
 - To ensure that all Islington children and young people receive high quality music education linked to progression routes outside of formal education settings.
 - To support the provision of inspirational and best practice arts education within Islington schools and youth settings.
- 6.6 **Place-making:**
Promoting community cohesion and sense of place through place-making and animation of the public realm – Inspiring Islington through direct engagement in shaping local distinctiveness.
Objectives:
- To maximise the role the arts can play in place-making and engage local residents in actively influencing the changing face of the borough
 - To animate the public realm bringing the streets alive by taking work out of venues to places where people are.
- 6.7 **Skills Development & Creative Employment:**
Generating creative skills, employment and career development opportunities - Inspiring Islington through clear progression routes towards employment in the arts sector
Objectives:
- To promote the role of literacy and the arts in developing employability skills
 - To provide progression routes for Islington young people to secure employment in the arts and cultural sectors
 - To develop the workforce of the future through the provision of work experience, entry level jobs and skills development opportunities
- 6.8 **Cultural Infrastructure**
Providing a broad and resilient cultural infrastructure – Inspiring Islington through the delivery of exemplary arts programmes
Objectives:
- To support arts organisations to remain in or move into the borough
 - To build the resilience of the sector
 - To resource the sector through shared intelligence and information
- 6.9 The Action Plan that accompanies this strategy will be updated annually as part of the Council's service planning processes to ensure that longer term objectives can be met whilst maintaining a flexible and continuously improving service able to adapt to evolving challenges and opportunities.

7 Implications

7.1 Financial implications:

- 7.1.1 The Arts Service has a significant track record in securing external funding to support its work and that of other corporate and community partners. Over the last three years £853,198 of external funding has been secured for key strategic projects.

- 7.1.2 These range from £20K pilot projects such as the Islington Creative Schools Pilot with sector partners East London Cultural Education Partnership to evaluate the potential of the arts to support the delivery of school's development strategies to major high profile regeneration programmes and public art commissions such as Morag Myerscough's transformation of the Seven Sisters Road Railway Bridge abutments which has secured £242K funding through the GLA, New Homes Bonus, Transport for London, Arts Council England and S106 contributions. Between 2013 -16, £313K was levered from Creative & Cultural Skills and participating arts businesses to support the services Creative Employment Programme.
- 7.1.3 It is also estimated that income generated through the Islington Film Service contributes approximately £170K to the Council each year in addition to an annual £40K income to support the work of the arts service.
- 7.1.4 The cost to the council for providing this function relates to staffing and has been factored in to the council's budget setting arrangements for 2015-16 and is affordable.

8 Legal Implications:

- 8.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

9 Environmental Implications

- 9.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report

10 Resident Impact Assessment:

- 10.1 Inspiring Islington prioritises working with the arts sector and corporate, community and investment partners to maximise the social and economic benefits that the arts can bring to Islington residents. The strategy recognises that whilst many residents are able to access the borough's exemplary arts offer, many residents experience greater barriers to accessing the arts and the benefits that they may bring. As a result, the strategy and associated action plan prioritises interventions that actively target our more vulnerable residents, those that face greater barriers to engagement and are subject to structural inequalities.

11 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 11.1 The council has undertaken a programme of research and consultation with the arts sector and corporate, public sector and investment partners in order to develop the Arts Strategy 'Inspiring Islington 2017-2020.'
- 11.2 The strategy sets out the Council's vision and approach to working in partnership with and supporting the sustainable development of the borough's arts sector, in order to maximise the social and economic impact of the arts over the next three years. The accompanying action plan prioritises areas of intervention and support, key milestones and the outcomes the council seeks to achieve.

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Appendix 1 'Inspiring Islington' Arts Strategy 2017 – 2020

Final report clearance:

Signed by:

11 November 2016

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