

INDEX

1. **Executive Summary**
 - (i) Purpose of the Document
 - (ii) Scope
 - (iii) Leadership Role
 - (iv) Benefits
2. **Local Context**
 - (i) Cannock Chase District
 - (ii) Cannock Chase Council – Our Vision and Objectives
 - (iii) Cultural Provision in the District
 - (iv) Land Use
 - (v) Social & Demographic Change
 - (vi) Transport Links
3. **Why a Cultural Strategy?**
 - (i) The Strategy
 - (ii) What is Culture
 - (iii) Benefits of Cultural Provision & Development
4. **A Cultural Strategy for the District of Cannock Chase**
 - (i) Aims of the Strategy
 - (a) Protect and Enhance the Environment
 - (b) Enhance Economic Prosperity
 - (c) Assist Individual and Community Development
 - (d) Promote Good Practice

- (ii) Cultural Objectives
 - (a) Improve Access to Cultural Activities
 - (b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication
 - (c) Maximise Available Resources
 - (d) Increase and Broaden Participation in Cultural Activities
 - (e) Develop a Network of Facilities to Accommodate Cultural Activity
 - (f) Protect and Enhance our Natural and Built Heritage
 - (g) Encourage the Development of Cultural Events and Festivals
 - (h) Developing Cultural Activity to Support Personal, Community and Economic Development
 - (i) Promote and Publicise Culture
 - (j) Demonstrate the Value of Cultural Development

5. **Key Issues**

- (i) Present and Future Funding
- (ii) Links to other Council Strategies
- (iii) Response to National and Local Agendas
- (iv) Consultation Framework

1.0 Executive Summary

(i) Purpose of the Document

To set out the benefits, principles and context of Cultural services and activities throughout the District and demonstrate the linkages to other corporate plans that are in existence.

(ii) Scope

Culture has both a material and a value dimension and includes a wide range of activities including arts, media, museums, libraries, the built heritage, the countryside, playgrounds and tourism.

The Local Cultural Strategy offers a vision of how the local area and our culture may develop over the life of the strategy and looks to include a wide span of cultural activities taking into account the activities of the private, voluntary and public sectors and makes reference to the natural and man-made features that help shape the cultural identity of the district.

The Local Cultural Strategy should also help strengthen and develop links between services.

(iii) Leadership Role

Only local authorities can legitimately take the leadership role in preparing their Local Cultural Strategy because they are democratic and accountable, have regulatory and development authority, and are experienced at providing and enabling others to provide cultural services. The development of this strategy should be used to actively engage and involve the community and all public and private sector partners.

(iv) Benefits

Local Cultural Strategies have many benefits. They;

- Give a clear rationale for supporting activities
- Advocate the benefits of cultural activities
- Bring culture centre stage in the business of local authorities
- Provide synergy with the work of central government and national and regional agencies
- Promote partnership
- Set a framework for performance review
- Can act as a lever for gaining funding from external agencies

2.0 Local Context

(i) Cannock Chase District

Cannock Chase District Council is situated on the fringe of the West Midlands conurbation in the south, extending through the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, to the River Trent flood plain in the north covering 7,800 hectares.

Many of the towns and communities developed because of Coal Mining, 40% of the District can be described as urban. The Cannock Chase Forest separates the old industrial urban areas with 60% of the District being Green Belt; a large proportion of which is also within the AONB (3,008 hectares).

The District has an estimated population of 93,300 (mid 2002 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics) which is evenly split by gender. The age profile of the District remains relatively youthful, when compared to other area across the Region. However, when examining the population changes between Census 1991 and 2001 there has been considerable growth in the older age-groups, persons aged over 75 years have increased by 31%.

(ii) Cannock Chase Council - Our Vision and Objectives

All successful organisations have a clear vision of what they want to achieve; a vision that sets their direction, defines their priorities and guides their actions; and a vision that challenges them constantly to strive for improvements. The Council's Vision is:

“By 2015, Cannock Chase District will be recognised as a place where everyone’s lives are enriched by a strong cultural identity, vibrant local economy and pride in the outstanding natural environment”.

Our own aims must meet the desires and needs of our community, but must also reflect the Government’s priorities. The Government’s national priorities are:

- Promoting healthier communities
- Raising standards in schools
- Promoting economic vitality
- Improving the quality of life of children, young people, families at risk and older people
- Creating safer communities
- Transforming our local environment

We have been working with Cannock Chase’s Local Strategic Partnership, Chase Community Partnership, to develop the community’s own vision of the future – the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Cannock Chase Local Strategic Partnership

comprises key organisations within the local public, private and voluntary sectors and is committed to realising a shared agenda and supporting the Government's priorities. This is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, "Here for you, at the core of your community".

