

## **TRAFFORD COUNCIL**

**Report to:** Executive Briefing  
**Date:** 10 July 2023  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage

### **Report Title**

**Trafford Cultural Strategy and implementation plan**

### **Summary**

Trafford's Cultural Strategy has been developed over the past year, drawing on extensive research as well as consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders.

The vision of the Cultural Strategy is – “We will make Trafford a place powered by cultural and creative expression that comes from everyone, and which will enrich lives and life chances.” This is underpinned by 3 main strategic aims focussing on Leadership, Talent and Communities.

Further engagement has led to the co-produced action plan to activate the strategy. The action plan is starting point, so will grow and be refined once implementation begins.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**It is recommended that Executive:**

1. Adopt and approve the Trafford Cultural Strategy; and
2. Approve the implementation plan and commit the associated resources.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Simon Davis  
Extension:

*Implications:*

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	The Cultural Strategy will contribute to the delivery of the corporate plan and strategic priorities - reducing health inequalities, supporting people out of poverty and addressing the climate crisis.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	The Strategy work takes into account the Greater Manchester Combined Authority Culture strategy <i>Grown in Greater Manchester, Known Around The World</i> and will ensure that Trafford strategy is aligned.
Financial	There is a temporary resource ask of up to £180k to activate the strategy. No specific budget exists for this, therefore the cost will need to be met from the general contingency budget which affords a small element of resilience to cover unbudgeted commitments and any unbudgeted costs caused by the continuing high levels of inflation affecting good and services and pay. . There is potential for impact on identified savings within the Finance and Change Programme as there is a recommendation to review the operating model of Waterside Arts.
Legal Implications:	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.
Equality/Diversity Implications	The Cultural Strategy includes a pillar on how access and engagement with culture can be increased across different under-represented groups.
Sustainability Implications	There is nothing in the report that would undermine our sustainability plans.
Carbon Reduction	The Cultural Strategy aims to improve opportunities which can assist in supporting carbon reduction.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	As implementation commences resources will be required, either by embedding the within existing roles or as part of mini projects.
Risk Management Implications	There is the potential impact from; the cost of living and the Service Review. Both of these risks have already been identified in this report as part of this analysis.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Health and wellbeing will be improved through the implementation of the Culture Strategy through improved access to services and opportunities.
Health and Safety Implications	No direct impact.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Trafford Council recognises the benefits a Trafford Cultural Strategy will bring to the borough. The strategy has been a priority for a number of years and will support the delivery of the corporate plan, vision and strategic priorities while maximising and growing the benefits of the wider cultural sector for the borough and our residents. Additionally, a strong cultural offer would have positive impacts on both the visitor and night-time economy.
- 1.2 The aim of the Trafford Cultural Strategy is to bring together the rich and diverse cultural assets within the borough, from large independent organisations (e.g. Imperial War Museum, LCCC, MUFC, Dunham Massey), to small community groups and Council run services (e.g. Waterside, Gorse Hill Studios, OT Creative). This will create a greater sense of place identity within Trafford and greater confidence in the value of all cultural activity, while supporting the vision and strategic objectives of the council.
- 1.3 The strategy recognises the importance of local resources, local traditions and customs and looks to promote these further, to improve the boroughs image and pride in place. The strategy will provide opportunities for both local residents and visitors to enjoy the cultural arts and history of place, in addition to the sporting and retail opportunities that are currently available, while at the same time boosting and bringing local investment into the borough.
- 1.4 It is acknowledged that to produce a local Trafford Cultural Strategy, Trafford cannot act in isolation – it needs to link in regionally with plans across Greater Manchester – so positioning Trafford to benefit from this and collaborating with partners across Greater Manchester in addition to local strategic partners is critical.
- 1.5 Currently Trafford is underrepresented in terms of external funding for culture and the arts, with no Trafford based organisations being supported by the GMCA Culture Fund or by Arts Council England’s NPO (National Portfolio Organisation) programme. The Trafford Cultural Strategy will build on GMCA’s [Culture Strategy](#) – *Grown in Greater Manchester, Known Around The World*, to ensure that Trafford is fairly represented in the cultural sector across the region.
- 1.6 The strategy development process supported the Council on its journey to build an understanding of the current landscape, the challenges and the opportunities that are available to deliver the strategic vision. The development process included researching, engaging and testing through consultation and critical thinking. A key strength identified is that Trafford is a talent belt for Greater Manchester, 25% of creative professionals living in the borough.
- 1.7 This process allowed for openness and flexibility so influencing factors that may not have been present when the original brief was created can be aligned, e.g. cost-of-living crisis, further changes in government (policy), post-pandemic funding, and other major council strategies. This development work looked at what Trafford is dealing with and how the role of improved cultural identity can benefit, e.g. community wellbeing on one hand and inward investment on the other.
- 1.8 The Draft Cultural Strategy was presented to Executive Briefing in March and was broadly accepted, however more detail was required about implementation. This briefing provides an overview of the Vision, Strategic Aims and Recommendations

