



## Cabinet

<b>Title</b>	The Culture Strategy
<b>Date of meeting</b>	16 April 2024
<b>Report of</b>	Councillor Ammar Naqvi – Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts & Sports
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Key</b>	Key
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Appendices</b>	Appendix A – The Culture Strategy 2024-2029 Appendix B – Culture Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)
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### Summary

The Council and Barnet’s local community have co-produced a new five-year culture strategy 2024-2029. This strategy is dedicated to celebrating, supporting, and enhancing our borough’s creative and cultural sector, and seeks to build upon the cultural assets, opportunities and activities already present in the borough.

This report provides a high-level overview of the aims and priorities of the strategy and seeks Cabinet approval of the strategy, which is attached as Appendix A.

### Recommendations

1. That the Cabinet approves the Culture Strategy 2024-2029 as set out in Appendix A.
2. That the Executive Director for Transformation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Arts & Sports be authorised to make minor amendments to the Cabinet report to facilitate publication

## 1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 The full Culture Strategy document is attached as Appendix A.
- 1.2 Barnet’s five-year culture strategy is dedicated to celebrating, supporting, and enhancing our borough’s creative and cultural sector. Developed in collaboration with our local community, this strategy seeks to build upon the cultural assets, opportunities and activities in the borough. It will create a step change in what is offered, strengthening the borough’s identity as a cultural destination. Our aim is to further develop Barnet as a place with a diverse, accessible, and enriching cultural offer for residents and visitors to enjoy for many years to come.
- 1.3 To deliver this strategy, the Council will work in partnership with creative professionals, residents, community groups and businesses. Just as this strategy has been created through co-production, the journey to implement it will also be one we take together.
- 1.4 Togetherness is something that culture in all its forms can create. It enables communities to celebrate their identities, share their stories and see themselves reflected in our collective narrative. It can inspire learning through understanding, and foster tolerance through shared experiences of joy.
- 1.5 Engaging with culture also has the power to increase personal wellbeing and create benefits for our communities that will support Barnet’s social, health and economic objectives. Our cultural offer will be open and accessible to everyone.
- 1.6 At the heart of Barnet’s culture are the people who make it. This strategy will empower local creatives and grow an environment where they can thrive. We want to embed creativity into our public spaces, helping to shape an ambitious cultural identity for our borough that will make it not just a great place to live, but a destination.
- 1.7 The Culture Strategy priorities are:

<b>Involvement</b>	Increasing participation in Barnet’s cultural sector
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Developing placemaking and supporting Barnet’s cultural infrastructure
<b>Interconnection</b>	Promoting culture as a connector of people and places
<b>Identity</b>	Accelerating Barnet’s identity as a cultural destination
<b>Inspiration</b>	Stimulating cultural education and engagement with young people
<b>Influence</b>	Harnessing the power of culture to enrich other services and industries

## 2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

- 2.1 Alternative options were considered, such as not having a culture strategy; however, after discussions with our independent teering group, comprised of representatives from across Barnet, and incorporating insights from residents, we moved forward with the strategy.

## 3. Post Decision Implementation

3.1 If approved this strategy will be:

- Redesigned by our house graphic designers (Good Impressions), to create a public facing, visually engaging document that is as visibly striking as possible, with images from Barnet’s cultural sector incorporated.
- A launch event will be held in June to celebrate and raise awareness of the new Culture Strategy.
- An action plan will be developed that looks to achieve the objectives set out in this strategic document.

## 4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations

### Corporate Plan

Our Plan for Barnet 2023 -2026 - Caring for Our Places.

- 4.1.1 This strategy sits under the Culture, Leisure, Arts & Sports portfolio that is led by Councillor Ammar Naqvi.
- 4.1.2 The corporate vision underlying Our Plan for Barnet 2023 – 2026 is “Caring for people, our places and the planet”.
- 4.1.3 The transformation agenda consists of three primary components that will serve as a foundation for the Culture Strategy. In the context of this strategy these are:

1- Destination Barnet

This seeks to make the borough an attractive location for creative industries, a hub for creative activity, and a renowned locale for culturally relevant or significant venues.

2- Discover Barnet

This workstream showcases existing cultural capital, all the events and opportunities to experience culture in Barnet, as well as broadcasts the rich heritage of our borough.

3- Barnet Dreams

This is a commitment to ensure that we have the tools, opportunities, and advice services available locally to ensure every resident unlocks their potential.

- 4.1.4 Another significant element of Our Plan for Barnet is to embrace collaborative development of our strategies and initiatives in conjunction with our local communities. The Community Participation Strategy published in 2022, describes essential principles for accomplishing this goal and plays a substantial role in shaping the development of our Culture Strategy.
- 4.1.5 We have been committed to actively involving our local community in every stage of the Culture Strategy’s development, including its creation and design. Our approach prioritises working in partnership with our residents rather than seeking mere approval of our outputs.

4.1.6 An example of how we empowered the community surrounds the definition of culture. Recognising that culture holds diverse meanings for different individuals, the Council deliberately refrained from providing a specific definition. Instead, we worked alongside our local community and independent steering group to shape what culture was defined as.