The Local Strategic Partnership's Vision is:

- to provide local people with better opportunities in education, employment and shopping
- reduce crime and reassure people about their safety
- develop health and active communities
- develop cleaner and greener communities where information is easily accessed and local people feel well informed.

This shared agenda is driven forward within the Council through our Vision and supported by our key objectives. We have established these by using what we know from the Community Strategy and based on your comments.

Creating a strong cultural identity, vibrant local economy and outstanding environment is dependent on all parts of the community and local organisations and agencies working together in a 'joined up' way.

Since our first Performance Plan in 1999 we have used the acronym CHASE to identify our objectives, which will enable us to achieve our Vision:

CHASE stands for:

Children & Young People

Healthier Communities & Older People

Access to Skills, Economic Development & Enterprise

Safer & Stronger Communities

Environment

We also have a clear understanding of the sort of organisation we need and aspire to be to enable us to deliver our Vision and Objectives and so we have an additional objective, which we believe will enable us to deliver effective public services and become an excellent authority.

Our Vision provides long-term direction for guiding the Council and progress against all of the key objectives will be necessary if we are going to transform Cannock Chase in line with our Vision. This Corporate and Performance Plan sets out how we intend to progress towards the achievement of the Council's Vision, detailing the progress that our services are making as well as the key targets which we are working towards over 2006-09.

Building an Excellent Council

(iii) Cultural Provision in the District

Cannock Chase District Council has a good working relationship with the cultural providers in the District and frequently works in partnership with voluntary groups and Town & Parish Councils to satisfy the needs of the community.

The Voluntary Sector is developing quite strongly throughout the District with local clubs and societies providing many cultural activities, events and facilities. It is recognised that without the commitment, dedication and enthusiasm of the voluntary organisations, provision would suffer greatly. Voluntary groups bring life to the cultural facilities that they and their fellow partners provide.

The Public Sector includes the District Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Town & Parish Councils within Cannock Chase. The Parish & Town Councils are impartial providers and play a vital role in helping to identify and respond to the needs of the community.

Local schools and the college have traditionally provided a resource and focus for some cultural activities within the local community. They are playing an increasingly important role in this regard and may offer exciting new opportunities for the future development of cultural services throughout the whole District. The Private Sector also has an important role to play in enhancing the District's cultural resources. Private investment supports a range of essential facilities and activities for local people and visitors to the area.

The District has a network of community buildings which are used for a wide range of activities by numerous groups. Church and village halls are also part of the cultural provision and provide accommodation for a diverse range of groups including, for example, sports, arts and youth groups.

Cannock Chase District has a range of sports and Leisure facilities from the new state-of-the-art Leisure Centre in Rugeley, the nationally recognised Beaudesert Golf Course to a variety of local sports facilities (for example tennis and cricket) provided by local voluntary sports clubs. There are pitches for formal recreation and parks and open spaces for informal recreation.

The district has a strong Town Twinning heritage; the main ethos behind Town Twinning is "to know and understand each other better". The original idea for town twinning was born in Europe shortly after the Second World War and allowed citizens the opportunity to find out about the lives and cultures of other towns and countries.

Cannock has been twinned with Datteln in Germany, a small town with a population of 37,500, since 1971 and in that time numerous close personal relationships have been forged, culminating in 1996 with spectacular celebrations at the Datteln Kanalfest and the Cannock Carnival to mark the 25th anniversary of the twinning. Every year clubs, societies and local people visit Datteln to make new friends and renew existing friendships.

Rugeley has been twinned with Western Springs, a small town in USA with a population of 12,000 people, since 1975. Western Springs is a convenient 25 minutes fast express ride from Chicago and despite the distance between both communities the bonds of friendship have blossomed with occasional visits and regular correspondence.

Museums and galleries tell the story of this nation, its people and the whole of humanity. The District is enriched by the provision of the Museum of Cannock Chase, the only accredited museum in the area. The Vision for the museum is:-

"To give residents of, and visitors to the Cannock Chase District both a 'sense of place' and the opportunity to actively participate in the preservation and exploration of the area's cultural heritage."

Tourism development in the area has traditionally been based on the natural beauty and location of Cannock Chase which is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The purpose of designation as an AONB is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of an area, including wildlife and cultural heritage as well as scenery. Cannock Chase AONB was designated in 1958 because of its beautiful landscape, its history and wildlife.

(iv) Land Use

On average 430 new properties are built each year in the District; there is continuing pressure to identify new housing sites, an issue which will be addressed in the emerging Local Development Documents.

The Staffordshire Structure Plan 1996-2011 makes provision for 80 hectares of land to be provided in the District for employment development. At present, 71.23 hectares either have been developed or are available, leaving a further 8.77 hectares to be identified in the Local Development Documents.

(v) Social and Demographic Change

Cannock Chase District has a population of 93,300 persons, the population increased by + 1,100 from mid-2001 to mid-2002, with the population having a broadly even gender split; males representing 49% of the population and females 51%.

