



<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Cabinet
<b>DATE:</b>	27 July 2022
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Cultural Framework for Investment
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	Approval of the Cultural Framework (Strategy) for Boston and East Lindsey and the Action Plan for Boston.
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	YES
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	Cllr Richard Austin
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Deputy Chief Executive - Growth
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	Lydia Rusling, Assistant Director for Economic Growth
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	ALL
<b>EXEMPT REPORT?</b>	NO

## **SUMMARY**

This reports seeks to provide background information on the development of a new Cultural Framework for Boston and East Lindsey. The Cultural Framework for Investment sets an ambitious vision for culture, which connects to heritage and the visitor economy and contributes to people's health and well-being, as well as supporting environmental sustainability and the local cultural ecosystem.

The Framework document is shared with the Cabinet for constructive comment and feedback prior to Boston Borough Council's approval and adoption.

It also notes that during the development of the Framework there has been an opportunity to submit an Expression of Interest for National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Members are requested to support the formal adoption of the Cultural Framework for Renewal and approve the final document.
2. In consultation with the portfolio holder, Cllr Richard Austin, that final amendments are incorporated and the final document be published on the Council website.
3. Support the extension of the work to reflect the Partnership with South Holland.
4. Note the submission of the Expression of Interest for National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

A formally adopted Cultural Strategy and agreement of priority actions will provide Boston Borough Council with the cultural principles we want to see reflected in each place. In addition, the Cultural Framework will support funding applications, increase engagement with art and culture and facilitate greater connectivity with Art and Cultural organisations.

It has also already provided the Partnership with the opportunity to submit an Expression of Interest to seek to secure National Portfolio Organisation status and associated funding.

The ambition of the Framework and associated NPO status supports a wider cultural and place based approach to regeneration, in line with the Government's Levelling Up White Paper and links culture with community engagement to support our Partnership objectives.

## **OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

Arts Council England has provided the funding to create the Cultural Framework, therefore it is a requirement of the funding to produce the strategic document.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Arts Council England (ACE) awarded funding to both East Lindsey District Council and Boston Borough Council to support the development of cultural strategies.
- 1.2 Following the Strategic Alliance with Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council in August 2021 we agreed to align the two strategies.
- 1.3 An extension to the work was granted to ensure a connected approach to both projects. We proposed a joint strategy or framework, which provides both authorities with the cultural principles we want to see reflected in each place.
- 1.4 The work was informed by the current research and engagement which has been led by Magna Vitae, whilst engaging with Transported (and other partners) to ensure a solid and robust foundation for the area.

- 1.5 Each grant has enabled a place-focused approach for culture in Boston and East Lindsey. A timeline was agreed to produce a cultural strategy adopted by the Alliance with place-based plans for each area to support funding applications, increase engagement with art and culture and facilitate greater connectivity.

## 2. REPORT

- 2.1 Set against a backdrop of Covid recovery and a new South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership, the new Cultural Framework seeks to build on the significant progress in recent years to support cultural activity, build capacity, and demonstrate commitment to excellence and innovation in cultural infrastructure, partnership and programming.
- 2.2 The Framework aligns with the Government's Levelling Up White Paper and funding opportunities of Cultural Investment through Town Deals and Levelling Up Funds. It is also symbiotic with recent policy for the visitor economy and the ambition for Culture to support communities' health and well-being.
- 2.3 Both Boston and East Lindsey have been designated Arts Council Priority Places – areas where there is significant potential but also one where multiple barriers have historically stood in the way of system-wide cultural renewal.
- 2.4 Consultation through a programme of workshops and interviews has informed the draft document. An online survey across East Lindsey and Boston gathered a wider range of opinions. Key points included:
  - 2.4.1 *50% felt there weren't sufficient or appropriate venues, with cost or administrative barriers cited alongside the lack of purpose built cultural infrastructure for some types of cultural activity.*
  - 2.4.2 *The importance of collaboration and creative organisations to freelancers was clearly seen with 82% having worked with a cultural organisation in the area, 68% outside the area, and 16% internationally and 63% with an organisation in another sector (e.g. technology, health, wellbeing and tourism).*
  - 2.4.3 *67% felt there weren't enough live events indicating an appetite for more. They felt cultural activity was affordable (53%), open and inclusive (54%) which reflects the community nature of much activity.*
  - 2.4.4 *Transport, size and the rural nature of the area were frequently cited as barriers.*
- 2.5 The draft Cultural Framework at Appendix A has proposed Four Strategic Themes emerging from the Consultation and Research: Culture for All; Health and Wellbeing; Cultural Infrastructure and Cultural Places.
- 2.6 Multiple barriers have historically stood in the way of system-wide cultural renewal. The area's ageing population and sustained loss of younger talent, limited transport links, health and wellbeing indicators, fragmented communities, and lack of critical mass in a range of industries, are commonly identified as challenging features or as barriers to cultural development. However, there is significant potential through an asset-based perspective

with heritage, natural and built environment, building on our existing cultural offer and taking full advantage of the ambition and aspirations of the people.