4.1.7 This strategy has been conceived by the local community, for the local community, embodying the essence of collective empowerment and shared ownership.

#### **Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures**

4.2 We will establish a new steering group (or similar function) made up of independent non-council representatives to ensure we deliver on the objectives that feature in this strategy.

4.2.1 There will also be an internal measure to hold us accountable.

#### **Sustainability**

We consulted our colleagues from the sustainability team and have integrated a specific objective into our plan “Work with our cultural and voluntary sectors to attain our goal of achieving net zero in Barnet by 2042”.

#### **Corporate Parenting**

4.3 We have a dedicated section addressing young people; however, we foresee no adverse effects, only positive outcomes. A key aspect of the strategy aims to enhance young people’s engagement with culture.

#### **Risk Management**

4.4 The objective is to enrich the cultural landscape in Barnet in collaboration with partners. The strategy itself carries no significant risks; however, projects and actions arising from it may pose associated risks.

#### **Insight**

4.5 Insight has been gained through independent research and studying other local authorities approaches to producing Culture Strategies.

4.5.1 The three key strands of engagement and research that have shaped the strategy are:

- 1- The Audience Agency research
- 2- The Culture Strategy Steering Group Workshops
- 3- Our Barnet Canvas Consultation and Engagement Programme

4.5.2 Please see appendix A for more information on the consultation that has taken place to inform this strategy.

#### **Social Value**

4.2 Our independent steering group has emphasised the importance of showcasing the social, economic, and wellbeing benefits resulting from investing in culture. The strategy looks to utilise culture to bring about wider positive benefits to society.

4.6.1 The strategy and in particular priority six – Influence, incorporates economic, social and health related objectives.

## **5 Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)**

- 5.1 Funding has been secured for actions and projects such as Barnet Legends, Related Argents work, and match funding contribution to Barnet and Culture for Youth (3 years' worth) that will contribute to the priorities of the strategy within the next few months. There is no current funding gap (as we are just seeking approval of the strategic document).
- 5.2 We will be producing a separate long-term action plan to support the strategy which will need a budget agreed, however, the purpose of our request at Cabinet for this meeting, is to approve the strategy not the action plan.
- 5.3 This future budget will supplement external funding that is currently being sought through an application to the Arts Council England Cultural Development Fund to support the creation of an immersive technology digital hub, with public art and digital interventions in three town centres.. Further funding will be sought from the Heritage Lottery fund for up to £10 million to realise elements of the regional park and the role of heritage, cultural interventions, trails and public art in those spaces.
- 5.4 The Arts and Culture team will consist of the Arts and Culture Manager, a Public Art and Culture Officer (currently in post) and a Senior Arts and Culture Officer (to be recruited).
- 5.5 The team will work together to lead on delivering the five-year Culture Strategy priorities, managing London-wide strategic relationships with Arts Council, Greater London Authority and the Heritage Lottery Fund etc, supporting the arts and culture sector in Barnet and delivering key projects such as the Cultural Impact Award, LFA, public art projects such as Barnet Legends.
- 5.6 The team will grow as partnerships are developed and if further project funding is secured to realise some of the strategic projects referenced in the Borough of Culture bid and aligned with the culture strategy such as the role of culture in supporting the realisation of the regional park etc.

## **6 Legal Implications and Constitution References**

- 6.1 Under the Council's Constitution, Part 2D the terms of reference states that Cabinet is responsible for the following functions:
  - Development of proposals for the budget (including the capital and revenue budgets, the fixing of the Council Tax Base, and the level of Council Tax) and the financial strategy for the Council;
  - Monitoring the implementation of the budget and financial strategy;
  - Recommending major new policies (and amendments to existing policies) to the Council for approval as part of the Council's Policy Framework and implementing those approved by Council;
  - Approving policies that are not part of the policy framework;

## **7 Consultation**

- 7.1 All consultation and engagement activity (The Audience Agency research, independent steering group and Hemingway Designs Consultation and Engagement Programme) have already been referenced. The priorities that emerged from these pieces of research are included in this document. Please see Appendix 1 for more information.

- 7.2 This project has been co-produced by members of the local community, who have also seen the draft strategic document and commented on the wording and all aspects of the strategic document already.
- 7.3 We will be conducting further engagement as part of monitoring of the delivery of the strategy going forward.

## **8 Equalities and Diversity**

- 8.1 We have developed a EqIA to accompany the strategy. Please see Appendix B to read it in full.
- 8.2 Equality and diversity issues are a mandatory consideration in the decision-making of the council.
- 8.3 Decision makers should have due regard to the public-sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that Council has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public-sector equality duty are found at Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows below.
- 8.4 A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
  - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
  - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 8.5 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
  - Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
  - Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 8.6 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
- 8.7 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
- Tackle prejudice, and
  - Promote understanding

8.8 Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and Civil partnership

8.8 The public sector equality duty considerations are key for the development of our programme of activity as well as our Corporate Plan.

## **9 Background Papers**

9.1 Culture Strategy Consultation 2024-2029: <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/the-culture-strategy-update-2023-2028-2>