Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

3 December 2026

Telford and Wrekin Cultural Strategy 2027-2032

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Angela McClements - Cabinet Member: Culture, Tourism & Leisure
Lead Director:	Katherine Kynaston – Director: Housing, Commercial & Customer Services
Service Area:	Culture & Events
Report Author:	Jon Bielstein – Group Manager Culture
Officer Contact Details:	**Tel:** 01952 380992 **Email:** Jon.Bielstein@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Yes – 14 May 2026
Report considered by:	SMT – 3 November 2026 Business Briefing – 19 November 2026 Cabinet – 3 December 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1.1 Note the impact and achievements of the borough's existing cultural programme including Theatre on Tour and the borough-wide Events Programme and its contribution to community wellbeing, participation, place-making, economic growth and civic pride.

1.2 Approve the proposals for an expanded cultural events programme in 2027 featuring an extended Theatre on Tour and Amphitheatre programme and a new borough-wide Festival (TF Fest).

1.3 Endorse the development of the Telford @ 60 programme to celebrate the Telford's Diamond Jubilee engaging residents and partners in celebrating the borough's heritage and communities and supporting participation in cultural activity.

1.4 Approve proposals to launch a £100,000 community culture & arts grant programme to support Town & Parish Councils and voluntary and community organisations to develop events and activities to form part of the T@60 '60 Moments' celebration.

1.5 Approve the Telford and Wrekin Cultural Strategy as the borough's new place based, framework for cultural development.

1.6 Support the establishment of a Telford and Wrekin Cultural Partnership to provide leadership and coordinate delivery of the Strategy and to maximise opportunities for investment and collaboration noting the Council's role as a key partner.

1.7 Following the Borough's identification by DCMS/Arts Council England as a priority place for cultural development support the development of a Place Partnership funding bid.

1.8 Grant delegated authority to the Director of Housing, Commercial & Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Tourism & Leisure to take the necessary steps to implement the Council's contribution to the delivery of the Cultural Strategy and Partnership and to submit proposals for Place Partnership investment.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 Building on the success of Telford & Wrekin Council's existing cultural programme, including Theatre on Tour and the borough-wide Events Programme, the report sets out an ambitious programme of cultural investment and celebration, centred on an expanded 2027 events offer, the 2028 Telford @ 60 Diamond Jubilee programme and a new £100,000 T@60 Cultural Communities Grant Programme open to Town & Parish Councils and community groups to be part of creating new cultural events and activities. Together with the adoption of a new Cultural Strategy, creation of a Cultural Partnership and pursuit of national cultural funding opportunities, these proposals aim to strengthen community wellbeing, participation, civic pride, place-making and economic growth across the borough.

2.2 The new Cultural Strategy based on wide ranging engagement with stakeholders, creatives and residents, establishes a shared vision for culture across the borough and provides a framework through which partners and investors can work together to maximise the social, economic and environmental benefits that culture can bring to Telford and Wrekin. The Strategy will frame the Council's future delivery of cultural activity and events which will continue to grow, and support further

engagement by partners and communities to broaden programming, extend community reach and deliver economic benefits. It also provides the context to attract funding from Arts Council England and other funders and work with key stakeholders like National Trust as they develop their plans for the Ironbridge Museums.

2.3 This report demonstrates how culture contributes to the borough's priorities and wider ambitions for healthier communities, stronger neighbourhoods, opportunities for children and young people aligned with our Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin commitment, stimulates economic growth and pride in place. It recognises culture not as a standalone activity, but as a catalyst for wider social, economic and community outcomes.

3.0 Background

3.1 Over recent years Telford & Wrekin Council have continued to invest in culture and developed an increasingly ambitious and accessible cultural programme, working with Town & Parish Councils, residents, artists, cultural organisations, educational institutions, businesses and community groups to create opportunities for participation and enjoyment across the borough.