- 2.7 The Cultural Framework for Renewal sets out the context for the strategic approach to Culture across the Partnership and the Consultation feedback. Four strategic themes identify the barriers, opportunities and priorities. East Lindsey and Boston have place-based priority actions.
- 2.8 Feedback from Arts Council England has recently been formally provided and has been integrated into the latest version of the Cultural Framework at Appendix A. These amendments have included a refreshed vision, further alignment with ACE strategy Let's Create, definition of culture to include everyday culture, emphasis on data and a refined governance model to reflect the NPO EOI.
- 2.9 Feedback from the informal Cabinet and member briefing included the following points:  
Alignment with the Boston Historic Place Panel recommendations; reference the NPO group led by Magna Vitae; add case studies; provide hard copies; share with High Street Task Force support; reference the Local Listing project and improve references to the Buoy art work trail and the need for further promotion. These recommendations require integrating into the final document.
- 2.10 During the development of the Cultural Framework and its Council adoption process, there has been further opportunity through meetings with Arts Council England to extend this piece of work to reflect the new geography of the Partnership and incorporate the South Holland District Council area.
- 2.11 The lack of NPO applications was also highlighted to the team during their last meeting with Arts Council England - being a National Portfolio Organisation provides opportunities for creative and cultural organisations to plan and deliver over the long term. It is the bedrock of ACE funding and the work of all NPOs is seen as vital to the success and development of the cultural sector. An 'Introductory Conversation' was held on Thursday 21 April to indicate an intention for the South and East Lincolnshire Council Partnership to submit an application for National Portfolio Organisation funding. A lead authority would be required to be the accountable body – proposed to be East Lindsey District Council. The Partnership's NPO would focus on three centres – Boston Guildhall (Boston Borough Council), Asycoughfee Hall (South Holland District Council and the Colonnade at Sutton on Sea (East Lindsey District Council).
- 2.12 NPO funding would support a programme of art and culture across the Partnership, as well as enabling an education, research and skills programme to be developed. The NPO funding opportunity presented an opportunity to support the priority actions arising from the Cultural Framework. Please see Annex B.
- 2.13 The revenue funding would enable investment into people, programmes and activity, whilst building on the capital investment from the Towns Fund (and Levelling Up Funding bids).

- 2.14 The application has referenced and supported the Cultural Framework for Boston and East Lindsey.
- 2.15 The recent development of the UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) has provided another opportunity to reference the Cultural Framework, particularly within the investment priority of Community and Place and aligning with the Missions of the Levelling Up White Paper to build Pride in Place.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The Cultural Framework has been developed through consultation and the agreement to adopt the Cultural Strategy and priority actions will provide Boston Borough Council with the cultural principles to support funding applications, increase engagement with art and culture and facilitate greater connectivity with Art and Cultural organisations.
- 3.2 The adoption of the Cultural Framework aligns with Boston's Corporate Strategy supporting Boston as a place where people want to live, work and visit.
- 3.3 The Framework has already provided the Partnership with the opportunity to submit an Expression of Interest to seek to secure National Portfolio Organisation status and associated funding, as well as strengthening the UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan for Boston.
- 3.4 The ambition of the Cultural Framework and associated NPO status supports a wider cultural and place based approach to regeneration and inclusive growth, in line with the Government's Levelling Up White Paper and links culture with community engagement to support our Partnership objectives.

### **EXPECTED BENEFITS TO THE PARTNERSHIP**

A formally adopted Cultural Strategy and agreement of priority actions will provide Boston Borough Council with the cultural principles to support funding applications, increase engagement with art and culture and facilitate greater connectivity.

It has also already provided the Partnership with the opportunity to submit an Expression of Interest to seek to secure National Portfolio Organisation status and associated funding.

The ambition of the Framework and associated NPO status supports a wider cultural and place based approach to regeneration, in line with the Government's Levelling Up White Paper and links culture with community engagement to support our Partnership objectives.

