

<b>This report is public</b>	
<b>Made in Banbury</b>	
<b>Committee</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee</b>	02 September 2025
<b>Portfolio Holder presenting the report</b>	Portfolio Holder for Councillor Rob Pattenden
<b>Date Portfolio Holder agreed report</b>	16 July 2025
<b>Report of</b>	Assistant Director Wellbeing and Housing

## **Purpose of report**

A new cultural strategy for Banbury and an exploration of the economic impact of investment in the cultural sector offer a perspective on the importance of cultural organisations for the district. This report highlights the connection between the council's wellbeing strategy, the Banbury Area Priority Plan and the development of coordinated investment.

## **1. Recommendations**

The meeting resolves:

- 1.1 To endorse Made in Banbury, a cultural strategy for the Town.
- 1.2 To acknowledge the impact investment in arts and culture can have on the local economy.
- 1.3 To support the Banbury Quays Consortium in their coordination of marketing cultural offers to audiences under a shared 'Made in Banbury' approach across the district with a grant of £3000 from existing funding allocations for the next two years.
- 1.4 To monitor the implementation and delivery of the action plan appended.
- 1.5 Given the independent nature of the cultural strategy, the area oversight groups are to consider culture in their placemaking plans. Ensuring the arts organisations of the district contribute to the cultural development of the district overall.

## **2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1 Banbury Quays Consortium, an independent Community Interest Company (CIC), grew out of the desire for professional arts and culture organisations to consider their impact, recognising their unique contributions and audiences and their ambition to see Banbury continue to be a place that promotes urban regeneration and facilities for all age groups, for recreation, art, performance, culture, education

and other leisure activities in order to encourage participation by all those living in Banbury and the surrounding area, and to make Banbury a destination for visitors.

- 2.2 A commission to Art Reach, a national acclaimed specialist consultancy, enabled them to come together and capture not only the current offer, but solidify their joint ambition to make the arts and cultural organisations the drivers of regeneration and investment in the Town Centre.
- 2.3 There is a recognition that the significant professional organisations in this sector are based in Banbury but that their audiences are drawn from the whole district and beyond.
- 2.4 Consequently an economic impact study was undertaken to assess the value of investment into these organisations made by Cherwell District Council and other grant making bodies. Cultural and leisure events can work as a powerful magnet to attract residents and visitors to a town centre with cafes, restaurants, pubs, shops and other facilities able to benefit from the footfall and accompanying spend.
- 2.5 The Council's Wellbeing Strategy recognises the impact the arts and engaging in creative activity can have on the wellbeing of residents. Goal 5, everyone can connect with culture specifically talks to the benefits of creative and cultural activity for individuals but also as drivers of community cohesion and resilience.
- 2.6 The Banbury Area Priority Plan identifies the actions determined from the Banbury Vision 2050 engagement findings which support the regeneration of the Town Centre and will develop Banbury as a destination for residents and for visitors from near and far.
- 2.7 Considerable work is being considered by all tiers of local authority and the Integrated Care Board to coordinate and catalyse development locally to improve the health outcomes of residents, as well as attract investment to sustain and develop a vibrant Town Centre. This report draws together potentially disparate actions into a coordinated and consistent plan of action with Banbury Quays Consortium at the heart of the activity overlaid by the structure and support from local authorities. The appended Alignments document captures this.
- 2.8 The district's key arts organisations are based in Banbury, but they all have an impact beyond the town. Consideration of how to maximise their district wide impact should be considered through the Area Oversight Groups.