3.2 This approach recognises that culture is not simply about arts and entertainment. Culture plays an important role in helping people connect with one another, supporting wellbeing, developing skills, celebrating local identity, animating public spaces, attracting visitors and strengthening communities. As a borough with a distinctive heritage, diverse communities and significant ambitions for growth and regeneration, Telford and Wrekin is well placed to harness culture as a contributor to wider outcomes for people and place.

3.3 The extent and impact of this work was recognised in the LGA Culture peer review which included Paul Bristow, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Place Policy, Arts Council England. The panel recommended that to ensure growth and sustainability of existing activity and to further connect the diverse local network of creative organisations, artists and venues, that a place based, partnership led Strategy be developed setting out shared ambitions and priorities for sector development. The Cultural Strategy 2027-2032 stems from that recommendation.

3.4 The new Cultural Strategy builds on strong foundations and sets out a long-term vision for how culture can contribute to the lives of all residents and the future success of the borough. It establishes some immediate term actions including for the Council but through the new Partnership this will develop further into a shared Delivery Plan and basis for a bid for Place Partnership funding to the Arts Council.

4.0 Impact and Achievements

4.1 Over the past year, Telford & Wrekin Council has continued to build on its ambitions to make culture accessible to all, delivering a packed programme of free and low-cost events, performances, festivals and community activity reaching residents across the borough and attracting visitors from beyond its boundaries.

This has involved and compliments the work done by many other organisations and individuals.

4.2 The programme has generated more than 100,000 attendances including both residents and visitors, increasing year on year, demonstrating both public appetite for cultural activity and the growing profile of Telford and Wrekin as a destination for cultural experiences.

4.3 The continued delivery of a programme of free and affordable activity remains particularly important at a time when many households are experiencing financial pressures and is a key commitment in our Cost of Living Strategy.

4.4 Based on attendance levels and recognised visitor economy benchmarks, the programme is estimated to have generated in excess of £2 million of additional economic value for the borough through visitor spending, supporting local businesses and hospitality venues, boosting employment, retaining local talent, increasing high street footfall and benefitting the wider visitor economy.

4.5 Culture increasingly contributes to the delivery of wider priorities across the borough and supports the Council's ambition to Protect, Care and Invest to Create a Better Borough.

4.6 The Cultural Strategy supports the ambitions of the borough's Health and Wellbeing Strategy by creating opportunities for people to connect with others, participate in community life and access shared experiences that contribute to positive wellbeing. Across the borough, culture is increasingly taking place in parks and green spaces and with a continued focus on accessibility through family-friendly activities, accessible venues, and measures that support participation by residents with disabilities and additional needs.

4.7 By reducing barriers to participation and creating opportunities for social connection, culture helps build safer, stronger, inclusive and resilient communities supporting the wider ambition of enabling residents to live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.

4.8 Culture also contributes to the ambitions of Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin creating opportunities for children and young people to participate, develop confidence, express themselves and influence decision-making. The borough's strong educational offer, including its highly regarded Telford & Wrekin Music service, demonstrates the role creativity can play in supporting educational attainment, confidence, aspiration and opportunities for young people. We have facilitated a partnership that in 2027 will see Royal Ballet and Opera bring world class expertise to Telford primary school teachers to inspire creative ways to teach dance across the primary curriculum.

4.9 The new Cultural Strategy illustrates what we have heard from children and young people as part of stakeholder engagement and how we are responding. This emphasised their priorities to be involved in shaping places and services that affect them and co-production of cultural activity and opportunities.

4.10 Cultural activity also supports place-making and regeneration which in 2027 will see the animation of more public spaces including our borough town high streets, the new Betty Harris Square (Station Quarter), Oakengates Square and Wellington Market

Highlights from 2025 and 2026

Festivals and Events

4.11 The Council's headline events programme opens with **Spring into St George's** Day in Telford Town Park, bringing together residents and visitors for a free day of family entertainment, featuring jousting, birds of prey demonstrations, creative workshops and the Made in Telford showcase. The event celebrates local talent, community spirit and cultural participation.