The Office for National Statistics population projections suggest the District's population will increase to 95,100 by 2010.

In addition to a growing population the District's age structure remains relatively youthful when compared to other areas across the region. Mid 2002 population estimates indicate that:-

- 21% of the population are aged under 16.
- 63% are of working age.
- Just 16% of residents are aged over 60 for females and 65 for males (although this age group is increasing).

(vi) Transport Links

Cannock is serviced by:-

- M6 junctions 11 and 12 are located just 3 miles away.
- M6 Toll junction 7 just one mile from Cannock Town Centre.
- The main A5 travels across the south of the District heading east/west.

3.0 Why a Cultural Strategy?

The last 20 years have seen significant development of cultural facilities and opportunities throughout the District of Cannock Chase. Most recently this has included the development of a new Leisure Centre in Rugeley and the current potential new development of:-

- A new leisure village in Cannock
- A new swimming pool in Rugeley
- A new full-sized all weather pitch in Cannock
- An extension to the museum of Cannock Chase to include a new gallery
- A new heritage trail across the whole District
- Key Play areas being developed
- Plans for the development of local Park facilities
- Strategic plans for the development of Play

The range of cultural activities in which people can choose to spend their leisure time is increasing and people have higher expectations of cultural provision. Awareness of the value of cultural provision and the benefits it can bring to communities and individuals is also growing.

The aim of the Strategy is to maximise the opportunities that can result from having a co-ordinated approach to the development of facilities and services for the residents of the District. The Cultural Strategy seeks to offer direction to all local cultural providers throughout the whole District to achieve this aim and ensure that the full potential for developing culture is realised

(i) The Strategy:-

- Aims to develop a shared vision for the development of cultural opportunities across the District of Cannock Chase.
- Is for the community of Cannock Chase District, with the local authority being best placed to undertake a strategic role and lead the development and implementation of the Strategy.
- Seeks to maximise existing resources and promote their effective use to develop local cultural opportunities to benefit Cannock Chase District.
- Aims to encourage a co-ordinate approach to the development of cultural provision.
- Seeks to encourage debate about local cultural provision and needs.

(ii) What is Culture?

Culture includes sport, the arts, media, parks, museums, libraries, the built heritage, playgrounds and tourism. The geographical identity, local history and the character of an area also help to shape its particular culture. Activities, interests, people and places contribute to the overall quality of life of individuals and communities. Cultural provision and activities can provide positive links between the present, past and future.

Cultural providers, partners in players throughout the District of Cannock Chase therefore include:-

- Cannock Chase District Council
- Town & Parish Councils
- Staffordshire County Council
- Voluntary Sector
- Private Sector
- Heritage Properties and Museums
- County Council Youth Service
- Education Providers
- Libraries
- West Midlands Arts Council
- Sport England
- English Nature

....to name but a few.

(iii) The Benefits of Cultural Provision and Development

The importance of cultural provision is now widely recognised. The quality and level of cultural provision is viewed as an indicator of quality of life. Its value is no longer consigned to terms such as 'spare time'. People need cultural activities to live a fulfilled and balanced life. Cultural activities span a wide range of activities and represent an individual choice, be it competitive, physical sport or a relaxing quiet pastime.

For local communities, involvement in cultural provision helps people to 'relate' to their local area and can promote a feeling of responsibility and ownership. For individuals taking part, cultural activities can have benefits for both physical and mental health, personal and social development and quality of life.

Cultural development contributes to the health of the nation and local economy. For example, a 1995 Sports Council Survey showed that nationally £10.4 billion was spent on sport and that 415,000 people were directly employed in sports related activities.

The environmental benefits of cultural provision across the District are far reaching, the most obvious being the large Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, There exists a wide range of cultural opportunities in the form of parks, gardens, countryside, nature

conservation areas, sports pitches and woodlands, providing formal and informal recreation activities for the local community.

It is recognised that cultural provision can play an important role in helping to provide solutions to some of today's challenges, whether it be helping to bolster the local economy, regenerate run down areas, tackle youth related issues, develop a healthier nation or promote community responsibility and pride of place. A comprehensive Cultural Strategy can help to address local and national agendas such as healthy living, community safety, social exclusion, environmental sustainability, economic diversity and lifelong learning.

4.0 A Cultural Strategy for the District of Cannock Chase

The Council recognises that cultural provision and development is central to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life of our community. The Council recognise that cultural provision can make a vital contribution to the well-being of our community, economy and environment and the quality of life of individuals. The Council will continue to work with the community and its partners to maximise the benefits that cultural development can bring.

(i) Aims of the Strategy

(a) Protect and Enhance the Environment

Use culture to help to:-

- Safeguard and enhance the distinctive natural and built environment of the District.
- Protect the appearance and character of the countryside.
- Manage resources to minimise the damage to our environment (Agenda 21).
- Promote environmental awareness and responsibility.

