

## A Culture and Heritage Strategy for King's Lynn – Analysis Dec '24

The following is a summary of responses from a follow up survey, open from October – November 2024.

The aim of the survey was to test some of the ideas and priorities that had emerged from consultation workshops.

The survey was sent to a mailing list of 92 people who work or volunteer in culture in King's Lynn, and further input was invited through the Council's website. 72 responses were received.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

### **Creativity and opportunities for young people are the primary concern**

There is strong concern for the creative aspirations of young people in King's Lynn, with a combined 89% agreeing or strongly agreeing with point 3, and a combined 83% agreeing or strongly agreeing with point 4. People generally agree that there is low creative aspiration in KL, and there are few opportunities for young people to get involved in the arts. There is a strong sentiment that creativity should be accessible to everyone, and that there is a need for space to nurture it and bring ideas to the people with decision-making powers, as well as create jobs and opportunities for people of all ages.

### **Tourism is less of a concern**

Respondents were less enthusiastic about the role of tourism in KL, with most people (41%) choosing 'somewhat agree' for point 1. There's a sentiment that the cultural pride of local people needs to be nurtured before we can create an attractive tourism offer.

Priority 1: Young People as Makers, Creators and Producers.

### **The main priority is to make more creative spaces available for young people**

People generally agree that there is a lack of creative spaces for people to learn and nurture creative skills, with a combined 90% agreeing or strongly agreeing with step 2. Respondents acknowledge the fact that many schools have low budgets and are under constant pressure to deliver results, so often prioritise STEM subjects over the arts, and so external spaces are needed. There is a general frustration at the lack of control we have over school curriculums, this being a national problem not just a local one.

### **Mentors are needed but there are reservations about practicalities**

Respondents are generally positive about step 1 (scheme for established artists to mentor young people), with more people saying they 'quite like' the idea (54%) than those saying they like it 'a lot' (34%). People had concerns over how the mentors would be paid, as well as the availability of places for mentees.

## Priority 2: Animating Heritage in King's Lynn

### **King's Lynn's existing resources can be expanded upon as well as introducing new ideas**

There is general agreement that heritage engagement would benefit from input from creatives, with a combined 88% saying they 'quite like' the idea or like the idea 'a lot'. Respondents said that King's Lynn is off to a good start with live and digital performances, with some people referencing projectors, Town Guides, and Stories of Lynn, but they acknowledge that KL's creatives need to be mobilised more. A few suggested that animating King's Lynn's heritage could be a good way to tackle priority 1, by engaging young people with heritage, creativity and tech.

### **Arts over heritage**

A few people were confused about the emphasis on heritage and have little understanding of the link between arts and heritage. Some people showed concern that an emphasis on heritage could take away from the creative arts.

### **Heritage over arts**

On the flipside, plenty of people commented on the huge potential of King's Lynn's heritage industry, and were adamant that historical accuracy should not be compromised in favour of creative representations.

## Priority 3: Collaborative Working for Resilience

### **There is a concern that learning from other towns and cities could lead to imitation.**

Although the idea was generally well-received, comparatively more people chose the negative options for step 1 than for the other proposed steps in this section. Many people believe that KL should have its own identity that fits its unique needs.

### **A marketing group would be beneficial for creative industries in KL but needs clear aims**

People like the idea of a marketing group, with 45% of respondents saying they liked the idea 'a lot' but are concerned that it must have a clear common purpose and aim to avoid it becoming a talking shop, and should encourage collaboration over competition. People expressed concern that the marketing group should be made up of local businesses rather than 'outside groups'.

### **There are concerns over funding for work placements**

People acknowledge that placements are a good idea, with 60% of people saying they like this idea 'a lot', as businesses can invest in local people and reap the rewards later. However, people are not confident there will be enough funding for this. Some people suggested apprenticeships instead of placements.

## Priority 4: Inclusivity and Diverse Voice Embedded in King's Lynn Heritage and Culture

### **Respondents are unclear about the purpose of collecting demographic data**

This step (mapping nationalities and demographics in King's Lynn and who is/is not connected to our cultural and heritage sector) has the most mixed results out of the whole survey. Over a quarter of respondents (26%) chose 'neutral/I don't know', and 14% said they didn't like the idea much, the highest negative response of all the questions. People seem confused as to the purpose of mapping the nationalities and demographics, and ask what would happen next. What will the data be used for?

### **Mapping demographic data can help improve equity of access to the arts**

However, many people like the idea, saying that it could help make the arts more accessible and expand opportunities, and that it should be standard practice across all sectors. Some have suggested working with people who are already part of the priority groups we want to engage with.

### **Please rate the following in terms of importance**

The question asked about priorities for culture for health and wellbeing, to support the economy and culture supporting communities.

### **Culture binds people together and supports a healthy society**

Respondents quite enthusiastically agree that all these points are very important, saying that culture 'binds and supports civil society' and supports healthy lifestyles. People recognise that the lack of job opportunities in the town leads to young people moving away or transferring skills to other areas, and arts and culture is a good way to encourage people to make an 'active choice' to remain in KL. However, people still recognise that culture is important as an end in itself, not just a means to an end.

### **What are your thoughts on this proposed way of working?**

The question proposed the formation of a Culture & Heritage Steering Group to drive the strategy, with Task Groups to deliver actions.

### **People generally like the idea and hope it will lead to action**

A generally positive response. Most respondents are enthusiastic about the idea of a Steering Group if the 'right' people are recruited – suggestions on this include people who live and work in King's Lynn, young people, people from diverse creative backgrounds, and volunteers. Lots of people agree that the council shouldn't lead the group but suggest a member of the council should be there to listen and report.

### **People have reservations about the make-up of the Steering Group**

A few people have reservations about who will be in the Steering Group and are concerned about repeating the mistakes of past steering groups, which were too large and had 'competing and changing priorities'. Many felt frustration at the lack of funding and decision-making power held by steering group members. People worry that the interests of smaller businesses could be ignored in favour of those of larger businesses, and that their voices may not be heard by the council.