

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee **Adult & Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Committee **10 January 2006**

Report Title **Warwickshire Arts Service: A Vision for the Future**

Summary The report sets out the results of a major consultation with stakeholders on policy and priorities for the County Arts Service and presents recommendations based on this.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No.

Background papers Arts Policy 2002-2005

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s) Not applicable
- Other Elected Members Councillor S Tooth, Councillor R Dodd, Councillor Mrs M Haywood – “Noted, particularly Item 3.1, first paragraph.”
- Cabinet Member Councillor C Hayfield
- Chief Executive
- Legal Ian Marriott – report agreed
- Finance Paul Walsh, Financial Services Manager - approved
- Other Chief Officers

- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Agenda No

Adult & Community Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 10 January 2006

Warwickshire Arts Service: A Vision for the Future

Report of the Director, Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards

Recommendation

1. That the Committee comments on the County Arts Service increasing reliance on funding from external sources to respond to the priorities agreed.
2. That the Committee comments on the recommendations regarding Key Areas (3.1.1 below)
3. That the Committee comments on the recommendations regarding Grant Aid (3.2.1 below)
4. That the Committee comments on the recommendations regarding Joint Working (3.3.1 below)
5. That the Committee communicates its views on future policy and priorities to Cabinet.

1 Background

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) has a responsibility to ensure a good quality of life for those residents within its boundaries. This public service remit includes the provision of the arts - providing opportunities for people to access, engage in and benefit from diverse arts activities. This responsibility was recognised in the Warwickshire Cultural Strategy which Cabinet adopted in 2003 and within which access to and promotion of arts are key components alongside other cultural opportunities. The currently proposed review of the Cultural Strategy would provide another opportunity to consider how best these objectives may be achieved.

The County Arts Service is one means of delivering access to and development of the arts - these services are broadly dictated by the current Arts Policy which also indicates certain priorities - a number of which have been successfully achieved.

In recent years the real value of the budget available to the County Arts Service has eroded. In particular, budgets available for direct funding to voluntary sector

organisations have reduced and the emphasis on seeking projects which lever in additional funding for arts has increased. The Table in Appendix 1 shows the approximate pattern of Arts expenditure and external income for the last four years.

It is recognised that, to some extent, this represents a shift from investing in annual contractual agreements for set outcomes on a whole county basis towards a more flexible programme of projects and partnerships partly funded by other parties. At present both methods remain in play but members are asked to give their views on an approach which increasingly looks to secure funding from external sources and to deploy these to respond to the priorities agreed.

1.1 Evaluation of Current Priorities

During 2005 the County Arts Service has undergone a process of evaluating its services and these priorities. In Autumn 2005 the Head of Arts led this consultation with members of the County Arts Service itself and other Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards (LHTS) services, other WCC departments, WCC elected members and key partners such as the Districts and Boroughs; Arts Council of England; Government Office West Midlands as well as local and regional arts organisations; community and voluntary sector organisations and individuals with an interest in the arts.

The consultation took the form of face-to-face interviews as well as email, telephone and written submissions. The consultees were asked for their views on twelve questions which were divided into three sections: key areas (of work); grant aid and joint-working. They were also asked for any other comments which fell outside the ambit of these questions. (See Appendix 2)

We received responses from some 48 of the 100 consultees contacted (see Appendix 3). Given the diverse nature of the consultees who represented different sectors, diverse organisations and are working in different disciplines there was a perhaps surprising degree of agreement. This proved extremely helpful when drafting recommendations as clear leads emerged throughout the process and will assist in continuous improvement to the County Arts Service. The consultation has been a very positive process with leads emerging about new ways of working and has proved to be a useful advocacy tool.

The following sections of the report provide an overview of the consultees' responses and attempt to coalesce this information to provide a basis for future priorities. A number of recommendations, arising from each consultation theme, are made which are intended to form the basis for a reinvigorated arts service, appropriate to the modernised, restructured County Council.

2 Current Activities

Before turning to the recommendations it might be useful to provide members with a snapshot of current activity - services are currently focused on the following areas:

2.1 Community Arts

Since 2004 County Arts Service has employed a Community Arts Officer whose role is to engage with communities across the county by undertaking targeted work with priority groups and areas to engage harder to reach communities.

Members may recall the report relating to the programme of work undertaken by the Community Arts Officer which was presented at the November 2005 meeting of this Committee.

2.2 Sub Regional Partnerships

The County Arts Service has a responsibility to maintain a strategic overview of the arts across the County and is also currently involved in Sub Regional Partnerships with a variety of agencies, these are:

- **Visual Arts & Crafts** – by employing a Visual Arts & Crafts Business Development Officer to support the needs of practitioners within the county and in particular the development of the Artsweek initiative.
- **Dance Development** - the role of the Sub Regional Dance Development Officer for Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire is to work strategically promoting and developing all forms of dance practice across the sub-region and act as a focal point for dance development and information.
- **Youth Arts** - the role of the Youth Arts Coordinator is to create a co-ordinated approach to the development and support of contemporary cultural activities with and for young people by working with young people, arts organisations, artists, local authorities, voluntary sector bodies and the formal education sector.
- **Public Art Advocacy** - to increase the scope and quality of art delivered within the public realm across the sub region of Coventry, Solihull and areas within Warwickshire, with a particular focus on the contribution public art can make to regeneration.

