

Lancashire County Council

Community, Cultural, and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 6th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm in
Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston**

Present:

County Councillor Ged Mirfin (Chair)

County Councillors

J Shedwick	N Khan
M Dad BEM JP	Y Motala
C Edwards	J Parr
S Hind	R Woollam
T Hurn	A Hindle

County Councillor Anna Hindle replaced County Councillor Azhar Ali OBE for this meeting.

1. Apologies

None.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 12 December 2023

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Culture Review: What it is, Impact in terms of Place / Economy and Engaging with Young People

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Peter Buckley, Cabinet Member for Communities and Cultural Services, County Councillor Ash Sutcliffe, Lead Member for Cultural Services and Skills, Andy Walker, Head of Service Business Growth, Steve Lloyd, Head of Cultural Services, and Heather Fox, Cultural Development Manager, to the meeting.

A presentation was provided on REMADE: Cultural Investment Strategy for Lancashire and covered how the strategy would facilitate the remaking and recognition of culture to deliver Lancashire Enterprise Partnership's vision for Lancashire through its main priority areas, desired outcomes, and economic growth dimension.

A report and presentation were also provided to the committee detailing the role of culture and its impact and presented the draft Cultural Strategy Services Strategy 2024 – 28 which expanded on these themes. The report highlighted the reviews to the existing strategy and a refresh to inform the direction of the service for the next four years to deliver better outcomes for the people of Lancashire.

The committee thanked the officers for the detailed report and presentations, copies of which are attached to the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- The committee requested more detail surrounding the profiles of the eighteen existing National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) within Lancashire, and how the county council has previously been successful in attracting funding, so that the number of NPOs continue to grow at a successful rate, and further support could be given to organisations approaching the end of their four-year funding cycle. The members were informed how the portfolio status gave organisations more security than one off funding applications and work was being done to improve organisational development and delivery to increase organisations interested in bidding, including collaborative training between NPOs to enable groups to reach higher levels of national funding.
- The committee requested further insight into the relationship between the location of NPOs within Lancashire and where funding was coming from.
- The committee raised the issue of many local cultural assets and events occurring within the county which were often not picked up at a wider level, it was felt it was important to tap into local knowledge of cultural events, and councillors could support this by sharing local knowledge.
- A concern was raised regarding individual organisations not having the upfront capital to pay for consultancy surrounding sponsorship opportunities that in turn could drastically increase their outreach and fundraising. It was therefore queried whether the council could provide a package support to help cover the cost of events and leverage sponsorships in.
- The committee queried the role of the third sector when engaging with local communities, cultural diversity and fostering inclusion. As a result, it was encouraged that funding strategies poured effort into bottom-up engagement with communities and building the capacity of voluntary and third-sector organisations to facilitate wider outreach across Lancashire. In response to the queries, members were informed that while it was a work in progress,



efforts were ongoing to reach grassroots-level activities and uncover organisations in localities.

- The committee discussed the need for connectivity within the county, utilising culture to share diversity. It was highlighted that various areas across Lancashire may not have the knowledge and experience of different cultures and their celebrations and therefore requested that work should be done to raise the community's awareness of diversity profiles within the county. It was highlighted that the Lancashire 2050 Framework and the proposals within the CCA Authority under the Cultural and Tourism section encapsulated these concerns around pan Lancashire working. It was noted that the Cultural, Physical and Activities Network (CPAN) was also in place across the districts trying to bring everything together.
- The relationship between cultural events and the retail and hospitality industries was discussed and the committee recommended that, because of their significant economic output, a directory of festivals across the county should be publicised.
- The committee queried over the specific example of Preston Guild Hall and its recent closure. Concerns were raised over losing citizen and tourist footfall to larger cities like Manchester and Liverpool, and the overall decline of culture in the area. In response to the concerns, members were advised that while the officers worked with Preston City Council closely, it was ultimately under their jurisdiction.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for answering the committee's questions.

Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Cultural Services and where possible, be used to inform the draft Cultural Services Strategy for 2024 - 2028:

- i. Consideration be given to how the county council can further support, grow, and work with our National Portfolio Organisation holders that exist in Lancashire to attract even more funding including a breakdown of the rubric contained in the ACE Create IT Strategy Document.
- ii. A piece of work to take place to understand the footprint of where NPO organisations are located within Lancashire and whether they are eligible for National Lottery Heritage Funding, National Lottery Community Funds and Sports England at a district level.
- iii. Examination of individual District Local Plans / Core Strategy documents produced by districts to better understand their cultural strategies.
- iv. Information to be provided on the role of advocacy organisations the county council works with such as Arts Lancashire, Digital Lancashire, Lancashire Cultural Network and Visit Lancashire.



- v. Development of a Directory of Festivals in Lancashire to be considered and regard be given to how significant events and festivals are shared wider in Lancashire. Consideration be given to a package of support to be provided for events where sponsorship can be leveraged in.
- vi. Consideration be given to the role of culture as part of the Corporate Cohesion Strategy and Workforce Equalities Strategy update which is due to be presented to the committee in May 24.
- vii. Refer the report provided to the committee to Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee for them to review the report in terms of the updates provided on Education and Skills.
- viii. Officers to revisit a series of reports produced and commissioned since 2012 including The Work Foundation on The Creative Economy in Lancashire and the LCC Scrutiny Task Group Report – Towards a Stronger Sense of Place.
- ix. A further report to come back to the committee in November 2024 to update the committee on how work is progressing.

5. Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund / Crowdfund Lancashire

County Councillor Peter Buckley, Cabinet Member for Communities and Cultural Services, County Councillor Ash Sutcliffe, Lead Member for Cultural Services and Skills, Steve Lloyd, Head of Cultural Services, and Heather Fox, Cultural Development Manager, presented a report to the committee.

The report provided an insight into Crowdfund Lancashire which was the crowdfunding platform that administered the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund. Crowdfund Lancashire and the Lancashire Culture and Support Fund empowered Lancashire communities to shape the culture and sport offer where they live, giving community groups autonomy to fund and deliver projects that are of need in their locality.

The committee thanked the officers for the detailed report. A copy of the presentation can be found in the minutes.

Comments and queries raised from the committee were as follows:

- The committee raised concerns surrounding engaging with young people who were excluded from education and other services. In response to the concerns, members were informed that oversight in this area connected various departments, including Children Family Well-Being and Education Improvement.
- Following on from discussions surrounding young people out of education, officers also highlighted work that was being done to increase overall engagement with young people, in response to current research that younger



generations were the least connected and were the most likely to suffer social isolation. As such, research and outreach efforts were ongoing to involve more young people with community facilities and social spaces such as libraries.

- The committee discussed how the wider benefits of culture, not just its intrinsic and standalone value, should be emphasised. The Sports Fund was praised for its contributions in steering young people away from antisocial behaviour and as such, the committee recommended that more funding should be assigned to these projects.
- The committee wanted to know how groups within their local areas could find out about funding available to them, as many would be unaware such programmes exist. In response to the question, members were informed that the relationship between Active Lancashire and Arts Lancashire had grown significantly, enabling communication across different organisations, heightened awareness of funding available, and council involvement through letters of endorsement.
- The committee raised concerns over noticeable reduced funding for Youth Clubs in certain districts. The officers advised that this was not part of Cultural Services, but Children and Family Services; it was noted that communications with this department would take place and an update reported to the committee.
- The committee raised a query surrounding the total amount of funding the fund had to allocate. In response, members were informed that the pledge of funding was allocated in the February 2022 budget and consequently was not a one-off initiative, but an effort to build up involvement in communities. The committee was asked by officers to consider a recommendation in the report that the maximum matched funding be lowered from £20,000 to £15,000 to increase the scheme's flexibility and outreach potential. Committee members agreed to support this recommendation.
- Regarding the officer's other recommendations, concerns were raised by the committee as to the similarity in concept of recommendations ii and iii, and the consequential futility of including both, and the wording of recommendation iii in the report in which projects from low-income areas are proposed to be prioritised. The committee agreed to support recommendations i, ii and iv from the report and agreed not to support recommendations iii.
- The committee raised the subject of involving sport or celebrity mentors to help promote the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund and enhance the county's reputation. In response, the members were informed about the improvements to the council's relationship with external partners who have the most connections across sports arenas.
- In addition, the committee suggested that the council should work with national bodies such as Football League to increase outreach potential.



- The committee requested that alternative grant or funding avenues be actively signposted to groups who have been unsuccessful in their Crowdfund application. The officers confirmed this advice was actively provided.
- Regarding options for increased community outreach, the committee recommended that links with high-capacity venues such as football grounds should be explored to host other events and facilitate greater community engagement and awareness. In response to this question, the officers confirmed that many collaborative projects with notable groups like football teams were ongoing, but that avenues for venue usage would also be explored.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for answering the committees' questions.

Resolved: That the following recommendations be shared with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Cultural Services:

- i. That the following recommendations from the report be supported:
 - a. To continue to reach Lancashire residents and community groups in more areas so all districts have an equitable share of the Lancashire Culture & Sport Fund.
 - b. To continue to target under-represented areas and communities through working with district councils and community organisations.
 - c. To lower the current maximum pledge of £20,000 to £15,000. This would allow the panel to support more projects at higher pledge amounts, meaning more funds could be spread across the county and increasing the likeliness of more projects reaching their crowdfunding target.
- ii. That recommendation iii from the report to prioritise those projects in low-income and for under-represented areas not be supported at this time.
- iii. Officers to consider how venues can be utilised and accessed more for community events, allowing communities to have greater access to venues and facilities that are available in Lancashire.

6. Work Programme 2023/24

The committee considered the work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.

The committee requested that regarding the update for recommendations to Council Estate, Use and Occupancy of Council Buildings and Asset Disposal, a request be made for property asset disposals to be detailed further so that members could see where exactly land had been disposed of was located.



Resolved: That the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny work programme for 2023/24, be noted.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee will be held on Thursday 21 March 2024 at 10:30am in Committee Room B – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.

H MacAndrew
Director of Law and Governance

County Hall
Preston