(b) Enhance Economic Prosperity

Use culture to help to:-

- Achieve sustainable growth and development in the District.
- Develop cultural businesses and career opportunities.
- Promote the image of the District for investment and tourism.

(c) Assist Individual and Community Development

Use culture to help to:-

- Promote personal development, health, education and lifelong learning.
- Promote the development of close knit communities and social inclusion.
- Contribute to community safety.
- Improve quality of life.

(d) Promote Good Practice

Deliver and develop quality cultural services, activities and facilities which:-

- Are needed and wanted.
- Represent good value for money and excellence.
- Are accessible to all.
- Are achieved by working in partnership with the community and local, regional and national partners.

In seeking to implement the Strategy, the Council recognises that these aims may sometimes be mutually exclusive and that therefore a careful balance needs to be maintained in their pursuit. To achieve these aims the Council considers that special attention needs to be focused on the following key objectives:-

(ii) Cultural Objectives

(a) Improve Access to Cultural Activities

This means:-

- Breaking down the barriers which prevent people from taking part in cultural activities.
- Involving under-represented groups in the planning and development of cultural services..
- Promoting initiatives that improve access to cultural opportunities by under-represented groups.
- Working closely with strategic partners, especially the County Sports Partnership and the Chase Community Partnership.

Certain groups are under-represented in their participation in cultural activities. Factors such as transport, physical accessibility, pricing and cultural differences may influence whether or not people take part in cultural activities. If we believe that it is beneficial for individuals and communities to take part in cultural activities we should aim to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to take part.

Improving access to cultural activities means tackling a range of issues. It includes:-

- Ensuring that facilities are physically accessible to those with special needs.

- Developing public transport links and addressing gaps in the provision of cultural services and facilities.
- Making information on cultural activities easily available, for example using new technology such as the internet.
- Breaking down the barriers and stereotypes that put people off taking part in cultural activities.

(b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication

This means:-

- Developing effective partnerships and communication networks to achieve common goals.
- Developing cultural provision in consultation with the community.
- Keeping up to date with development in the cultural field.
- Liaising with cultural development agencies to represent the interests of the District.

Culture is a complex and rapidly changing sector encompassing a wide variety of activities which require cultural providers to think and act strategically. Whilst the various cultural providers will wish to retain their identity, it is important to recognise the opportunities that can be made available and affordable through collaboration and co-operation. Developing new partnerships and greater collaboration between agencies to work towards common goals is essential.

The Council is keen to further develop and promote networks for effective communication, consultation and information exchange between local community, interest groups and cultural providers. Considerable benefits can result from pooling the knowledge and expertise of cultural agencies throughout the District. Establishing effective communication networks and encouraging dialogue between providers, users and key agencies can help to avoid duplication, encourage resource and information sharing, will allow creative and joint problem solving and promote co-ordination and co-operation. It can also make it easier to exchange and receive the latest information on a range of important issues, such as funding opportunities.

(c) Maximise Available Resources

This means making the best use of the finite resources that are available to develop cultural provision. It involves:

- Strategic planning to address local needs and priorities.
- Effective targeting of limited resources.

- Maximising inward investment to the District from external funding sources.
- Encouraging collaboration between providers to pool resources and avoid duplication.
- Ensuring that people possess or can access the necessary skills, information and expertise to maximise the resources available to them.
- Applying principles of value for money and quality in developing cultural opportunities.
- Where possible encouraging cultural provision to be sustainable and self-supporting, whilst recognising that sometimes assistance may be merited where this has benefits for the community and the development of cultural opportunities.

There are finite resources available to develop cultural opportunities in the District to meet the needs of our community and visitors. It is essential that we recognise the full range of resources available and use those resources to best effect.

It is essential that there is a strategic approach to developing cultural provision in both the long and short-term, based on assessments of local need and reflecting the aspirations and characteristics of the local community. Local priorities need to be identified so that available resources can be targeted to where they are most needed and will have the greatest benefit. This must be done in close consultation with the local communities and expert agencies to inform and develop plans to meet shortfalls in local cultural provision.

Many cultural facilities, activities and services are directly provided and funded (for example by local authorities and the private sector). However, grant aid, commercial sponsorship, charitable donations and community fundraising are also important sources of funding for the cultural sector. The Council wants to maximise inward investment to Cannock Chase from external sources of grant aid and funding. To achieve this, local cultural providers need to be aware of potential funding sources and develop realistic strategies for bidding for funds. It is usually a condition of accessing external funding that partners priorities often have to be addressed e.g. Sport England have several target groups who are traditionally underrepresented, women and girls, the over 45's and those on lower incomes are some of those identified as underrepresented.