## Implications & Impact Assessments

Implications	Commentary
Finance	
Legal	
Risk Management	There are no risk implications arising directly from this report. Any risk arising will be managed through the service operational risk

	and escalated to the leadership risk register as and when deemed necessary. Julie Miles, Performance Analyst & Developer, 04 August 2025			
<b>Impact Assessments</b>	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
<b>Equality Impact</b>	x			Arising from the implementation of plans referenced in the report
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?	x			Supporting a vibrant and responsive cultural sector will positively impact on residents and provide opportunities that reduce inequality.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?	x			Building a strong, cohesive, and resilient Town will have positive benefits for people with protected characteristics.
<b>Climate &amp; Environmental Impact</b>		x		
<b>ICT &amp; Digital Impact</b>		x		
<b>Data Impact</b>		x		
<b>Procurement &amp; subsidy</b>		x		
<b>Council Priorities</b>	An enterprising economy with strong and vibrant centres Healthy resilient and engaged communities			
<b>Human Resources</b>	N/A			
<b>Property</b>	N/A			
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	The Cultural Strategy developed by the Banbury Quays Consortium is the result of consultation undertaken with a selection of cultural organisations in Banbury and a direct public survey linked to the Banbury Vision 2050 engagement programme.			

## Supporting Information

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The District Council's Wellbeing strategy identifies culture as an important element of residents' wellbeing. It is reproduced here for ease but the whole strategy is available following its approval at Executive in December 2023.

#### **Goal 5: Everyone can connect with culture**



***Achieving this ambition would mean creative activities lead to improved personal health and wellbeing, as well as contributing to vibrant urban environments that boosts economic regeneration.***

#### **Commitments**

- *Community assets are recognised and protected.*
- *Maintain strong partnerships with providers of cultural events and programmes, especially at The Mill Arts Centre and Banbury Museum.*
- *Residents will have the opportunity to engage with local culture, including public art, in a way that promotes connection and a sense of belonging.*

#### **Suggested Measurements**

1. *The Council and its partners will develop and deliver realistic plans for specific projects and actions and direct resources to recognise and protect its cultural assets.*
2. *Through locally based trusted relationships and networks the providers of cultural events and programmes sector feel supported by CDC and can thrive.*
3. *More residents engage with local culture and feel connected to its aims (Measured by an annual survey).*

- 3.2 Banbury Quays Consortium (BQC) have developed the cultural strategy 'Made in Banbury' in response to the district council's Wellbeing Strategy, 'Everyone's Wellbeing' and the placemaking programme resulting from Banbury Vision 2050. Recognising the opportunity being created by the newly articulated policies for Wellbeing and Regeneration.

- 3.3 The role of the district council is to enable and support the development plans of the cultural organisations and consolidate actions arising from both regeneration and wellbeing strategies to maximise their impact for residents and investors.

## **4. Details**

- 4.1 The cultural strategy appended to this report details the vision and necessary actions to achieve a Cultural Vision for Banbury. A summary of that strategy is captured here
- 4.2 ***Made in Banbury.*** *Creative Banbury is a community of confident innovators, working together to ensure Banbury is a vibrant town of cultural opportunities where people can make their own way and shape their own futures. A cultural vision for Banbury can be organised under three priority themes: **Place, People and Partnerships.***

### **THEME 1: PLACE**

*DESTINATION – Banbury is a cultural destination that is proud of its distinct heritage and culture and is known for its unique cultural activities and events that cater to a range of tastes.*

*IDENTITY – Banbury is known to be friendly, welcoming and inclusive, with an independent streak of creative inventiveness and cultural ambition.*

*ECONOMY – Banbury is attractive as a place to live, work and visit due to its thriving cultural scene which attracts investment and contributes to its healthy economy.*

*LIVING WELL – Banbury is a place where people want to live, work and play because of its thriving cultural offer.*

*FACILITIES – Banbury has a well-developed infrastructure of a range of buildings, spaces and facilities which support creativity, learning and creative enterprises to thrive.*

### **THEME 2: PEOPLE**

*CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – the new generations are confident with creative aspirations, supported by Banbury's facilities, safe creative spaces, and opportunities for skills development and progression.*

*INCLUSION – cultural activity in Banbury supports wellbeing and healthy living through culture for all at any age and brings people together to share and celebrate the diversity of Banbury's communities.*

*ENGAGEMENT – Banbury's people are engaged and involved in shaping cultural decisions for their town.*

