

Luke Emmett statement

Good evening councillors,

I am here to raise your support for our cultural industries.

I was pleased to see Culture mentioned in the abstract of the Heritage Services Business Plan. I attended Tuesday's scrutiny panel to hear it discussed and was encouraged to hear about the internal culture audit, which has begun, and plans that are in place to investigate B&NES' cultural infrastructure before summer.

I urge you to publish and disseminate the outcomes to the public, cultural workforce and organisations.

But I am disappointed that Culture is not more heavily embedded in the Heritage Plan.

If one of the Council's priorities is to embed culture within all key policies, why hasn't this happened with this plan? It only mentions "culture" four times and one of these occurrences was to state the full title of the DCMS. This is a missed opportunity – one I hope is not an indicator of your approach to culture from now on.

Moving forward, I would like to see you:

1. Include cultural industries at the centre of all discussions around culture in B&NES.
2. Appoint a dedicated cultural officer or councillor - a conduit for organisations to connect with the council and access local funding bodies.
3. Repair B&NES' damaged relationship with the Arts Council
4. Show written and evidenced commitment to Culture. This commitment will help cultural organisations secure more funding by giving confidence to funding bodies. (In the 2015 Cultural Strategy Review, there was an ambition to set up a Cultural and Creative Investment Board with representatives from the Arts Council England, B&NES, Heritage Lottery Fund, Local Enterprise Partnerships, and members of the cultural community. Would it be possible to revive this idea?)

5. Create a revised, ambitious, cohesive, and fit-for-purpose Cultural Strategy for B&NES in partnership with local stakeholders.
6. Work with local stakeholders to engage with WECA and access cultural funding and help tie in with the WECA Cultural Compact.
7. The lead officer told Tuesday's Corporate scrutiny panel that Heritage Services are looking for investment from high net worth individuals. Can you use this same approach to provide some arts funding in B&NES?

Finally, I dare to dream of a future where this council once again has a dedicated cultural budget and shows a sustained and ongoing commitment to culture in B&NES.

This is possible when you leverage the resources you have available to you – namely a world-leading city, with an extremely passionate and dedicated cultural sector who are keen to help.

Thank you.