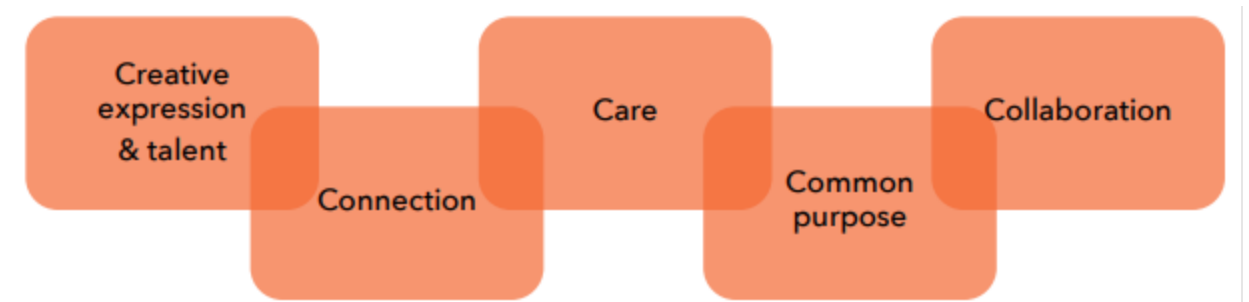
of the Trafford Cultural Strategy, a high-level implementation plan to embed the strategy and the resources required.

## 2. Trafford Cultural Strategy

2.1 The full strategy is attached, as appendix 1, with this briefing and this section gives a brief overview of the Vision, Strategic Aims and Recommendations.

2.2 Vision –

The vision has been based on 5 dominant interlocking themes –



These have led to the vision of the Cultural Strategy being as follows:

***We will make Trafford a place powered by cultural and creative expression that comes from everyone, and which will enrich lives and life chances.***

2.3 Strategic Aims –

There are 3 strategic aims that are based on Leadership, Talent and Communities. These are –

1. Trafford will develop a distinctive and inclusive approach to cultural leadership, based on a shared set of priorities with key partners.
2. Trafford will become a creative factory – GM's 'talent belt' – driving opportunities for embryonic, emerging and established cultural talent, with clear pathways for skills, talent and career development.
3. Trafford will champion and nurture connected cultural communities from the grassroots up, by supporting more hyperlocal and community-led activity.

Detailed in the attached Cultural Strategy are objectives detailed for each of these aims.

2.4 Recommendations –

The recommendations are in section C2 of the attached Cultural Strategy and are grouped by the strategic aims, Leadership, Talent and Communities. All 19 recommendations are also detailed here –

***Leadership –***

1. Create a new strategic panel for cultural development, chaired by Trafford Council with representation from culture, creative industries, places and placemaking, and communities, with a clearly defined set of roles and responsibilities to drive the vision for this strategy.

2. The panel should consider making an application to Greater Manchester 'Town of Culture' programme as a means of providing impetus to the activation of the strategy - the timing of this is important as, if successful, it needs sufficient lead in time
3. Recruit a temporary Cultural Transformation 'director' role – an inspiring and proactive individual who will activate the 'hub and spoke' model, building confidence and capability across the partnership, and drive the alignment of relevant Trafford Council assets and resources in support of the strategy, including Waterside Arts, Music Service, Libraries, Leisure Trust, and other departments. An outcome of their role will be a strong application and foundations programme for Year of Culture.
4. Establish an internal, cross-departmental cultural leadership training programme for Council officers. This can provide the means, focus and confidence for engaged services like Libraries and Communities and Town Centre Managers to apply their energy into culture with purpose.
5. As a result, it can build depth and consistency in empowering and devolving Trafford's cultural 'welcome' in practical terms, e.g., licensing, community grants, use of parks, etc. As a model, it can strengthen hyperlocal cultural programming, and roll-out across the borough. It may also provide an attractive proposition for funders.
6. Using the relationships that the Council has across sectors and with its supply chain (including with partners, including Trafford Leisure, Trafford Housing Trust, Bruntwood), revisit and develop more effective mechanisms for cultural community groups to be able to access facilities in an affordable and timely manner.