4.12







4.13 The first **Telford Krazy Races** in July 2026 attracted over 7,000 spectators to Telford Town Park with 26 teams representing businesses, charities, and community groups from across the borough. The event raised more than £5,000 for local charities and community causes including Lingen Davies Sunflower appeal and Cuan Wildlife Rescue. It generated significant positive publicity for Telford, increased visitor footfall, and demonstrated the power of large-scale cultural events to entertain and support local economic activity.





4.14 **Telford Balloon Fiesta** continues to grow, this year featuring 37 hot air balloons, a sold-out Night Glow with 7,500 attendees that evening alone, and a packed programme of free family entertainment across the Bank Holiday weekend. Culminating in **Telford Carnival** this celebrated everything that makes Telford and Wrekin unique, through music, dance, creativity and cultural expression.



4.15 The Fiesta remains one of the borough's largest and most popular cultural celebrations, attracting visitors from across the country with postcode data showing visitors drawn from Devon to Northumberland and the Welsh coast to East Anglia reinforcing Telford's reputation as a destination for major events and a showcase for new audiences and generating significant economic impact.



4.16 The inaugural Telford Day was held in Southwater on 29 November 2025, establishing a new annual celebration of civic pride and identity for the borough. The event saw the raising of the new Telford Flag, designed by local schoolgirl Amelia. Featuring the iconic Iron Bridge, a cog symbolising the borough's industrial heritage and green reflecting its parks and open spaces, the flag has quickly become a symbol of civic pride and belonging. The celebrations also included the

Telford My Home lantern parade, with illuminated house-shaped lanterns and fairy-lit coracles creating a striking floating light installation on Southwater Lake, alongside entertainment in Southwater Square.



4.17 Telford Day 2026 was celebrated in Ironbridge Gorge as part of a weekend of community and festive activity which also marked the launch of Ironbridge 40, a year-long programme celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Gorge's UNESCO World Heritage designation. The event brought together residents, community groups and visitors and commenced a wider programme of cultural, heritage and learning activity that will continue throughout 2027. Further details of the Ironbridge 40 programme are set out in paragraphs 5.10 to 5.14 below.

4.18 Building on the success of the 2025 festive programme, which included record attendance at Christmas in Southwater, the popular Festive Gardens and the pantomime at Telford International Centre, the 2026 programme will once again provide a vibrant and inclusive seasonal offer for residents and visitors. The pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk will provide the centrepiece of the programme, supported by cross-promotion with activities at Telford Ice Rink, the Southwater Christmas Market, local hospitality businesses and Telford Carol-oke, a community Christmas sing-along in Southwater Square featuring local school choirs. The ever-popular Festive Gardens will return, continuing to provide an affordable and accessible family experience, with ticket prices held at just £8 for a family of five. Together, these events will support the town centre economy while bringing residents and visitors together to celebrate the festive season.

Theatre on Tour

4.19 Whilst the new Telford Theatre takes shape, the **Theatre on Tour** programme has continued to expand, taking professional theatre, live music and participatory activity directly into communities. During 2026 activity was delivered through an increasingly diverse venue network including Belmont Hall, Charlton School Theatre, The Anstice, The Little Theatre, Dawley Town Hall, Cosy Hall, The Wakes, Harper Adams University and other community venues.

4.20 Delivered in partnership with Arts Alive, a National Portfolio Organisation funded by Arts Council England, the programme helps ensure that residents of all ages can engage with cultural activity regardless of location or circumstance.

Amphitheatre

4.21 As well as outdoor performances in Hartshill Park, Oakengates, and Bowring Park, Wellington the reopening of the **Telford Town Park Amphitheatre** marked a significant milestone in the delivery of the Telford Theatre on Tour outdoor programme, bringing live performance back to the venue after more than 25 years. Over the summer, the Amphitheatre hosted 19 event days, with a mix of live music, theatre, comedy and family entertainment, attracting more than 8,000 attendances in a setting in the heart of our award winning Town Park.

