

Date of meeting: 15th September 2017

Report submitted by: Nick Denham, on behalf of the Creative Hertfordshire Steering Group

Title of Report: Hertfordshire's Year of Culture 2020 – project update

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 This report for information notes the proposal for a Hertfordshire Year of Culture in 2020, to raise the profile of the cultural sector across the county and to complement the 2018 Hertfordshire Year of Physical Activity. A powerpoint accompanied this report.

2.0 Background, since an initial discussion at HACO in June 2017

2.1 What is the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020?

- An ambitious programme to enhance the promotion, value and artistic quality of the cultural sector across Hertfordshire.
- To develop audiences across all forms of culture and heritage, particularly in areas and communities with low cultural engagement
- Cost-effective - build on existing programmes and services
- Collaborative delivery on new projects
- Identify and support training or development needs for cultural organisations
- Sharing expertise within the county and drawing in further expertise from our region and nationwide, for local organisations to create work themselves.

2.2 Interest in the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020 since HACO in June 2017:

- It is proving to be a more tangible project than a standalone countywide Cultural Strategy
- It is a follow-on theme from 2018 Hertfordshire Year of Physical Activity
- The suggested campaign year is January to December 2020, to allow lead-in time to prepare stakeholders and providers
- Through the campaign, to identify the strategic priorities, infrastructure and leadership for the cultural and creative sector in Hertfordshire after 2020

2.3 Organisations consulted so far include:

- Herts LEP, Visit Herts, University of Hertfordshire, HCC (Libraries, Heritage and Music Services; HCC Portfolio Holder), St Albans 1Life, Hertford Theatre, Arts Council England, Watford Palace, Herts Visual Arts Forum (HVAF), Hertfordshire Lifestyle Legacy Partnership (HLLP), Hertfordshire Public Health, Creative Hertfordshire, individual practitioners.
- *Hertfordshire Year of Physical Activity 2018* Development Group

2.4 Some comments from discussions to date:

- 'Start with what we have'; 'add value to existing programmes'; 'we need to celebrate what is there'
- Championing young people having access to culture in schools and their communities
- "If young people will be employed by the creative industries, let them be young people from Hertfordshire. How can we help this happen?"
- Make being on London's doorstep a positive
- Get local, regional and national attention
- Some cultural events will be more expensive than other choices, so how do we reflect their value?

- Promotion that is high impact with positive prompts (like *This Girl Can*) and minimal cost – for example ‘*make this the year you...*’, to encourage culture to be part of anyone’s routine. These generic messages can run after 2020.
- Test the campaign by how many people sign up to something
- We don’t want to marginalise people who feel ‘culture’ is not for them
- Be explicit there is something there for everybody (as there is under ‘Physical Activity’), and there are decisions residents can make in their own home about getting involved
- Local cultural opportunities are being informed by participants and audience members

3.0 Initial proposals for the Hertfordshire Year of Culture in 2020 (Herts YOC2020)

3.1 Initial principles for the campaign:

- **Promote interactive, ‘hands on’ opportunities**
 - Active ‘making’, behind the scenes, intergenerational
- **Raise profile of high quality arts & culture ‘on your doorstep’**
 - Promote current work, tourism, collaboration, new projects
- **Encourage venues and providers to run ‘takeover’ events**
 - Run by local children, tap talents of current volunteers
- **Encourage partnerships of local providers to reach particular groups with low engagement in cultural opportunities**
 - Reach new audiences, increase reach of venues/local networks

Through the programme:

- *Online promotion of live events & opportunities across the county*
- *2018 and 2019 are used to support practitioners and providers to develop their services and projects ahead of Herts YOC2020*

3.2 Context in 2020. Some celebratory events are already planned in Hertfordshire for 2020, as well as opportunities for cultural organisations to consider complementing across the year. It would be helpful to know about other opportunities around the county.

- Welwyn Garden City Centenary
- UH School of Creative Arts 150yrs old
- Harpenden cultural venue opening
- Stevenage Cultural Strategy
- The expanding music festival programme countywide
- Olympics and Paralympics
- European Football Championships

3.3 ‘Towards 2020’

- Ahead of the campaign, partners to focus on:
 - Our collective cultural assets, and practical ways to connect them
 - residents not currently getting involved in culture
 - supporting cultural providers to expand their offer, through genre/artform symposiums, skill sharing and funding advice.
- Invite London 2012 InspireMark-style nominations for work in line with Herts YOC2020 principles, to receive campaign branding.
- A Grants for the Arts bid to Arts Council England through Creative Hertfordshire to underpin this for a project with clear public engagement outcomes.

3.4 During 2020:

- Promotional campaign for planned activities and events
- Some 'Showstopper' events: National Storytelling Conference; commissions; heritage project; creative careers conference...
- **Visit Herts** and **Creative Hertfordshire** as the online platforms for promotion and campaigns

Initial suggested online campaigns in 2020:

- **"Make this the year you..."** visit the theatre, take better photos, make a film on your phone, dance all night, play in a band, trace your family tree, paint something to hang at home..."
- **'Celebrating the people and places of Herts'**. Themed months (outdoors, dance, family). Images/film shared on social media.