#### **Talent –**

7. Conduct a detailed audit of all cultural facilities and technical assets to set against demand and need from creative industries, practitioners and the community. For example, the provision of media, editing, digital and photographic stores, dark rooms, studios, display etc. for community and professional image-based activity, including animation.
8. Conduct a detailed review of the sector, sensitive to the cost-of-living crisis and post-pandemic situation, to inform immediate and mid-term priorities:
  - a. Collaboration (e.g., strategic interventions and development programmes, events, cross-sector partnerships);
  - b. Coordination (e.g., marketing communications, programming, role of Creative Industries Trafford);
  - c. Capability & Capacity building (e.g., skills development, data capture, shared learning, resources, potential for green and blue public spaces for cultural activity)
9. Invite organisations, practitioners, and community-based groups to contribute ideas and programme for a Towns of Culture application.
10. Support the fledgling LCEP to establish clear pathways for young people in Trafford to access creative and cultural activities (for skills, talent and career development, enterprise or 'just' life-enrichment) beyond Key Stage 4 / 5, and outside of the formal education environment.
11. Build resilience and expertise into this approach to cultural education with strategic partnerships with formal education partners, e.g., UA92. Cultural education can be delivered via an innovative and blended model, including building on existing strengths in sports and leisure education.

12. Review how third sector and community networks – such as Trafford Arts Association – support voluntary and amateur activity (individual and organisational), to improve how needs (skills & training, getting involved and learning, communications, funding, creative exchange, social exchange etc.) is defined and responded to as part of the third sector ‘talent belt’.
13. Research and create a talent pool of active / experienced cultural and creative professionals living in the borough (and perhaps working elsewhere) to mentor talent (both community-based groups and individuals).

### **Communities –**

14. Commission primary research (e.g., from The Audience Agency – noting that Audience Finder data will not be sufficient) to build a shared understanding of cultural engagement across Trafford, with a specific goal of mapping and making recommendations on how to develop a shared cultural data capture and management capability. This would pull together for the first time the full cultural ecology of the borough – major players like Imperial War Museum, Lancashire Cricket and Waterside alongside smaller, community and privately run organisations and enterprises. Data is currently generated, captured and applied in different ways. There is an opportunity to aggregate data to inform cultural investment and partnership activity. The more data can be captured digitally, the easier it will be to capture, track and report.
15. Building on an enhanced understanding of cultural diversity, provision and opportunities (from the shared data approach noted above), develop an audience development plan that has as its starting point the whole cultural ecology, and not just by organisation.
16. Apply the enhanced data, networks and connectivity of the ‘hub & spokes’ model to build a Trafford listings platform online – a channel to promote the offer, but also build sector engagement and partnership.
17. Ensure that digital capability and connectivity is a priority, including infrastructure, programmes and upskilling re: the capture and use of data, and how to harness to drive better intelligence & insight; digital engagement and communications activity; events promotion, commerciality and income generation.
18. Activate the connectivity of the ‘hub & spokes’ model digitally – to build a comprehensive Trafford-wide online events listings platform / digital channels and services (such as websites, e-newsletters, digital noticeboards, town centre screens) to showcase and promote the offer, build sector and partner engagement and encourage audience / community discovery, participation and exchange around the borough. These need to be in place in advance of a Towns of Culture Year – and will take 6-9 months to deliver and embed.
19. Work with community-led cultural organisations on a twin track participatory approach. Firstly, develop new membership and volunteering opportunities, especially for younger people. Secondly, work with these (often ageing) same organisations to extend this into longer-term leadership roles. In effect, sustainability through succession planning.

## **3. Progress Update**

- 3.1 Following the draft Cultural Strategy being presented to Executive Briefing in March, there was broad support for the strategy and its recommendations, however further detail was required around the implementation and resource requirements. CTC were commissioned to support this work by producing an indicative action plan and role description for the recommended Cultural Transformation position following further stakeholder engagement.
- 3.2 The stakeholder engagement centred around a Cultural Strategy Summit held on 6<sup>th</sup> June at Urmston Library. All previous stakeholders were invited to attend, with 42 people present on the day from a wide range of organisations. The summit included 2 workshop sessions to inform the outputs, these were –
1. To identify skills and resources that everyone both has and needs to form the basis of a skills matrix.
  2. To identify the actionable steps required to achieve the aims of the strategy.
- 3.3 The feedback from these workshops have been captured. An example skills matrix has been compiled from the education themed responses and is attached as appendix 2. In total 54 actionable steps were captured and categorised in 6 themes –
1. Cultural Transformation Impetus
  2. Empower and devolve Trafford's 'cultural welcome'
  3. Develop cultural education with formal education partners
  4. Review how 3rd sector/ community networks support voluntary & amateur activity
  5. Prioritise digital capability and connectivity
  6. Work with community arts organisations on twin-track participatory approach
- 3.4 The feedback has been used to inform the creation of the Cultural Transformation role profile, the following implementation plan and will be used in early stages of the implementation.
- 3.5 The creation of a temporary (up to 2 years) Cultural Transformation role is a recommendation of the strategy and will be essential to a successful implementation. A draft role profile is attached for information, as appendix 3, and includes the role types considered. The recommendation is that either a high-level freelancer or fixed term senior officer would be more suitable than a strategic consultant for the skills required, with a high-level freelancer likely to be the best fit. This will require financial resource of up to £145k.