4.22 A particular highlight was the delivery of six days of free live music, comprising a two-day reopening celebration and four dedicated local band showcase events providing performance opportunities for local musicians and community groups. The opening weekend alone featured nine acts, including Shades of Grey, Caradoc & The Loachra, Stomping Jacks, Collision, The Endings, Jester, Hadley Male Voice Choir, Midnight Jukes and Broadcast Alley, showcasing the breadth and quality of local musical talent across the borough.

4.23 The reactivation of the Amphitheatre has established a strong platform for future programming with more local musicians and artists approaching the Council for Summer 2027.

4.24 The response to the reopening of the Amphitheatre highlighted the positive impact the venue has already had on local pride and community connection. One resident described the Amphitheatre as having been transformed from "*something of an eyesore*" into a community asset that had '*strengthened their pride in Telford'* and confidence that public investment can improve quality of life and bring communities together. Social media feedback from the public described the reopening as "*a fantastic afternoon*", *"a lovely event"* and *"a wonderful thing to do for our town"*.
"This project is something Telford & Wrekin Council should be proud of. It has made me feel proud of my town and I hope it is the first of many investments that continue to strengthen our community."

Resident feedback following the Amphitheatre reopening



5.0 Looking Ahead

5.1 The next two years represent a significant opportunity to build on success including celebrations for Telford@60 in 2028.

5.2 The Council and its partners will continue to deliver a year-round programme of activity **expanding Theatre on Tour** to more venues, **opening the Amphitheatre for a longer summer run** and ensuring high-quality, accessible cultural opportunities through new festivals, performances, community events, creative programmes and outdoor spaces.

TF Fest 2027

5.3 Joining the Council's established events programme, **TF Fest** will be a new borough-wide festival of culture running from May to November 2027, designed to celebrate the identity, heritage, communities, businesses and culture of Telford and Wrekin's towns.

5.4 Built around the idea of **"A Festival of Towns"**, the programme will shine a spotlight on a different borough town each month with themes to include music, dance, heritage, outdoor arts, young people and enterprise whilst encouraging participation, collaboration and celebration across the wider borough.

5.5 The proposal recognises that Telford is unique created through the coming together of historic towns, villages and communities, each with its own stories, traditions, character and sense of identity. TF Fest seeks to celebrate these differences whilst strengthening the shared story of Telford and Wrekin as a place. It will culminate in Telford Day 2027 planned for Dawley.

5.6 The festival will provide a practical opportunity for community organisations, businesses, Town and Parish Councils, artists, cultural organisations and residents to collaborate in developing content benefitting footfall on the high street and activation of new public spaces. This includes the Betty Harris Square (Station Quarter) and Oakengates Square. It will include a focus on youth-led activity and support for local artists and performers and importantly demonstrate the impact of a coordinated, borough-wide approach to culture to funders like the Arts Council with scope to seek match funding.

5.7 TF Fest will also act as a significant stepping stone towards the celebration of 60 years of Telford as a New Town in 2028, testing new ideas and creating a pipeline of projects that can be revisited, expanded and celebrated during Telford@60.

5.8 2027 will also see new venue opportunities including the completion of the refurbishment of **Wellington Market** and the return of late night events providing a platform for local musicians and emerging talent complementing the successful live music programme established through the Amphitheatre.

5.9 Supporting our ambition to connect and promote the wealth of existing activity we will launch a **borough-wide digital cultural listings platform**, creating a single point of access to cultural activity across Telford and Wrekin. The platform will

enable community groups, promoters, artists and venues to promote events and develop themed cultural trails and festivals. It will also support TF Fest programming and improve audience development, whilst increasing the visibility of grassroots cultural activity across the borough.

Ironbridge 40: Celebrating a World Heritage Legacy

5.10 November 2026 marked the launch of **Ironbridge 40**, a year-long programme celebrating the 40th anniversary of Ironbridge Gorge's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The programme commenced with the hosting of Telford Day in the Gorge and a weekend of illuminations, community participation and cultural activity. Activities included iron casting demonstrations and a community lantern parade featuring lanterns depicting engineering, industry, nature and imagination, marking the start of a year celebrating the area's global significance and continuing contribution to the Borough's cultural identity.

