

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
ENVIRONMENT SELECT COMMITTEE – 23 MARCH 2022
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR FOR CLEANER, GREENER & CULTURAL
SERVICES
CULTURE PLAN 2022–26

This report has been brought to the Environment Select Committee to provide an update on the Four-Year Culture Plan 2022 - 2026. This follows on from the launch of a One Year Covid-19 Recovery Culture Plan 2020-21 in July 2020.

The Committee is asked to note the report and make comments to the Lead Member for Culture, Leisure & Community Safety.

FOR SCRUTINY AND COMMENT

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Pre Covid-19, a Five-Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2025 had been created in draft. In light of the pandemic, prior to this being signed-off, in May 2020 it was revised. Subsequently, a One Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2021 was launched in July 2020.
- 1.2 This report outlines next steps to enable a Four-Year Culture Plan 2022 - 2026 to be created and includes an overview of the development of Kensington + Chelsea Festival.

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 The Select Committee is invited:
 - to consider and comment upon priorities for the Four-Year Culture Plan 2022 - 2026
 - to review plans for the Kensington + Chelsea Festival

and to consider if any changes should be made to the proposed process for developing the Four Year Culture Plan and the delivery of the K+C Festival for 2022.

3 MAIN REPORT

- 3.1 The report has been brought to the Environment Select Committee to give the Committee an opportunity to review the proposed direction of travel on the production of the Four-Year Culture Plan.

Key decisions

- Kensington + Chelsea Festival - Forward Plan ref: KD06098/22/D/A (17 February 2022)
- Culture Plan 2022 - 2026 – Forward Plan ref: 06048/22/D/A (Not before 1 February 2022)- Still to be implemented.

Four Year Culture Plan 2022 - 2026

- 3.2 On 6 July 2020, the Environment Select Committee reviewed the draft One Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2021. On 8 December 2020, the Environment Select Committee reviewed the methodology proposed for the Four-Year Culture Plan 2022 - 2026.
- 3.3 On 15 July 2020, the One Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2021 was agreed by the Leadership Team. The One Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2021 is listed on the RBKC website: <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/culture/culture-plan-2020>.
- 3.4 The process to co-create the original Five-Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2025 with residents, retailers, market traders, cultural providers and creatives started in the second week of September 2019. In advance of a draft Five-Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2025 being created in December 2019, this encompassed the following activity:
- Detailed analysis of existing data and consultations on relevant topics.
 - A literature review to fill in any gaps in knowledge, including London and national trends.
 - A community engagement process involving conversations with residents, retailers, market traders, cultural providers and practitioners through a series of Listening Sessions.
 - One-to-one conversations with residents, retailers, market traders, cultural providers and practitioners and with relevant RBKC staff.
 - A “Cultural Conversation” event attended by over 120 cultural providers and practitioners.
 - A series of Focus Groups to which residents, retailers, market traders, cultural providers and practitioners and relevant RBKC staff were invited.
- 3.5 Throughout January 2020 a process of internal consultation on the draft Culture Plan was undertaken. This included:
- Circulation of the draft document
 - One-to-one meetings and team meetings
 - Hosting of a Culture Café at KTH
 - Receiving detailed comments on the draft Culture Plan

This feedback was then sense checked and in consultation with Environment and Communities colleagues and Lead Members a new version of the Culture Plan was created and signed off for external consultation.

3.6 Throughout February 2020, a process of external consultation was undertaken. This included:

- Circulation of the draft plan to Resident Associations, cultural providers, arts schools and practitioners, retailers and youth arts organisations
- Attendance/presentations at resident focused events such as an event run by the Kensington Society
- Hosting of Creative Conversations (Listening Sessions) in seven locations across the borough and receiving suggested changes by email and phone
- Discussing with cultural providers and others, options for signing up as a Partner for Actions included within the Culture Plan
- An update version of the Culture Plan was then created

