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| Date | Friday 4 June 2021 |
| Time | 9.00 am – 11.00 am |
| Location | MS Teams |
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| Present | Sukhy Johal (Chair), Fiona Allan, Pawlet Brookes, Pippa Frith, Ayub Khan, Jennifer McKie, Lara Ratnaraja, Cllr Piara Singh Clair, Gary Topp, Tanya Raabe-Webber (plus PA Jackie Cooley)  Peter Knott, Richard Russell, Rebecca Blackman, Mark Done, Maureen Gaynor, Kathy Fawcett, Simon Fitch, Hugh James, Tom Wildish, Sharon Joinson, |
| Apologies | Cllr Abi Brown, Cllr John Reynolds, Sarah Brigham, Liz Johnson, Sarah Kennedy, Harinder Matharu, Toby Norman Wright |
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**Notes**

**Midlands Area Council Meeting**

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|  | WELCOME AND APOLOGIES  1.1 The Chair welcomed Council Members and Management Team to the meeting.  1.2 Apologies were noted as above.  1.3 The Chair informed members that Cllr Diana Meale had not been re-elected at the May local elections and therefore has had to resign her position on the Midlands Area Council. He asked for thanks to Cllr Diana Meale, for all her support, dedication, and commitment to be noted.  1.4 The Chair welcomed Tom Wildish to the meeting and congratulated him on his role covering the Senior Manager, Operations post. |
|  | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST  2.1 Members were asked to check their declarations of interest register circulated at the meeting. Members are required to keep their declarations up to date and a copy of the register will be available at all meetings.  2.2 Members were asked to particularly declare any interests at the point in the agenda when the risk register is discussed. |
| 3. | **NATIONAL DELIVERY PLAN ACTIONS**  3.1 Richard Russell presented an information and discussion paper to update members on the remaining elements of the Delivery Plan, which are due to be published in July. The paper covers a general update, timeline, headline content including draft outcome elements and draft actions.  3.2 Richard informed members that the Chair will have the opportunity to relay anything of note in the National Council meeting on 23 June, and we will share all feedback and take it into consideration as we refine the content. He said the actions were draft. Some might be cut, which might be because of resource restraints, or because they are deemed not to be suitably SMART, substantive enough or ready. He said they may be kept for future years and that we will review and update the delivery plan each year. He explained that we have a much smaller budget to support the delivery plan than pre-pandemic, so it is a smaller set of actions than originally considered. He informed members that we were sharing them in their unfinished state but would urge members to read them when they are published in July to ensure they have the final versions in mind.  3.3 Members then discussed the draft outcome elements with comments as follows:     * Cultural Communities: One member was concerned regarding the ordering of the bullet points with the first 3 being place based. Organisations are not just place based but operate nationally and internationally. The ordering of the bullet points seem to put more emphasis on place based. Richard responded that whilst there is a heavy focus on place this is not meant to exclude communities with a wider reference point.      * Cultural Communities: A member asked if the wording around international could be more outward looking.      * A Creative and Cultural Country: One member suggested including the word ‘cultural’ as in ‘.. currently under-represented in the creative and cultural industries’.      * A member said clarity was needed on who the outcomes are for. The sector, the Arts Council, both. Richard responded that it was a strategy for the country, for all communities and the Arts Council. When we refer to ‘we’, we are referring to the Arts Council and the country.      * There was concern that they may cause some anxiety with organisations. However, there was recognition that the sector helped put together the outcomes and most will welcome them.      * Members said that it would be useful to use examples of organisations that are already on that journey to help the rest of the sector see what this looks like. It is important that case studies illustrate all scales/sizes/funding levels as there is great practice going on in various places that are not necessarily our most visible organisations. There is also some great work going on that is not in venues. Case studies about disabled artists would be good to see. Richard responded that supporting materials will include case studies and examples of good practice.   