#### **4. Implementation Plan**

- 4.1 For the Cultural Strategy to be successfully adopted the activity required will need to be iterative and, at times, organic, therefore not all actions are known now. This initial implementation plan sets out –
1. Immediate activity that will take place
  2. Outline plan to create and embed Trafford's Cultural Network (Hub and Spoke)
  3. Brief overview of internal reviews required

#### 4.2 Immediate activity –

The immediate activity is centred around activity that started during the strategy development and preparation work before the someone starts in the new role. Therefore, this activity will take place between August 23 and November/ December 23.

Action	Start	End
Recruit to new role	Aug-23	Dec-23
Develop TORs and create internal Steering Group by evolving the Events Group	Jul-23	Sep-23
Steering Group will ensure buy-in and identify overlaps internally	Sep-23	Ongoing
Steering Group to oversee internal process and policy review e.g. Street Art, TENs etc.	Sep-23	TBC
Create a Cultural Calendar that can further evolve in future	Jul-23	Aug-23
Further engagement with "cultural teams" e.g. Libraries, Music Service and Waterside Arts to embed the aims of the strategy, as preparation for full operating model review	Aug-23	Dec-23
Communication/engagement with stakeholders who contributed to the strategy development to maintain engagement	Aug-23	Ongoing
Establish/Maintain key relationships with external organisations (e.g. ACE and GMCA) to ensure strategic alignment	Jul-23	Ongoing
TCEP Relaunch	Jul-23	Sep-23

#### 4.3 Outline plan to create and embed Trafford’s Cultural Network –

The aim of the network is to take forward the majority recommendations in the strategy and therefore will include a wider range of stakeholders/partners/members including –

- Trafford Council services
- Health
- VCFSE groups
- Strategic partners
- Businesses
- Creative individuals/organisations

The first part of the network will be a new Strategic Panel with representation from the above groups to drive the vision of the strategy. The activity of the network will need to be iterative and organic to ensure success and will therefore grow over time. The graphic below gives an overview of this process, with a number of key stages during the initial 2 years, some of which will be repeated, to grow the network successfully. These key stages are –

##### 4.3.1 Preparation –

The preparation stage will be used to undertake the immediate actions above, with the addition of –

- Identifying and engaging with potential members of the Strategic Panel and creating TORs
- Any other preparatory actions identified by the Steering Group



- Review of actions captured at the Cultural Strategy Summit

#### 4.3.2 Creation –

The initial creation stage will start in November 23 and continue to summer 24, the activity during this time driven by the new role and will include the creation of –

- The Strategic Panel, including defined roles to achieve the strategic aims of the strategy
- The Trafford Cultural Network

These will then lead to the creation of –

- Toolkits and resources, including –
  - Skills and resource matrix
  - Funding opportunity pipeline
  - Talent pathways
  - Clear processes for staging cultural events
  - Directory of contacts
- Collaboration opportunities, including funding bids
- Mechanism to share best practice
- A shared evaluation framework to capture outcomes

Over time the creation phase will be repeated as required and as new opportunities arise.