It is also important to recognise that in appropriate circumstances cultural development can be made available and affordable through partnerships. Developing greater collaboration between agencies working towards common goals can avoid duplication and, where appropriate, facilitate the joint funding of initiatives that can spread the cost between partners. It is people, not just funding, who make things happen and determine the success of initiatives. Successful cultural projects in Cannock Chase succeed due to effective

partnerships and the commitment, drive and vision of those involved. It is important that cultural providers have the necessary skills, information and expertise available to maximise the resources available to them. This includes the public, private and voluntary sectors.

It is important to apply the principles of value for money and quality in developing cultural opportunities. This involves carefully evaluating the relative costs and benefits of a scheme, ensuring that services and facilities are of an appropriate quality for the purpose envisaged and that in this context they represent good value for money. It means ensuring that resources are invested to maximise both long and short-term benefits.

Cultural facilities and activities should be economically and environmentally sustainable and self-supporting wherever possible. It is vital that in developing cultural opportunities we are realistic as to what can be supported within the District and seek to minimise any negative impact on environmental resources. Applying the principle of sustainability includes, for example, budgeting to resource routine facility maintenance or routine cultural activities. It also includes designing cultural facilities to be energy efficient, low maintenance and economical to operate.

It is recognised, however, that there are occasions where cultural activities, facilities or events cannot be sustainable or self-supporting or may require pump priming. This may be acceptable, or even desirable where the benefits to the community are considered to outweigh the cost of a subsidy. Each case for subsidy or assistance should be carefully evaluated on its merits.

(d) Increase and Broaden Participation in Cultural Activities

This means increasing and developing participation by individuals and the community in cultural activities at all levels. It includes:-

- Promoting, encouraging and developing participation in cultural activities.
- Encouraging initiatives that broaden or extend people's cultural experience.
- Maintaining and developing existing opportunities to take part in cultural activities which are valued or need by the community.
- Supporting initiatives which provide new opportunities to participate in cultural activities, particularly those which target under-represented groups or enrich the cultural diversity of the whole District.
- Encouraging innovation, creativity and best practice in attracting new participants and developing new cultural opportunities.
- Developing links between cultural providers.

People take part in cultural activities at a variety of levels. They may take a very active part in organised activities and at a high level of expertise and excellence. They may take part on an informal and passive basis, for example as audiences and spectators.

The Council wishes to increase participation in cultural activities to maximise the associated benefits for individuals and our community. The Council also wishes to broaden people's cultural experience and encourage the development of a rich and diverse range of cultural opportunities, where these can be supported and sustained. This includes finding ways to attract people to new cultural activities by challenging their perceptions and providing positive experiences. It also includes developing links between cultural providers to enable organisations and individuals to develop and progress in their chosen activity.

The Council will work with its partners to identify local needs and to champion and seek resources to support cultural development throughout the District, particularly where these involve new community initiatives and partnerships.

(e) **Develop a Network of Facilities to Accommodate Cultural Activity**

This means:-

- Protecting and maintaining facilities that meet local need and that cannot be replaced.
- Properly designing, managing and maintaining facilities to ensure that they are sustainable and used to best effect.
- Identifying local priorities for the development of facilities which are based on the needs of the community so that limited resources can be targeted effectively.
- Planning for the development of cultural facilities in consultation with our partners, advocating good practice and identifying local priorities.

Cultural facilities which accommodate cultural activities include specialist facilities such as arts and leisure centres, sports pitches and pavilions, museums and libraries, outward bound centres, youth facilities and children's playgrounds. They also include facilities which cater for a wider range of activities, including cultural activities, such as schools, village halls, civic halls and community centres.

The provision of adequate cultural facilities in Cannock Chase is a key issue. Facilities require a relatively high level of investment and expertise to properly develop and maintain. Although the District has a reasonable range of facilities there are gaps and shortfalls in current provision. There are also existing facilities, which require modernisation or improvement if they are to continue to meet the needs of the community. There is a need to develop a

network of sustainable and quality cultural facilities to meet the needs of the local community and to benefit visitors to the District.

Given the importance of facility development and the need to properly address the issues identified, the Council will continue to plan for the development of cultural facilities in the District in consultation with its partners.

(f) Protect and Enhance Our Natural and Built Heritage

This means recognising that culture shapes and influences our built and natural heritage. In turn, culture can be used to promote investment in our local heritage. It can be used to help to enhance, protect and understand our natural and built environment. It includes:-

- Encouraging initiatives that will enhance, protect and conserve our built and natural heritage.
- Carefully managing public access to these precious resources.
- Encouraging initiatives that engage local people in the conservation and interpretation of their natural and built heritage.

Our natural and built heritage includes important natural habitats, the countryside and public rights of way network, parks and areas of open space, villages, towns and buildings and our urban and rural landscapes. These physical resources are essential for significant cultural activities such as outdoor recreation and tourism. For example, the most popular leisure pursuit in the UK is walking in the countryside.