3.7 In March 2020, the final timetable was as follows:

- The draft Culture Plan 2020 - 2025 was circulated to Ward Councillors, residents, retailers, market traders, cultural providers and practitioners. Comments were collated and reviewed by the Head of Culture and Place
- The draft Culture Plan Report was to be presented at Environment Select Committee – 23 March 2020. However, this meeting did not take place due to Covid-19 lockdown. The Committee were sent a copy of the Plan and asked their views by the Committee Chair. Comments were received back and fed into the final drafting process

3.8 Due to Covid-19 and the impact on the Cultural sector, a revised One Year version was then created in May 2020, following an online Creative Conversation hosted in April 2020 during lockdown. Over 80 cultural providers and practitioners attended this event. The One Year Culture Plan 2020 - 2021 was then created. A second online Creative Conversation was hosted in September 2020 to which residents, retailers, landowners, market traders, cultural providers and practitioners were invited. A total of 132 people signed up to attend the event. The agenda was set by the participants as a group at the start of the Conversation around the question “How can culture play a central role in the borough’s recovery post Covid-19?”

3.9 Questions and themes that came out of the Creative Conversation in September 2020 for consideration in the Four-Year Culture Plan 2022 - 2026 were:

- High Streets – using Culture to revitalise these
- Pop up spaces for creatives across the borough
- Getting local people more excited about visiting local venues - bringing a festival feel in the borough
- Creative solutions to planning activities with young people

- Ensuring culture in the borough is accessible to older people
 - Developing a “showcase hub” to showcase projects and build new collaborations
 - Creating an online database of creatives in the borough
 - What role can buildings play? Creating a system of artistic guardianship for the borough
 - More outdoor local events. Ideas suggested included weekly events, arts spaces, “come for free session on acting, glass blowing etc. Encourage people to dress warm, pop in, free, come and share activities.
 - Making a social history project for this borough. Gather people’s stories and showcase the different communities and diversity in the borough.
 - Making things affordable and accessible. Providing a platform for young people to showcase talent and creativity for music, short films and art.
 - Portobello/Golborne Road Market - products that serve the local community are thriving, can we do more to assist people to start trading?
 - Making the culture and creativity of local people visible in the public space. How about local takeover of Exhibition Road? We've all been isolated in home - make public space like a living room for everyone?
 - Building on school visits - like the Natural History Museum community evenings, encouraging school kids to revisit with parents and carers
- 3.10 To further develop the dialogue across the borough, in November 2020, January 2021 and June 2021, Cllr Will hosted online Creative Conversations. Over 350 people attended these events which were held on Zoom. These Creative Conversations were jointly delivered by Discover South Kensington/Exhibition Road Cultural Group, Kensington + Chelsea Art Week and Kensington and Chelsea Council’s Culture Team along with special guest hosts from the north of the borough Goldfinger.
- 3.11 Additional consultation undertaken as part of the High Street Programme included:
- Local walkabout activity focused on residents, retailers and cultural providers which have taken place during Covid lockdown when restrictions allowed
 - The Commonplace platform which has enabled residents to offer views on potential High Street priorities which reached a total of 526 respondents who offered 998 comments
 - Comment received during the creation of the Markets Plan 2022 – 2027
 - Establishing new BIDs and working them to develop culture led priorities and actions.

Kensington + Chelsea Festival

- 3.12 From 21 June to 31 August 2021, Kensington + Chelsea Festival created joy in the post-pandemic landscape by encouraging recovery through cultural participation, rediscovery of Kensington and Chelsea, commissioning of new work and supporting performances by freelancers, many of whom lost more than a year of income. Several strands of the programming involved residents in the decision-making process. The majority of the activities took place in person. For those still isolating, there were immersive events on offer digitally. The Chelsea Theatre offered free loans of tablets to enable those without IT equipment to engage with activities from own home.
- 3.13 Delivery of activities within the Kensington + Chelsea Festival from 21 June to 31 August 2021, included:
- An estimated 33,325 people attended the free outdoor performances
 - More than 3,000 people booked tickets for venue-based performances
 - A total of 26 Pay What You Want Fringe shows in venues, with also new commissions by The Playground Theatre and The Gate
 - The BAME focused Trainee Producer role was filled with assistance from RBKC Family and Children's Services
 - Young people's take over stages advertised (5 in total) plus 3 free primary school shows were offered
 - Museum of the Moon installation outdoors Kensington Town Square and indoors St John the Baptist Church
 - Partner events with Notting Hill Carnival and the 606 Jazz Club, included 4 sell-out shows at Holland Park Opera for more than 1,500 people
 - Four partner events run outdoors for the community by recipients of the RBKC Covid-19 grants, with more than 2,000 in attendance
 - Over 100 volunteers supported the festival during weekender shows, with 45 volunteers attending 3 training sessions, totalling 417 volunteer hours
 - Online events programme with Leighton House Museum
 - Civic Gallery exhibits at Kensington Town Hall
- 3.14 Examples of Feedback Received

