

Barnsley's Cultural Strategy

Brief for Phase 2

Context

1. Summary

Barnsley MBC has an exceptional opportunity to use culture as a key driver to help deliver its Barnsley 2030 strategy. However, whilst culture is embedded into Barnsley's future plans there is currently no distinct borough-wide strategy to illustrate how culture and creativity can enrich the lives of local communities, improve their health and wellbeing, reduce inequality and contribute to a vibrant economy.

In 2023 Barnsley MBC's Cabinet signed off an approach to the development of a Borough-wide cultural strategy (see attached Cabinet paper). This approach is focused on building on the borough's existing democratic structures, empowering local communities, and better understanding their needs, challenges and aspirations by implementing a community led approach.

The disorder that took place across the UK during the summer of 2024 has only emphasised further the role that culture and the arts can play in bringing communities together. Barnsley Council has recognised this significance and the need for creative solutions in terms of listening to, and empowering communities. Therefore the development of the strategy is now a fundamental part of the Council's wider Cohesion Approach, building bridges with local communities.

The original proposal suggested a two-stage approach. The first phase has been delivered during the latter part of 2023 completed by July 2024. A key part of this phase was undertaken by [Collective Sense](#) who carried out a piece of action research between January and June 2024 to find out Barnsley locals' perceptions about creativity, arts, and culture in their local areas. As well as running workshops with locals in five different wards, the researcher, Chris Rolls also consulted a number of creative practitioners, and cultural stakeholders about their perceptions of arts and cultural offer in Barnsley with attention to *challenges* ('lacks, gaps and cold spots') and possible *ideas* or possible *solutions* to these challenges.

Alongside this Action Research, a significant cultural sector mapping exercise across the Borough was undertaken. This analysis was delivered in conjunction with the University of Sheffield. It involved detailed desk research alongside a set of engagement sessions across the Borough. There has also been some useful progress at regional level. The SYMCA Cultural and Creative Industries Data research and mapping project completed in 2023 by Fifth Sector, provides a range of useful information concerning the size and scale of the sector across the region.

A further piece of mapping work is underway with Creative Engagement Producer Boseda Olawoye working with Barnsley's Black, Asian and Global Ethnic Majority communities to identify current engagement, gaps in engagement and barriers to engagement. Whilst this work will not be complete until February 2025, Bo will be able to feed in her findings as both pieces of work progress.

Barnsley MBC now wishes to commission and progress the second phase of work. This will build on the first, identifying key parts of our local community that require further engagement, and ensuring that we engage with those groups effectively and using the information gathered. We expect local cultural organisations such as Barnsley Civic, Lung Theatre and Barnsley Youth Choir, as well as artists and freelancers will play a key role in the delivery of the proposal and the development of the cultural strategy.

2. Proposed approach

Our assessment indicates that three steps of activity will be undertaken to deliver Phase 2 of the strategy development.

- 2.1. **Step One – Desk research and Review of initial work:** A thorough piece of desk research should take place, reviewing key strategy and policy documents relating to Barnsley and South Yorkshire. The consultants will also be provided with all recent results of engagement and consultation undertaken with the community by the Council, and the results of the work in Phase One should be reviewed thoroughly.
- 2.2. **Step two – Further Engagement with Communities and Stakeholders:** Step One will identify what conversations with key stakeholders will be required, as well as targeted engagement with key parts of the

community. A set of interviews and workshops will be agreed and undertaken. This work will be led by the appointed consultants.

- 2.3. **Step three – Strategy Development:** The consultants will work with the Project Team to draft a short and focused strategy based on the feedback and contributions received from the Desk Research, Phase 1, and Steps 1 and 2. The Strategy needs to be completed and signed off by Spring 2025.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

The engagement with stakeholders as part of Phase 2 will be agreed with the successful consultant.

One option is for the engagement to be driven by the four headline themes in [Barnsley 2030: Barnsley A Place of Possibilities](#). These are:

- Healthy Barnsley
- Learning Barnsley
- Growing Barnsley
- Sustainable Barnsley

4. Governance

The successful consultant will work with a small BMBC Project Team led by the Head of Culture and Visitor Economy. Progress on the development of the Strategy will be reported into the Cultural Strategy Oversight Group.

Consultant requirement

Barnsley MBC wishes to appoint an experienced individual or organisation with a proven track record in developing strategic frameworks for places and localities that put communities at their centre.

The successful appointee will be expected to work closely with the Project team and the Cultural Strategy Oversight Group to deliver the following:

- A thorough desk review and analysis of relevant existing policies, strategies, engagement/consultation summaries and wider documentation of relevance to Barnsley's cultural strategy, this should include, but not be limited to:
 - Phase 1 Barnsley Cultural Strategy public engagement action research;
 - Mapping Arts, Culture and the Creative Industries in Barnsley;
 - Pathways to Work Commission Report;
 - Barnsley 2030 Vision;
 - BMBC Stronger Communities report 2024;
 - SYMCA Cultural and Creative Industries Data research and mapping project
- Preparatory work with the BMBC Project Team and Cultural Strategy Oversight Group to shape the cultural strategy engagement process in Phase 1, and particularly the content of workshops with Ward Alliances and Stakeholders.
- Undertaking interviews and workshops with relevant community groups to identify their perspectives. To deliver this we are envisaging seven half day workshops taking place across the Borough of Barnsley.
- Undertaking creative workshops with relevant stakeholder groups across Barnsley to seek their views and expectations. To deliver this we are envisaging five two-hour workshops, the majority of which will be delivered in Barnsley town centre.
- Pull together and analyse the responses and findings from the desk research, workshops and other conversations into a draft cultural strategy for Barnsley.

The appointed Consultant will be:

- Experienced in delivering cultural/heritage/arts strategies for places and localities.
- At their ease with local communities, able to listen, engage and encourage.

- Someone that thinks outside of the box, you will have experience and insight in facilitating multifaceted projects that prioritise imagination over habit.
- Able to face challenge and obstacles with abundant affirmative solutions, using intellectual and embodied ways of navigating the many political and personal realms that will evolve in this project.
- Will to lead on the day-to-day administration of an ambitious participatory project.
- Able to provide an overview of project budget and project management processes
- Actively contributing to the creative framework within which the Ward Alliances and stakeholder conversations will operate.
- Comfortable with engaging with a wide range of partners and elected members.

Budget

A budget of up to £20,000 is available for the relevant individual/organisation to deliver this work.

Submission

If you are interested in delivering this exciting project please submit a Covering Letter of no more than six sides that should include:

- Your approach to delivering the work;
- Your relevant experience, including two referees;
- A summary of the costs you would incur;
- A project timetable.

The Covering Letter should be sent to the Storying Barnsley team (email storyingbarnsley@barnsley.gov.uk) by close of play on Monday 9th December 2024.

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