These treasured resources accommodate cultural activities and events and make Cannock Chase the pleasant place it is in which to live, work and visit. They represent our local history and the way in which we have used and shaped the land over centuries of use. Developing an understanding of our natural and built heritage helps people to value their local heritage and therefore to protect it. It also helps to strengthen local communities by developing a sense of identity and pride of place.

The fragile and vulnerable nature of these resources means that their proper management and active conservation is essential if they are to benefit future generations. There are also opportunities to enhance our physical environment through cultural initiatives such as the development of public art. The cultural sector is a key player in managing the protection, use and enhancement of our natural and built heritage, for example, by managing nature reserves to balance public access and conservation, or developing partnerships between communities and artists to develop public art works to enhance town centres. It is essential that in developing cultural opportunities across the Chase District that we continue to find ways to contribute to the protection and enhancement of our natural and built heritage.

(g) Encourage the Development of Cultural Events and Festivals

In particular this involves encouraging the development of events and festivals that:-

- Are organised by the community, for the community.
- Promote a sense of identity and pride of place amongst local communities.
- Offer residents the opportunity to locally access a quality cultural experience.
- Will help to stimulate local cultural development.
- Contribute to the local economy and promote the District of Cannock.
- Celebrate the talents of our residents and communities.

Cultural events and festivals do much to generate civic pride and to establish a sense of identity and belonging amongst local communities. They help to make the area a vibrant and exciting place in which to live and help to put Cannock Chase on the map. Appropriate events and festivals can also make a valuable contribution to the local economy. For these reasons the Council wishes to encourage and facilitate the development of such events in Cannock Chase. The Council, however, recognises that in encouraging the development of cultural events and festivals, a careful balance needs to be struck between economic community and environmental objectives, which are not always compatible.

(h) Developing Cultural Activity to Support Personal, Community and Economic Development

This means:-

- Promoting the value of cultural activity as a tool to support personal, community and economic development.
- Supporting cultural initiatives which help to tackle local issues such as social exclusion, youth development, healthy living, community safety, life-long learning, environmental sustainability, economic development, community empowerment and promoting civic pride.

Cultural provision is central to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in our community. Taking part in cultural activities contributes to our health and well-being. It provides social opportunities and reduces isolation, contributes to active and close knit communities, can keep us mentally agile and can contribute to our continued education and development. The Council will therefore continue to advocate the importance of cultural provision and activity in contributing to the well-being of our community and will also continue to

encourage people to take part in cultural activity and to develop their interests and skills.

In addition it is increasingly recognised that the development of specific cultural initiatives can play an important role in helping to tackle some of today's challenges. For example, helping to tackle youth related issues, helping to develop a healthier nation through the promotion of sport and fitness, or contributing to economic development through the development of tourism. The Council therefore also intends to promote and develop the use of cultural provision as a tool to help tackle these pertinent issues.

(i) Promote and Publicise Culture

This means:-

- Making people aware of the full range of cultural activities that they can access across the District.
- Marketing local cultural facilities, events and organisations to develop new customers, users and audiences, including visitors from outside Cannock Chase.
- Being innovative and creative in finding new ways to promote culture in Cannock Chase.
- Celebrating and publicising our achievements.

It is important to actively promote the range of cultural activities, facilities and events that exist within the District. If individuals are to take part in cultural activities they need to be able to easily find out what is available to them. Active promotion also helps to sustain and support the development of local cultural providers who are trying to attract new members, customers, audiences and visitors.

In addition, Cannock Chase is fortunate to be home to some first class facilities, events and talented individuals, such as sports people and professional artists, some of international standing. Promoting our cultural resources and talents helps to develop a positive image of our area, puts Cannock Chase on the map, promotes a sense of unity and pride of place within our community and helps to support the local economy. This includes celebrating and publicising local achievements, from building a new village hall to winning the hockey regional finals!

Promoting culture is not just about direct marketing. It also includes improving the signage of local attractions, publicising local clubs and societies, developing effective marketing skills amongst clubs and venues and using new technology such as the internet to distribute information and developing press and media links.

Cultural providers need to work together and think laterally and creatively to achieve this objective.

(j) Demonstrate the Value of Cultural Development

This means developing and applying quantitative and qualitative measures to monitor and demonstrate the value and impact of cultural investment and activity across the whole of Cannock Chase.

Traditionally, the impact of cultural investment and development has proved difficult to measure in a meaningful way. To be meaningful, measures need to address the qualitative benefits of cultural activity as well as quantitative benefits and this often proves difficult and subjective. It is also often easier to measure the impact of specific, local cultural initiative than the collective impact of cultural development in a region or district. Work is being undertaken both nationally and locally to try and develop meaningful measures. The Council is keen to work with its partners to encourage the development and application of realistic indicators that can demonstrate the value of cultural initiatives, investment and development to the whole District.