### **THEME 3: PARTNERSHIPS**

*COLLABORATIVE – cultural organisations in Banbury work together to achieve more and address gaps in cultural provision for Banbury's people.*

- 4.3 Objectives have been drawn up for each theme, to identify how these goals for Banbury can be achieved as in the vision described above. Delivery will be guided by the Cultural Strategy Steering Group made up from the Banbury Quays Consortium and Cherwell District Council representatives.
- 4.4 A comprehensive Action Plan has been developed by the steering group of the BQC to deliver these objectives which will be monitored and reported to the Banbury Area Oversight Group. Appendix 2
- 4.5 An award of UKSPF funding allowed for the commissioning of an economic impact study. Not appended due to commercial sensitivity. This report does however show a significant slice of the arts and cultural economy in Banbury in a very positive light. It is a limited study of a micro economy but demonstrates how four of the key diverse cultural organisations are making an impact on the vitality of the town, creating a joint economic value of over £2 million annually.
- 4.6 The report examines data over 2 consecutive financial years 2022-23 and 2023 – 24. Critically, it demonstrates the resilience of the sector, in that, despite the cost-of-living crisis, ongoing pandemic after-effects and catastrophic flooding forcing the closure and temporary relocation of The Mill Arts Centre’s operation over several months, the data still shows a steady growth in all fields; audience development, employment stats, volunteers experience, earned income and attracting external funding investment.
- 4.7 The report is based on the economic impact of four very different models of cultural activity in the canalside area of Banbury and shows how their complimentary approaches underpin the collaborative ambitions of the Cultural Strategy ‘Made in Banbury’ and suggests further positive returns of economic and social benefits through investment in the arts for the future.
- 4.8 Ensuring that the cultural offers available in the Market Towns and centres of population in Cherwell is a key driver in successful place making. As the retail offer available shifts and changes, having a strong cultural offer, from commercial outlets as well as the subsidised sector, will both maintain and strengthen the visitor economy over and above supporting the wellbeing of residents.
- 4.9 The importance of vibrant market towns as destinations directly impacts on public perception, investment and town centre footfall. Creating strong communities through shared experiences, activity and quality public realm deliver best when partnership is at the heart of an approach. On its own the district council can bring about change but with partners and through consultation and ongoing conversations with residents, businesses and the widest spread of stakeholders those beneficial actions get embedded, and the evolution of places is shared and understood.

## **5. Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: Not endorse Made in Banbury and the consequent actions

This has been rejected as the strategy and action plan support the published policies of the Council and the small financial contribution can be achieved from existing funding over the next two years.

## 6 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Culture has an important role to play in the delivery of successful placemaking strategies and in the economic health of our Towns. In endorsing the work of the sector through these plans and providing an enabling and supportive policy context for the development of place, activity and employment, Cherwell District Council can effect change. The quality of life local residents enjoy is positively impacted by a vibrant cultural sector and the range of recommendations will help support the sectors efforts to provide a range of opportunities for audiences and residents wanting to pursue a career in the creative industries.

### Decision Information

<b>Key Decision</b>	Yes - Community threshold met.
<b>Subject to Call in</b>	Yes
<b>If not, why not subject to call in</b>	N/A
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Banbury Wards

### Document Information

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1</b>	Made in Banbury - a cultural strategy for the town
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Cultural Strategy Alignments
<b>Background Papers</b>	Economic Impact study of cultural organisations in Banbury 2025
<b>Reference Papers</b>	<p>Reports and Minutes Everybody's Wellbeing – A new strategy for Cherwell 4 December 2023  <a href="https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4554">https://modgov.cherwell.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=4554</a></p> <p>Culture - led regeneration; Achieving inclusive and sustainable growth LGA; Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation 2019  <a href="https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/culture-led-regeneration-achieving-inclusive-and-sustainable-growth">https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/culture-led-regeneration-achieving-inclusive-and-sustainable-growth</a></p>
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<b>Corporate Director Approval (unless Corporate Director or Statutory Officer report)</b>	Corporate Director for Communities