### **IMPLICATIONS SOUTH AND EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP**

The Cultural Framework sets out a number of specific commitments:

- A commitment to increasing audience participation levels across all types of cultural activity – from the very low levels of participation which have promoted Arts Council England to position Boston and East Lindsey as priority places for investment in cultural development.
- A commitment to excellence and innovation in cultural infrastructure, partnership and programming.
- Commitment to the four investment principles set out by Arts Council England – Ambition and Quality; Dynamism; Environmental Responsibility; Inclusivity and Relevance.

- The establishment of a Cultural Compact to enable the delivery of a programme of activities as a new National Portfolio Organisation.
- Commitment to the Priority Actions identified in the Cultural Framework for Boston.

These commitments do not have an associated budget and form part of funding applications and ‘expressions of interest’, therefore the Council may wish to consider a future business case to financially support through match funding, or if the funding bids are unsuccessful, then selecting the most appropriate plans to support.

### **CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The Cultural Framework for Renewal reflects the Corporate Priorities identified in the Corporate Strategy 2020-2024 and supports its priorities.

### **STAFFING**

None arising from the report.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None arising from the report.

### **DATA PROTECTION**

None arising from the report.

### **FINANCIAL**

None arising from the report. Please note implications above if funding applications are unsuccessful.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Please note the commitments do not have an associated budget and form part of funding applications and ‘expressions of interest’, therefore if the funding bids are unsuccessful the Council may wish to consider financial and resource allocation to support the delivery of the action plans.

### **STAKEHOLDER / CONSULTATION / TIMESCALES**

External consultation was undertaken as part of the formation of the Cultural Framework. In addition to a programme of workshops and interviews ranging from national partners and investors such as Arts Council England to local cultural organisations, schools, colleges, venues, community groups and artists, consultation for involved a survey to improve understanding of the needs and aspirations of local people. The online survey received 100 responses, split into thirds between creative practitioners, employees and volunteers at cultural organisations, and community members interested in the arts.

In addition, the Corporate and Community Committee reviewed the draft Cultural Framework on 26 May. See 2.9 of the report for their comments.

### **REPUTATION**

None arising from the report.

## **CONTRACTS**

None arising from the report.

## **CRIME AND DISORDER**

None arising from the report.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY/ HUMAN RIGHTS/ SAFEGUARDING**

None arising from the report.

## **HEALTH AND WELL BEING**

The Cultural Framework references The Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Lincolnshire (2018). In many of the areas it prioritises, arts and culture are already making a difference, with the potential to do much more in the future.

We are committed to aligning the Framework and the Action Plans with the recently established Healthy Living Board, which is tasked with delivering a leisure and culture offer for the sub-region.

## **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Cultural Framework aligns with Arts Council's four investment principles, which incorporates Environmental Responsibility.

The Framework references connecting culture to the natural environment through projects and infrastructure, and positioning this Framework as a vital tool for sustainable and responsible cultural development.

We are committed to aligning the Framework with the Partnership's Climate Change Strategy and the newly established Climate Action Network.

## **LINKS TO 12 MISSIONS IN THE LEVELLING UP WHITE PAPER**

<b>MISSIONS</b>	
<b>This paper contributes to the follow Missions outlined in the Government's Levelling Up White paper.</b>	
<b>Skills</b>	By 2030, the number of people successfully completing high-quality skills training will have significantly increased in every area of the UK. In England, this will lead to 200,000 more people successfully completing high-quality skills training annually, driven by 80,000 more people completing courses in the lowest skilled areas.
<b>Health</b>	By 2030, the gap in Healthy Life Expectancy (HLE) between local areas where it is highest and lowest will have narrowed, and by 2035 HLE will rise by 5 years.
<b>Wellbeing</b>	By 2030, well-being will have improved in every area of the UK, with the gap between top performing and other areas closing.
<b>Pride in Place</b>	By 2030, pride in place, such as people's satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.

## ACRONYMS

- ACE: Arts Council England
- NPO: National Portfolio Organisation
- EOI: Expression of Interest

## APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

<i>APPENDIX A</i>	<i>Cultural Framework for Renewal</i>
<i>APPENDIX B</i>	<i>NPO Briefing</i>

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

## CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

<b>Name of body</b>	<b>Date</b>
Corporate and Community Committee	26 May 2022
Cabinet Briefing	13 July 2022

## REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Lydia Rusling, Assistant Director Economic Growth
Signed off by:	Michelle Sacks, Deputy Chief Executive
Approved for publication:	Cllr Richard Austin