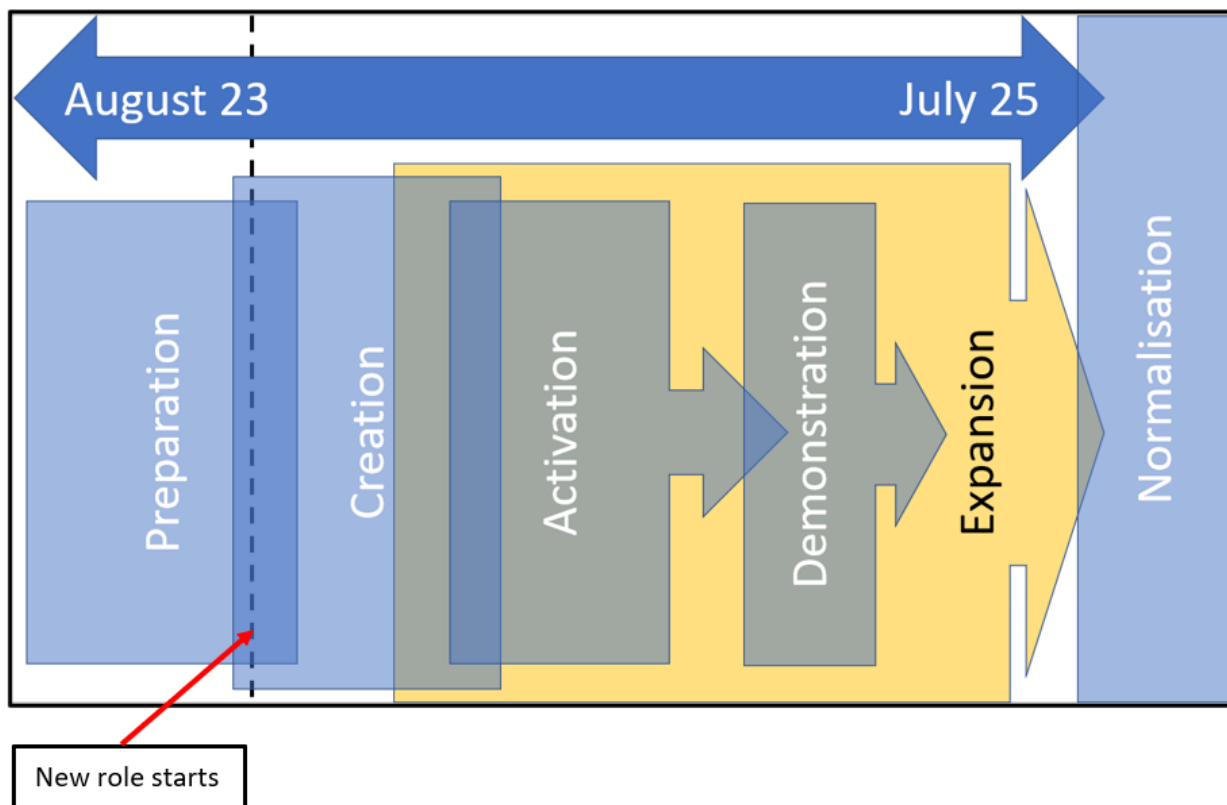
#### 4.3.3 Activation and Demonstration –

These stages will grow out of the previous work and will see the aims coming to life, whilst the graphic shows this beginning in spring 24, there is potential for pockets of activity earlier if the right opportunities are discovered. These stages will be repeated many times as the aims of the strategy are embedded. At this stage it isn't possible to know what will be seen, but potential examples are –

- Community theatre performances in libraries and leisure centres
- Public art exhibitions in parks
- Art inspired by heritage assets
- Local creative professionals mentoring young people
- Increase cultural activity in care homes

#### 4.3.4 Expansion and Normalisation –

The expansion stage is encompassing the previous activity as it grows through iterative steps, both through larger activity and increased engagement. This will be achieved by evaluating activity and showcasing success, which in turn provides a platform for larger funding applications. One potential future opportunity is the Arts Council's Place Partnership funding, an application to this (or another suitable fund) will be made during 24/25 to enable to step to be taken to normalisation and the vision of the strategy being realised.



4.4 Brief overview of internal reviews required – Operating model and structural reviews are required of the internal “cultural teams” (Libraries, Music Service and Waterside) to ensure that they are in the strongest position possible to embrace and model the vision and aims of the strategy. This review will be driven by the new role and will evaluate the skills, structure, operating model(s) and resources required in conjunction with the teams and will make recommendations for future delivery. These reviews will take place in 2024 to enable decisions to be made by March 25.

## 5. Resource Requirements

5.1 The table below sets out the required budget to activate the strategy –

Element	Budget Required
Cultural Transformation Role (assumed freelancer @£400 per day averaging 3.5 days per week for 2 years)	£145,600
Marketing resource	£15,000
Expenses (to enable collaboration and learning)	£20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£180,600</b>

5.2 This required budget can be met from the general contingency budget.

5.3 The recommendations include a review of the operating model for Waterside Arts, therefore there may be an impact on the identified savings within the Finance and Change programme for Waterside Arts.

5.4 The intention is that future funding requirements are met from external sources e.g. ACE Place Partnership.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Executive are asked to:

1. Adopt and approve the Trafford Cultural Strategy; and
2. Approve the implementation plan and commit the associated resources.

**Key Decision:** Yes

**Finance Officer Clearance** GB  
**Legal Officer Clearance** DS

**DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE:** Sara Saleh  
To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.