5.0 Key Issues

The District of Cannock Chase faces a number of issues and challenges in developing cultural provision. It is important to clarify what the key issues are that may influence cultural provision in order to plan for the future. Current key issues and influences which will impact on demand for the provision of cultural facilities and service across the District are:-

(i) Present and Future Funding

In general terms cultural provision is becoming increasingly reliant upon external services and funding with greater increasing pressure being placed upon local authority budgets. The National Lottery has provided significant new sources of funding for the cultural sector in recent years, however this source is gradually diminishing and other sources of funding need to be examined.

The collapse of the Coal Mining industry led to some areas of the District suffering from the most acute concentration of multiple deprivation. There was also severe social and economic exclusion and environmental degradation as a result.

Single Regeneration Budget funding from 1995 to 2003 pumped £155.2 million of investment into the District, helping to tackle some of the social, economic and environmental problems.

Four wards have retained full eligibility for Objective 2 funding from EU Structural Funds (Broomhill, Chadsmoor, Cannock South and Norton Canes). The remainder of the District, with the exception of Etching Hill and Western Springs had transitional status, which provided limited eligibility for EU funding.

External funding for sport and active recreation will still be managed through Sport England on a national level through their new structures for delivering sport; with the Regional Sports Board, County Sports Partnership and local Community Sports Network playing an ever increasing role in the direction of the funding.

(ii) Links to other Council Strategies

The importance of cultural provision for the well-being of our community is recognised and as a result, significant changes have been introduced to ensure a co-ordinated and planned approach for the delivery of the service. The Government expects local authorities, as well as other public sector agencies and their partners to work together to ensure public services meet communities' needs. Government strategies, initiatives, improvement tools and performance frameworks require an integrated approach to cross-cutting issues in order to deliver outcomes that really matter to local people.

"All Councils should secure a wide range of high quality, cost-effective services, tailored to the needs and preferences of citizens. This requires a constant focus on improvements and a constant challenge to current ways of delivering services."

Reference: *The Future of Local Government: Developing A 10-Year Vision, ODPM 2004.*

(iii) Response to National and Local Agendas

Public services must respond to the issues that people think are important at a local and national level. The following areas have all been identified through consultation as key issues for the public:-

- Health and the growing problems of obesity, particularly among young people;
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime;
- Raising educational standards;
- Activities for young people;
- Developing more cohesive and sustainable communities;
- Tackling disadvantage; and
- Ensuring young people get the best possible start in life.

In each of these areas, sport, as part of a wider solution has an important contribution to make and Sport England have committed to this agenda and supported it by producing a survey on a national level, The Active People Survey, that offers information for each local authority on the levels of activity of their population.

There is strong evidence available that high-quality sport and physical activity delivered effectively and in the right settings, can also contribute to 4 outcomes that the public consider to be high priorities:-

- Health communities and tackling health inequalities;
- Safe, strong and sustainable communities.
- Economic vitality and workforce development; and
- Meeting the needs of children and young people.

"The scientific evidence is compelling. Physical activity not only contributes to well-being, but is also essential for good general health. People who are physically active reduce the risk of developing major chronic diseases by up to 50%, and the risk of premature death by about 20-30%" **Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health, 2004.**

The above themes have been reflected through the Regional Plan "Sign Up For Sport", produced by Sport England(2004) with the following 7 key objectives:-

- Increasing participation – an increasing each year of 50,000 people who became involved in sports, physical activity or active recreation (5 x 30 minutes per week).
- Improve performance – increase the number of performers in the West Midlands competing for England and GB teams and achieving international success.

- Widen access – increase participation levels for women and girls, over 45's, black and ethnic minorities, disabled and those on lower incomes.
- Improve health and well-being through sport – contribute to the reduction of obesity and diabetes through meeting 50,000 people x 5 times x 30 minutes per week participation target.
- Create safer and stronger communities – demonstrate that sport contributes to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour by using the crime reduction figures within the Positive Activities for Young People Programme.
- Improve education through sport and PE – achieve the target of 75% of 5-16 year olds participating in high quality sport and PE in school and beyond the curriculum by 2006 and 85% by 2008.
- Benefit the economy – achieve growth in the economy through sports and sports related business between 2004 and 2008.

(iv) Consultation Framework

The following organisations were consulted during the preparation of the Cultural Strategy:-

- Staffordshire County Council
- Sport England
- West Midlands Arts Council
- Local Organisations and Groups
- Local Sports Council

In addition copies were made available in local libraries, Council's Offices and on the Council's website for a six week period. After the consultation had ended the representations received were considered, reported back to Select Committee along with suggested amendments to the strategy as appropriate.

