

**West of England Local Enterprise Partnership Board
meeting – 21 June 2021**

Supporting Recovery in the Cultural Sector

Purpose of the report

1. To stimulate discussion concerning the role and impact of the West of England Cultural Compact in helping to achieve regional recovery and inclusive growth.

Recommendation

The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Board is asked to consider the ways in which the West of England Cultural Compact can help demonstrate social as well as economic impact in achieving the delivery of regional strategies and plans.

- a) What approach could be taken to ensure the region's business leaders/ community influence the shape and purpose of the West of England Cultural Compact?
- b) In what ways could the Cultural Compact help the region's businesses to deliver impact on the ground?
- c) How might the LEP facilitate and support the relationship between the infrastructure and creative and cultural sectors in the context of a Net-Zero future?

Background

2. The West of England Cultural Compact ("Cultural Compact") was established in April 2021 as a collaborative vehicle and mechanism to steer, join up, facilitate and support strategic activity for the creative and cultural sector.
3. This builds on work led by a regional Cultural Strategy Engagement Group – chaired by Dick Penny, LEP Board member, with membership from the Combined Authority, local authorities and our four universities – including the creation of a cultural strategy evidence base and active input into the Regional Recovery Plan and subsequent cultural interventions (including the £1m Cultural and Creative Recovery Fund).
4. A working group of the LEP, the new Cultural Compact is chaired by Professor Sue Rigby with a core membership from the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), Bath and North East Somerset Council, Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council, North Somerset Council, the One City Culture Board, Culture Weston and Visit West.
5. Arts Council England have observer status, as (co)fundors of this pilot initiative; a recommendation falling out of the independent UK Cultural Cities Enquiry Report (2019) which considered how cities and regions can radically increase using culture to drive

inclusive growth. A package of measures was proposed across Leadership, Investment, Talent and Place.

6. The subsequent Cultural Cities Recovery Report¹ refers to the Cultural Compact as a key vehicle for “delivering local recovery and renewal in cities and towns, providing strategic leadership, increasing local capacity and promoting efficient, sustainable use of resources to increase places’ ability to attract investment, build local talent and enterprises, and reanimate city and town centres”.
7. In order to demonstrate value, the Cultural Compact will oversee work at the interface between practitioners, communities and the economic drivers of the region, whether these are local authorities or private companies.
8. A Cultural Compact co-ordinator post has been developed to ensure momentum is maintained and tangible progress is made. Six sprints, summarised below, are underway to guide the Cultural Compact’s initial work of influencing, auditing, evaluating and doing, at pace. The outputs from this work will inform the ongoing development of the regional cultural strategy.
 - Demonstrate the role of culture in placemaking and community renewal.
 - Extend and evaluate the potential of culture to support community and individual wellbeing including arts on referral and cultural prescribing practice as a way of improving wider wellbeing opportunities.
 - Undertake a broad analysis and mapping of current regional cultural asset provision and its capacity to address wider diversity and community needs.
 - Pilot ways to connect cultural assets and sustainable itineraries to help the region develop better tourism and heritage, both intrinsic and extrinsic in support of the post-pandemic recovery.
 - Influence discussions around culture as a way to improve communities and to provide an inclusive environment; for a shared understanding and exploration of how to do this.
 - Explore ways to encourage sustainable, inclusive talent pipelines for the region.
9. The methodology of the Cultural Compact is to:
 - Move these workstrands forwards at pace, through the direction and facilitation of Cultural Compact core stakeholders.
 - Align activity with the Metro Mayor’s Manifesto.
 - Explore ways to integrate regional cultural plans into wider strands of work through WECA and/or Arts Council England.
 - Commission local experts to undertake particular aspects of this work, with tightly drawn and rapid pieces of commissioned work.

¹ https://www.corecities.com/sites/default/files/field/attachment/ACE316%20Cultural%20Cities%20Enquiry%20V10_0.pdf

- Publicise and communicate our work through WECA, the LEP and more widely to ensure reach and engagement in the region.

10. Over the summer, as the workstreams progress and the Cultural Compact develops further, work will continue to finalise the regional cultural strategy and an implementation plan setting out the key mechanisms, policies and investments /co-investments needed to achieve its objectives. A major public launch for this work is being planned for the Autumn.

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