4.0 Issues raised in the consultation to date

4.1 The following questions have been raised in the discussions so far about the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020. Some initial responses are below for consideration by HACO, with additional information being collected from consultation meetings with HACO, HLLP and Creative Hertfordshire members.

1. What is the need we are trying to address with Hertfordshire's Year of Culture 2020?

- To support health and wellbeing in Herts, with a parallel programme of activity to Physical Activity.
- Raise the profile of existing assets and opportunities, and to increase active participation and engagement across the county
- To raise the profile of the cultural infrastructure of Hertfordshire. This needs to include collating available data on areas (or demographic groups) who have a low level of engagement in culture, as well as the size of the cultural/creative economy of Hertfordshire, and to identify common aims for a countywide cultural vision beyond 2020.

Action for YOC: collate data on cultural engagement in Hertfordshire [proposed lead Creative Hertfordshire]

2. What would we aim to achieve with a Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020? What could the outcomes be?

- A countywide cultural vision/strategy for the sector for 5-10 years
- Collating and co-ordinating information on what is out there, through the *inspiremark* applications, social media campaigns, online listing and national media
- Active involvement of targeted groups with previous low engagement in cultural opportunities
- Through CPD/support for cultural providers in the county and increasing footfall/ticket sales at events around the county, we will increase the economic impact of culture and expand audiences.
- Increase tourism (internally and externally), supported by an association with Visit Herts
- Raising the profile and quality of the cultural offer in Herts.
- To attract high quality projects to the county, through promoting a county receptive to innovative and collaborative working, and through clear contact points and introductory channels for initiating work in Herts.

3. What is Hertfordshire's cultural infrastructure for Herts YOC2020?

- Local Authority cultural services. HCC includes libraries, heritage, music education, YC Hertfordshire centres; district/borough arts officers/theatres/museums. HACO members

- Geographic cultural networks. Countywide – Creative Hertfordshire, Visit Herts, HLLP, Herts Cultural Education Partnership; district/local – e.g. Dacorum Arts Partnership (DAP), Watford Area Arts Forum
- Networks for artform/genre – e.g. HVAF, Digswell, Herts Association of Museums (HAM)
- Funded organisations (ACE, HLF): National Portfolio Organisations, Herts Music Education Hub
- Education sector: schools, FE colleges, University of Hertfordshire
- Individual organisations/practitioners
- Creative commercial organisations
- Community groups and voluntary sector
- Venues – diverse locations and programmes

Actions for YOC: complete research on what is the cultural infrastructure in Herts; complete economic impact study of cultural/creative economy of Hertfordshire (lead to be identified).

4. Where is the leadership for Hertfordshire's cultural sector?

The proposed leadership for YOC is:

- The *Herts Year of Culture 2020* Development Group, reporting to HLLP and HACO. Based on the Herts Year of Physical Activity Development Group, the proposed membership of the YOC group (for an initial six month commitment) is:
 - Economic Development: LEP and Visit Herts
 - LAs: HACO; HCC (Cultural service leads; Culture Portfolio Holder – Terry Douris; Public Health)
 - Education: University of Hertfordshire; West Herts College (on behalf of FE)
 - Networks: Creative Hertfordshire, HVAF, one local cultural network (e.g. DAP)
 - Cultural organisations: National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) - Watford Palace & ROH Bridge; Trestle; Henry Moore; a creative business; an inclusive creative organisation (e.g. ActOne ArtsBase or Herts Inclusive Theatre); Diverse creative organisation
 - National bodies: Arts Council England (ACE) and Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)
 - Voluntary sector representative – e.g. Herts Community Foundation, Community Development Agency (CDA), Connect Hertfordshire Community Hub, Herts Sports Partnership
- A 'Figurehead Group' has been proposed, that meets less regularly, with the owners or CEOs of key cultural facilities.
- Any plans for a countywide cultural strategy is separate from the *Herts YOC2020* Development Group, with the leadership of these plans recommended to be HACO .

Actions for YOC: research to recommend models of leadership for cultural infrastructure in Herts beyond YOC 2020 [proposed lead Creative Hertfordshire]

5. What is included in 'culture', for this campaign?

- Views on this are being collected through consultation meetings.

5.0 **Benefits of the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020 campaign for HACO members:**

- Additional promotion of local existing/planned services
- Collaborating on skill sharing for local services and/or targeting new projects for key communities
- Initial six month membership of the *Herts YOC2020* Development Group
- HACO to consider supporting this campaign through a small grant from HACO funds in 2018, 2019 and 2020 towards funding bids for *Herts YOC2020* central resource. A proposal will be brought to HACO's December 2017 meeting.

6.0 Next steps

- 6.1 HACO members are encouraged to tell colleagues and networks about Hertfordshire's Year of Culture 2020, and to pass any feedback to Nick Denham (nick.denham@hertfordshire.gov.uk).
- 6.2 HACO's Culture Working Group to meet and consider current feedback, towards drafting a project proposal for Herts YOC2020.
- 6.3 In December 2017, HACO to consider a grant application from Creative Hertfordshire for a small grant in 2018, 2019 and 2020 from HACO funds as match funding towards an application for external funds to co-ordinate the central programme.

Appendix – Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020 PowerPoint Presentation