6.0 How Can We Measure Performance In Culture?

There is no statutory requirement to provide cultural services and as such there are no statutory performance indicators in place. However culture, along with Environmental and Housing services has been identified as a key theme of the Central Government's framework for assessing whether or not local authorities are delivering services that reflect local needs, provide value for money, perform well and are likely to improve through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

Performance measurement for culture will include measures of satisfaction, participation, access, maintenance of assets, contribution to social inclusion and value for money.

Theme	Measure
Satisfaction/Quality	User evaluation of events/services Satisfaction levels Complaints monitoring
Participation	Number of users at events/services
Access and provision	% of population within 20 minutes of an accredited facility (industry specific)
Maintenance and protection of assets	Asset management plan Capital programme Rate of return on capital investment
Contribution to social, economic and environmental objectives	Numbers of users by geographic breakdown Number of users by demographic breakdown (age, gender, ability, ethnicity)
Value for money	Cost per head of activity Cost per user of facility Recovery rate per facility/service

7.0 Delivery of Strategic Aims and Objectives – Action Plan

This strategy has examined the importance and impact of culture at a national and local level and its wider contribution to the wider agendas of health improvement, community safety and regeneration. Much is already happening across the district and the partners already involved have many achievements under their belts. However, there are issues that need addressing for the district to realise the benefits and potential of cultural development. These issues include arriving at a common vision for the district and a co-ordination of resources and investments (capital and revenue). Importantly these involve building a vision for a future Cannock Chase not just a sense of improve or additional facilities and infrastructure but also in terms of a cultural and community identity and pride growing throughout the district.

The following section outlines how we wish to bring the Cannock Chase Cultural Strategy to life.

ACTION PLAN 2007-2009

CS1 Identify barriers to participation in cultural activities and produce an action plan to tackle the issues that are raised.

Cultural Objective:

- (a) Improve access to cultural activities.
- (b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication.
- (c) Maximise available resources.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.

Timescales:

2007/08.

CS2 Identify gaps in the provision of cultural activities, services and facilities.

Cultural Objective:

- (a) Improve access to cultural activities.
- (c) Maximise available resources.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.
- (e) Develop a network of facilities to accommodate cultural activity.
- (g) Encourage the development of cultural events and festivals.

Timescales:

2007/08.

CS3 Develop a network to:

- Promote existing cultural activities, services and events.
- Identify opportunities for joint working.
- Identify opportunities for new cultural activities, services and events.

Cultural Objective:

- (a) Improve access to cultural activities.
- (b) Develop effective partnerships and communication.

- (c) Maximise available resources.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.
- (e) Develop a network of facilities to accommodate cultural strategy.
- (g) Encourage the development of cultural events and festivals.
- (h) Develop cultural activity to support personal, community and economic development.
- (i) Promote and publicise culture.
- (j) Demonstrate the value of cultural development.

Timescales:

2007/09.

CS4 Produce a communication plan to:

- Raise awareness of the benefits of participating in cultural activities and events.
- Raise awareness of the cultural opportunities available throughout the district.

Cultural Objective:

- (a) Improve access to cultural activities.
- (b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.
- (i) Promote and publicise culture.
- (j) Demonstrate the value of cultural development.

Timescales:

2007/08.

CS5 Identify and provide training opportunities for individuals involved in cultural provision.

Cultural Objective:

- (b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication.
- (c) Maximise available resources.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.

- (h) Develop cultural activity to support personal, community and economic development.
- (i) Promote and publicise culture.
- (j) Demonstrate the value of cultural development.

Timescales:

2007/09.

CS6 Raise awareness of the funding opportunities that are available to local cultural providers.

Cultural Objective:

- (a) Improve access to cultural activities.
- (b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication.
- (c) Maximise available resources.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.
- (h) Develop cultural activity to support personal, community and economic development.
- (j) Demonstrate the value of cultural development.

Timescales:

2007/08.

CS7 Seek ways to encourage young people to plan, participate and become involved in cultural activities.

Cultural Objective:

- (a) Improve access to cultural activities.
- (b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication.
- (c) Maximise available resources.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.
- (h) Develop cultural activity to support personal, community and economic development.
- (i) Promote and publicise culture.

- (j) Demonstrate the value of cultural development.

Timescales:

2007/09

CS8 Produce district wide strategies to support cultural provision:-

- Playing Pitch Strategy
- Parks Strategy
- Sports and Physical Activity Strategy
- Arts Strategy
- Play Strategy

Cultural Objective:

- (a) Improve access to cultural activities.
- (b) Develop Effective Partnerships and Communication.
- (c) Maximise available resources.
- (d) Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities.
- (e) Develop a network of facilities to accommodate cultural strategy.
- (f) Protect and enhance our natural built heritage.
- (g) Encourage the development of cultural events and festivals.
- (h) Develop cultural activity to support personal, community and economic development.
- (i) Promote and publicise culture.
- (j) Demonstrate the value of cultural development.

Timescales:

2007/09.