3.4 NPO 23+ Process - Richard informed members that we intend to use the content in the Delivery Plan to inform the process that we use for the NPO 2023 process. He went on to outline the key milestones which include:   * January 2022 – publish applicant guidance * February/March – application portal open * April-September – assessment, balancing and decision-making * End September – communicate decisions * Oct 2022-February 2023 – feedback, negotiation, funding agreements issued * April 2023 – funding period starts   3.5 Richard informed members that we were scheduling drop-in sessions during July for Area Council members to talk about the process and Area Council’s role in it, as well as to test some of our emerging principles. From September onwards we will provide regular updates on progress and provide more information on decision making processes. |
| 4. | PRIORITY PLACES  4.1 Peter Knott presented the paper on the Midlands Priority Places. The paper sets out the proposed priority places for the Midlands, and the logic behind their selection. Area Council members were asked to endorse the list of priority places for the area.  4.2 A general discussion took place where members recognised the work that had gone into the process of selection and noted that they had been involved in several good discussions.  4.3 One member said that the Arts Council should celebrate the things it does well citing Creative People and Places (CCPs) as one of them.  4.4 Richard informed members that the lists of priority places would be published in conjunction with the Delivery Plan in July.  4.5 Peter added that we would report back to members on progress regularly. The Chair asked that to give the team time to have these conversations and to develop their approach, this could come back to a meeting in 6-12 months’ time.  4.6 Midlands Area Council APPROVED the Midlands Priority Places of:   * Ashfield * Bolsover * Boston * Chesterfield * Dudley * East Lindsey * Nuneaton & Bedworth * North East Derbyshire * Mansfield * Sandwell * Stoke-on-Trent * Walsall * Wolverhampton |
| **5.** | **MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 21 APRIL AND MATTERS ARISING**  5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April were agreed as an accurate record.   * 1. There were no matters arising. |
| **6.** | **AREA DIRECTOR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE**  6.1 Richard Russell spoke on the Executive Director’s report which included an update on the Culture Recovery Fund 3, the DCMS Select Committee and Public Accounts Committee, a consultation on funding for Higher Education, and feedback from the Race Advisory Group (RAG) and Disability Advisory Group (DAG), and the Government Indemnity Scheme.  6.2 There was a further discussion on the item on Funding for Higher Education and the Arts Council’s response that the creative and performing arts should be included in the list of strategically important high costs subjects. The Chair said this is a possible conversation for a future meeting.  6.3 Peter Knott spoke on his Area Director report which included a capital projects update, the opening of Derby Museum of making, Commonwealth Games 2022 update, Culture Investment Fund update and staffing news.  6.4 Simon Fitch spoke on the item on Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 highlighting to members that the main opening signatory event takes place on June 5.  6.5 The Chair asked for thanks to be noted for the huge efforts and work Simon has committed to this. The Chair also asked for a representative from the Coventry UK City of Culture team be invited to a future meeting.  6.6 Peter updated members on the latest risk review. |
| **7.** | **Chair’s Update**  7.1 The Chair thanked those members who he had contacted for feedback on Area Council’s review of effectiveness. He explained that he did not feel it was that long ago that this discussion was had at an Area Council meeting and therefore he had emailed a small group of members for feedback. He said that he had already had a discussion with Peter on members’ thoughts and he will feedback to National Council. |
| **8.** | **Any Other Business**  8.1 In response to a member’s concern that the RAG/DAG group meetings are not always fed back to the wider Area Councils, the Chair said whilst there is an update in the Executive Director/Area Director report, he will ensure that Area Council is updated before meetings.  8.2 A member informed the meeting that it was the 50th anniversary since Ugandan Asians settled in the UK and to look out for events around this. |
| **9.** | **Dates of future meetings**  **2021**   * Wednesday 1 September * Wednesday 10 and Thursday 11 November – National and Area Council conference - tbc * Wednesday 1 December   **2022**   * Wednesday 16 February |