2.3 Arts & Health

In Spring 2005 the County Arts Service commissioned an Arts & Health Mapping Project to research and provide information on the current range of arts and health activity in Warwickshire and investigate how this work is being funded, in order to make recommendations on potential demand within the County. This work has informed a development bid being submitted for consideration for the County Council 2006/7 budget.

2.4 Grants Programmes

The County Arts Service manages three grants programmes aimed at supporting the arts in Warwickshire, specifically they are currently:

- **Social Services Arts Fund**, managed by County Arts Service on behalf of WCC Social Services was set up to enable Social Services users to engage in arts activities and involves a broad range of user groups and art forms across the county.
- **The Public Art Capital Fund** is a cross-directorate fund is used to support the commissioning of public arts works across the County. The grant fund is allocated annually and managed by the County Arts Service.
- **Key Clients Fund** – currently supports four professional arts organisations which make a considerable contribution to the arts infrastructure in Warwickshire and work across more than one District or Borough area in Warwickshire.

2.5 Information, advice and advocacy

The County Arts Service offers a range of information and advice to the general public, artists and arts organisations and the voluntary and community sector in Warwickshire.

The County Arts Service is also involved in a broad range of networks and partnerships across the county.

Appendix 4 shows linkage between WCC corporate objectives and current County Arts Service priorities.

3 Results of the Consultation/Recommendations

3.1 Key Areas

There was broad recognition, given the resources currently available to the arts service, that comprehensive coverage would be an impossible task to achieve but that by working with partners a reasonable degree of coverage was possible. A number of those service areas currently supported have been determined in partnership with a variety of agencies. This is seen as the most appropriate response that the County Arts Service can undertake in order to maximize resources and hence impacts. Reviewing these commitments in mid-cycle would be problematic.

However one clear steer emerged as a priority, neatly summed up by the two words 'People' and 'Places' which broadly equate with the community arts and public art key areas. The distinction between these two areas of work is unhelpful. Rather than being seen as two separate disciplines they are in fact part of the same continuum: one valuing quality public places, the other meaningful community engagement and participation. Majority opinion emerged that we should deal with whole communities and not sections of communities in order to address issues of community cohesion and development. Arts involvement in regeneration and spatial planning will prove to be a key part in this process.

3.1.1 Recommendations regarding Key Areas

That County Arts Service continue to work broadly within these areas but there be fine-tuning as to future delivery and new approaches to working being tested so ensuring continuous improvement to the service. Specifically:

- **Community Arts** – as this was identified as perhaps the area of highest priority by the majority of respondents it is suggested that the County Arts Service work to ensure a higher profile of the excellent start already made in this area by the Community Arts Officer. That the County Arts Service should look at staffing arrangements within its current complement to best support this key area of work.
- **Dance Development** - That the County Arts Service continue to provide strategic support to the Regional Dance Development Coordinator in line with its corporate objectives.
- **Visual Arts & Crafts Business Development** – to consider how this area of work might be sustained following completion of the development phase in 2007.
- **Arts and Health** – to act on recommendations contained with the completed audit and initiate closer working links with the health sector, in particular the reconfigured Primary Care Trusts by undertaking a number of pilot projects.
- **Public Art** – to work with the WCC Public Art Steering Group in reviewing how policy and funding might best support the embedding of good public art practice within WCC working structures to ensure the highest standards of design within the public realm.
- **Youth Arts** -That the County Arts Service work with its partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of Warwickshire Youth Arts Network based at the Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs.

3.2 Grant Aid

There was consensus that the key client approach was an essential element of the county arts infrastructure and should continue – with a number of caveats. In particular consultees resoundingly felt that the current annual agreements made strategic planning and hence delivery difficult.

The degree of support for the key client way of working outweighed support for reinstating the small grants approach. It was felt by a large proportion of consultees that organisations/ community groups wishing to access grants from WCC could approach other WCC sources of funding including those administered by the area committees. This was seen as a valid way of working and would also embed the arts more effectively within community development working, where the arts can offer significant added value.

As well as providing access to its own grant aid, the County Arts Service provides advice and practical support in helping arts and community groups access external funds for arts projects and development work. The Service acts as a key contact in

the County for those groups and individual artists wishing to access grant programmes managed by Arts Council England West Midlands (in the period 2002 – 2005 this has predominantly been the Regional Arts Lottery Fund and Grants for the Arts Programmes).