In-person

"I live in the area and managed to catch lots of outdoor events put on by the festival" - A family of spectators at Valentino's Street Band in Little Wormwood Scrubs Park

"I wish the festival was longer" – Visitor feedback at 'Catch Me' by Upswing at Kensington Memorial Park

"How did they manage to make everything free? Amazing" – Audience member at 'Bonded' by Alleyne Dance at Kensington Town Square

“A beautiful performance with such a unique approach to Hindu Mythology” – Audience member at The Chelsea Theatre Fringe, sold out show 'Bhrama, Vishnu, Shiva'

“Sometimes bad weather but you don't give up” – Audience member at Bedlam Oz at Emslie Horniman Park

“The most diverse audience we have ever performed to” – Festival performers at Worlds End Place

Online

“The range of events available which meant there really was something for everyone”

“We are grateful that free entertainment was provided over quite a long period when few other events were taking place”

“Careful curation, very inclusive”

“It was beautiful and unexpected”

“It was across every park, so I got to see new places come alive”

“It's eclecticism and that the free events meant everyone could participate”

“I love the steel pan performances, the costumes and the workshops surrounding carnival”

“Different locations and there was a variety”

“So many free events! Thank you!!!”

“It's a good idea, somewhere to bring people”

“Volunteers. They were so dedicated”

- 3.15 This year, Kensington + Chelsea Festival will take place in July and August 2022. The season-long programme will allow for increased engagement by venues, artists and residents impacted by the pandemic.
- 3.16 This initiative has been developed working with cultural providers, residents and significant landlords including Cadogan Estates.
- 3.17 The Festival will be delivered using this methodology:
- RBKC officers hosting an art installation on Kensington Town Square
 - RBKC officers hosting pop up activities in RBKC outdoor spaces and parks
 - A visual art public art trail delivered by existing partners KCAW
 - An external open call for borough-based venues who want to host Fringe performances, with a set fee for artists involved
 - An external open call for borough-based organisations who wish to facilitate young people's takeover stages (min of 3 pop up stages)
 - An external tender to run the Marketing for the Festival

- An external tender to run the PR for the Festival
- The Festival will include a range of performances being delivered by partner venues by including, by agreement, shows that they would already be presenting, for example The Royal Court, Cadogan Hall, Tabernacle
- Evaluation of the different activities and events will take place, as well as the overall programme and festival.

3.18 The K+C Festival is included in the Culture Plan 2022 - 2026 as an annual festival (subject to securing resources and approvals) and to develop the K+C Festival brand. The festival will be reviewed annually with the intention to build on the success of the K+C Festival held in 2021.

4 TIMESCALE FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 The original timetable for delivery of the Four-Year Culture Plan 2022 – 2026 was extended as a number of Culture Team officers were seconded to the Hub at periods in the last year. Therefore, the One Year Culture Plan 2021-2022 continued to be delivered. The following timetable is now being proposed:

- Draft Four-Year Plan is complete - End of April 2022
- Draft presented to Environment Select Committee - May 2022
- Final Plan produced - June 2022
- Approved by Lead Member and Leadership Team - July 2022
- Start implementation of the Four-Year Plan - August 2022

FOR SCRUTINY AND COMMENT

Terry Oliver
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None other than previously published documents.

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