

## **REGENERATION, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10 JUNE 2021**

### **MEMBER'S ITEM: CLOSURE OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**

Report from: Richard Hicks, Director of Place and Deputy Chief Executive

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#### Summary

This report sets out a response to the Member's item, raised by Councillor Johnson, concerning the closure of the University for the Creative Arts.

#### 1. Budget and policy framework

- 1.1. Under Medway Constitution Overview and Scrutiny rules (Chapter 4, Part 5, Paragraph 9.1) Councillor Johnson has requested that an item on this issue is included on the agenda for this meeting.

#### 2. The Issue

- 2.1. Councillor Johnson has requested that an item be placed on the agenda and the reasons are set out as follows:

'The University for the Creative Arts recently announced their intention to leave their Rochester campus and to cease Further Education provision in Medway. Medway Labour and Cooperative Group have grave concerns about this loss of investment in skills for both the national and local economies. We would like the committee to consider the potential impact of the loss of this provision and to understand what work has been undertaken with the University for the Creative Arts, both before and after this announcement, to retain the provision within Medway.'

#### 3. Director's comments

- 3.1. Medway Council has historically played a pivotal role in securing University provision in Medway, including the inauguration of Universities at Medway by Her Majesty the Queen in 2002.

- 3.2. Our Universities are supportive of Medway's strategic ambitions, with the University of Greenwich one of the founder members of the Medway Place Board and a key partner in Medway's Climate Change and sustainability agenda. The University of Kent is represented on the City of Culture Trustee Board, and hosts the Medway City of Culture team. All four Universities have signalled their support for Medway's City of Culture Bid, and are supporting Medway's first Rapture Gaming and Creative Festival, taking place on 3 and 4 July at the Historic Dockyard, Chatham.
  - 3.3. All Universities have actively and collaboratively participated at a senior level in the Medway Learning Partnership for a number of years, with all signing up to the principles of a Civic University Agreement, positioning our Universities as anchor institutions within the community of Medway. The most recent Medway Learning Partnership meeting took place on 27 April 2021.
  - 3.4. UCA chaired Medway's Cultural Partnership for a number of years and led the production of the Medway Cultural Strategy 2014 – 2019.
  - 3.5. We have had a strong and positive working relationship with colleagues at UCA over the years, with the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive welcoming the Vice-Chancellor and Principal for a tour of Medway in June 2018.
  - 3.6. Since the announcement was made by UCA, a number of discussions have taken place with the Vice-Chancellor, Bashir Makhoul, and a wider range of partners made representations to UCA, all with a view to seeking to maintain a UCA presence in Medway.
4. Risk Management, Financial and legal implications
    - 4.1 There are no direct risk management, financial or legal implications arising from this report on the basis that any decision to leave the Rochester campus is matter for the University of Creative Arts.

## 5. Recommendation

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to note the Director's comments in response to the Member's item.

### Lead officer contact

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### Appendices

None

### Background Papers

None