5.11 Running throughout 2027, Ironbridge 40 brings together heritage, culture, education, innovation and community engagement to showcase the unique story of the Gorge and its role in shaping the modern world. The 12 month programme will include opportunities for residents and visitors to explore the area's heritage through storytelling, public art, learning initiatives, creative participation and place-based events.

5.12 Key elements of the programme include ‘Your Gorge. Your Stories.’, a community heritage project capturing memories and personal connections to the Gorge; the ‘Thomas Parker Young Innovators Challenge’, which connects the Gorge's tradition of invention with future skills and innovation; the ‘Made in the Gorge’ initiative celebrating contemporary makers and creative businesses; and the ‘Ironbridge Gorge Coracle Trail’, encouraging visitors to discover more of the Gorge and its communities.

5.13 The 40th anniversary programme supports the Cultural Strategy's ambitions to strengthen civic pride, increase cultural participation, celebrate local distinctiveness, support learning and skills development, and grow the visitor economy. It also provides a platform to engage children and young people with the Borough's heritage while promoting Ironbridge Gorge as a destination of national and international significance. Through links with World Heritage UK and the six other UK World Heritage Sites celebrating the same milestone, the programme will further raise the profile of the Borough and its internationally recognised heritage assets.

5.14 The programme will conclude in November 2027, bringing together the stories, memories, creative work and community contributions gathered throughout the anniversary year and creating a lasting legacy from this significant milestone.

TELFORD @ 60

5.15 These investments build towards the 60th anniversary of Telford in 2028 – our Diamond Jubilee and a unique opportunity to celebrate the borough's story, achievements and aspirations for the future.

5.16 Plans for the year-long programme respond directly to calls from residents during Cultural Strategy engagement for communities to shape, develop and deliver activity of their own, celebrating the stories, places and people that matter most to them, whilst strengthening local pride, participation and belonging.

5.17 To enable this the Council is launching a £100,000 **Telford @60 Cultural Communities Grant Programme** supporting Town and Parish Councils, schools, voluntary organisations, community groups and cultural organisations to develop local celebrations, creative projects, heritage activity and cultural commissions as part of Telford @60. Forming part of the 2028 **"60 Moments**" programme this will enable communities across the borough to create events and activities that celebrate the people, places and stories that have shaped Telford's first sixty years. Arts Council England have agreed to provide advice on how projects could also benefit from their match funding.

5.18 This approach will help create **a lasting legacy** including stronger community partnerships capable of sustaining local events and activity, increased resident participation, volunteering opportunities, new creative commissions and a growth in visitors and economic benefits. It also aligns with Arts Council England's principles and provides context for a Place Partnership bid to sustain and grow cultural activity through external investment.

5.19 More details of the T@60 celebrations will be confirmed in 2027.

Telford Theatre

5.20 The opening of the new Telford Theatre represents a significant investment in cultural infrastructure in the borough. The Theatre with its main auditorium and studio alongside rehearsal and community spaces will provide a focal point for performance, participation, skills development and creative learning whilst strengthening opportunities for residents, schools, artists and community organisations.

5.21 Working alongside Theatre on Tour and a growing network of community venues, the Theatre will act as a hub within a wider borough-wide cultural network and support future partnership and investment opportunities.

Priority Place for Culture

5.22 The borough has been designated a Priority Place for Culture by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, recognising the role culture already plays, and can further play, in supporting the borough's future development and creating opportunities with investment of £100,000+ potentially sustained over a number of years.

5.23 This designation presents a major opportunity to strengthen relationships with national agencies and reflects confidence in Telford and Wrekin's ambition, track record and potential to use culture as a driver of wider social and economic outcomes.

5.24 Using the foundations of the new Cultural Strategy and Partnership it is proposed to develop a bid for Place Partnership investment in 2027 maintaining commitments to community based arts and culture while recognising the role that the New Theatre will play providing a focal point for new performance. Areas of investment will be developed through the Partnership but based on other successful bids could support new festivals or music circuit development, addressing barriers to participation or areas of the borough without cultural venues or provision, innovative partnerships e.g. with health or to further young people's engagement.

6.0 Culture is Belonging – Telford and Wrekin Cultural Strategy 2027 - 2032

6.1 As highlighted in this Report we have a wealth of cultural activity but there is more opportunity. The LGA and Arts Council England Cultural Peer Review recommended we build on this foundation with the creation of a place-based, partnership-led framework to support future growth and inward investment.

6.2 The Strategy has been developed through extensive engagement with residents including children and young people, cultural organisations, artists, community groups, educational institutions, businesses and stakeholders. This engagement identified a strong appetite for culture that is accessible, community-focused and reflective of the borough's unique identity, heritage and aspirations.

6.3 A consistent theme throughout engagement was the importance of culture in creating a **sense of belonging**.

6.4 Residents told us that *culture already exists within communities* across the borough and is not limited to traditional arts venues. Participants highlighted the importance of making cultural opportunities accessible, supporting local creativity, celebrating the borough's heritage and ensuring that children and young people can play an active role in shaping future activity.

6.5 Young people in particular emphasised the importance of participation, influence and ownership, expressing a desire not only to attend cultural activities but to shape and create them.

"We want our voices to count in every decision that affects us... young people bring energy, resilience and creativity to our communities."

6.6 These conversations informed the Strategy's vision and reinforced a sense that Telford and Wrekin is at an important moment in its cultural development. As one stakeholder reflected:

"Feels like Telford's just on the cusp of something. Just at that tipping point."

Strategic Priorities

6.7 The Strategy establishes five priorities that will guide future cultural development across the borough. The full Strategy in Appendix 1 sets out a series of specific actions under each to kickstart delivery:

Belonging to our Communities
Creating opportunities for communities to participate in and shape cultural activity within the places where they live.

Belonging through Opportunity and Creativity
Supporting artists, creative organisations and cultural enterprises whilst developing creative skills, employment and learning opportunities.

Belonging to the Next Generation
Ensuring children and young people can access, participate in and influence cultural activity.

Belonging through our Shared Story
Celebrating the history, heritage, diversity and identity that make Telford and Wrekin unique.

Belonging to our Landscape and Environment
Using parks, green spaces and the natural environment as places for creativity, participation and cultural experiences.

Delivering the Strategy

6.8 The Cultural Strategy is intentionally partnership-led and will not solely be owned or delivered by the Council. It provides a borough-wide framework through which all stakeholders can work together around shared ambitions.

6.9 To support delivery, the Strategy proposes the establishment of a Telford and Wrekin Cultural Partnership. Building on the engagement of key stakeholders including National Trust, the Partnership will provide leadership, coordinate activity, strengthen collaboration, support funding bids and maximise opportunities for investment.

6.10 Whilst leadership will increasingly be shared through the Partnership, the Council will remain a key delivery partner. The Council will continue to invest in cultural activity, operate cultural facilities, deliver events, support funding applications, convene partners and champion culture through wider regeneration, health, skills and community programmes.

6.11 The Strategy also responds directly to the priorities of major funders positioning the Borough to maximise opportunities to attract external funding and deliver outcomes that no single organisation could achieve alone.

6.12 Ultimately, the Strategy seeks to ensure that more residents have opportunities to take part in culture, more communities can shape the activity that takes place around them, and more partners can work together to maximise the contribution culture makes to the future success of Telford and Wrekin.

7.0 Alternative Options

7.1 The Council could choose not to adopt the Cultural Strategy and to reduce or cease to deliver cultural activity and events directly. However, this would remove all the benefits illustrated throughout the Report, to residents, local artists and the wider economy stimulated by investment into culture. It would also limit opportunities to coordinate activity across partners, attract external investment, maximise the contribution culture makes to wider borough priorities and respond to recommendations arising from the LGA and Arts Council England Cultural Peer Review.

8.0 Key Risks

8.1 Key risks include failure to secure external funding, limited partner capacity to deliver shared ambitions, public expectations exceeding available resources and maintaining momentum beyond Telford @60. These risks will be mitigated through phased delivery planning, establishment of the Cultural Partnership, continued community engagement and the pursuit of external funding opportunities.

9.0 Council Priorities

9.1 The new cultural strategy directly supports the Borough Partnership Vision 2032 and the Council's priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community.
- Everyone feels the benefit from a thriving economy.
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live.
- Our natural environment is protected.
- A community focused innovative council providing effective, efficient and quality services.

9.2 The Cultural Strategy plays an important role in delivering the ambitions of **Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin** by ensuring children and young people have opportunities to participate in, shape and benefit from cultural activity across the borough. Through initiatives such as youth-led creative projects, cultural education programmes, Telford Day, community festivals, libraries, arts participation and events in parks and public spaces, the strategy supports the Child Friendly wishes relating to being heard, feeling proud of where they live, having fun, and accessing opportunities to develop skills and confidence. By embedding the voices of children and young people in programme design and creating accessible cultural experiences for all communities, the strategy helps strengthen belonging, wellbeing and aspiration while ensuring that culture contributes to making Telford and Wrekin a place where every child can thrive.

10.0 Financial Implications

10.1 Service and Financial planning (S&FP) approved funding of £500k for two years - 27/28 and 28/29 and this £1m is held in corporate contingency.
During the 2025/26 year-end process £123.3k was approved and held in a reserve. There is also an ongoing Events base budget of £200k. The recommendations referred to in section 1 and the increased resources required to deliver the programme will be funded from these funding streams.

11.0 Legal and HR Implications

11.1 The Council has powers to support and facilitate cultural, community and wellbeing activities, including through its general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. In implementing the proposals within this report, the Council will need to ensure compliance with its Constitution and applicable legal requirements, including in relation to decision-making, procurement, subsidy control, grant funding, contractual arrangements and the Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. Appropriate legal advice will be obtained as individual projects, partnership arrangements, funding agreements and grant schemes are developed and implemented.

12.0 Ward Implications

12.1 All wards will be impacted by these proposals.

13.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

13.1 Proposals will contribute to improving health and wellbeing outcomes across the Borough as illustrated in the Report. Significant inequalities continue to exist between communities and the new Strategy will support community-centred approaches to improving wellbeing, extend opportunities for all residents to access and be part of developing affordable cultural activity.

13.2 Investment into cultural activity delivers economic benefit generating footfall and spend, creating employment opportunity and providing an attraction for new residents and the establishment and growth of new businesses.

14.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

14.1 Increasing participation and social inclusion are central to the Arts Council England's Strategy and our Strategy will align delivering opportunities for everyone to participate and benefit from cultural and artistic activity.

14.2 All our proposals will pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ensuring that equality considerations have been embedded throughout the engagement process. We have and will actively consider how our decisions and actions will affect people with different protected characteristics, and seek to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations within

the communities we serve in line with our statutory responsibilities under s149 Equality Act 2010.

15.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

15.1 The Theatre redevelopment will reduce the carbon footprint of this facility contributing to our commitment to be Carbon Neutral as an Authority by 2030. All our events consider ways to reduce carbon impact e.g. through use of venues and locations accessible by public transport.

15.2 The Arts Council Strategy also includes an investment principle around environmental responsibility stating that cultural organisations should lead the way in responding to the climate emergency. Creative bodies are well placed to innovate and provide solutions to environmental impacts as well as to educate and inform through their art.

16.0 Background Papers

None.

17.0 Appendices

A Telford and Wrekin Cultural Strategy 2027-2032

18.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	18/10/26	29/10/26	KK
Legal	30/10/26	02/11/26	DTW
Finance	30/10/26	03/11/26	AEM