3.2.1 Recommendations regarding Grant Aid

- That the County Arts Service continues to work in partnership with Social Services to deliver the Social Services Arts Fund.
- That the County Arts Service works with the WCC Public Art Steering Group in reviewing how policy and funding might best support the embedding of good public art practice within WCC working structures to ensure the highest standards of design within the public realm.
- That the County Arts Service continues with the Key Client way of working but that a review be undertaken with existing Key Clients to ensure delivery against WCC objectives. As part of this process a scoping exercise be undertaken to ensure the validity of the current key clients as well as an analysis regarding other organisations who could act as Key Clients, with the criteria for support agreed and monitored.
- That consideration be given to 3-years agreements to be signed with Key Clients which would be reviewed annually in order to monitor compliance against agreed performance indicators. The indicators may be designed to support thematic working or targeting specific areas/communities.
- That the County Arts Service creates effective links with Community Development Officers and others to offer arts expertise in assessing applications.
- That the County Arts Service devises a fundraising strategy working closely with the External Funding Team.

3.3 Joint Working

The consultation suggested that particular attention needs to be paid to development in the areas of advocacy, policy development and overall strategic development.

Although a sound foundation has been laid through good links with other departments (in particular the Public Art Steering Group with representatives from all appropriate departments) and joint working on projects (evidenced by the work undertaken by the Community Arts Officer), cross-departmental working needs to be developed much more. Allied to this is the need to address the issue of the perceived low profile of the service. It was generally felt that there was a lack of understanding of what the service currently does. However it was equally felt that there was an enormous and currently under-fulfilled potential for the arts to work cross-departmentally to assist its own and other departments in delivering against key cross-cutting themes., Those most frequently identified were education and learning , health and well-being; the environment and community involvement.

As regards partnership working a substantial list of existing and potential partners emerged. However, consultees felt that the County Arts Service should concentrate its energies on ensuring the effectiveness of its internal working relationships first and that this process would in turn dictate which external agencies were prioritised. It was felt that this way of working could parallel the growing importance of the Local Strategic Partnerships as these become central to the delivery of the public services and the local government agenda. The opportunity should be taken to ensure that the arts are effectively represented within LSPs and for this to be reflected by a greater focus within the Local Area Agreements.

Finally there was also a growing awareness that the developing 'culture bloc' within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime provides the arts with a golden opportunity which the County cannot afford to miss.

Although the arts are classed as a discretionary service, changes to the CPA in 2008 herald a major step-change. The introduction of a 'culture bloc' within the CPA, bringing with it a basket of new performance indicators across the cultural services including arts, will result in an increased importance being attached to arts services. Indeed authorities who cannot deliver across the range of the 'culture bloc' cultural services will not be able to achieve 'excellent' status. Those that are currently 'excellent' but prove unable to deliver across the range of cultural services (including the arts) will lose that status.

It was felt that the County Arts Service could use the intervening period most effectively by undertaking a repositioning and by establishing appropriate cross-departmental working strategies to deliver against this newly emerging agenda. This would enable the Service to demonstrate the impact that Culture (including the arts) can make upon service-users and in particular how the arts can assist other services in effective delivery.

3.3.2 Recommendations regarding Joint Working

- That the County Arts Service contributes to relevant corporate business planning cycles, in particular the County Strategic Plan, Warwickshire Partnership Plan and other key drivers including the new Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships.
- That the County Arts Service works with other WCC CPA 'Culture Bloc' services to ensure that the Authority is fully aware of the forthcoming changes to the CPA regime and takes the necessary actions to succeed within it.
- That the County Arts Service participates fully in the review and renewal of the Cultural Strategy for Warwickshire.
- That the County Arts Service cross-references its work with other sections of cultural services – in particular Libraries and Heritage – by input into joint service-planning meetings to agree annual work plans.
- That the County Arts Service also pursues joint service planning with other services and departments

- That the County Arts Service cultivates closer working relationships with colleagues within newly emerging Directorates and in particular with Children, Young People and Families Services and with Environment and Economy.
- That the County Arts Service works to clarify and formalise the relationship between itself and its internal arts partners working within education - namely ArtZone; Artists in Education and County Music Service.
- That the County Arts Service produces a marketing plan in order to address its low profile both within WCC and externally. In so doing, that it consider a rebranding for the county arts service which better reflects the service it currently delivers as well as the service it aspires to become.

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06 December 2005

Appendix 1

The following table shows the approximate pattern of Arts expenditure and external income from partnership sources over the last three years.

County Arts Service Budget	2005-06 £000		2004-05 £000		2003-04 £000		2002-03 £000	
Base approved budget (gross)	170		162		151		159	
Nett (less central recharges/fixed costs)	110		127		122		140	
Remaining after staff related costs subtracted	40	Of which 26 allocated Key Clients 4.5 allocated Community Arts	59	Of which 30 allocated Key Clients	68	Of which 40.7 allocated Key Clients	79	Of which 46.2 allocated to Key Clients
Income from partnership sources	28		15		15		2.5	

Appendix 2

Linking the Work of the County Arts Service to WCC's Corporate Themes

Within the County Arts Service's adopted Arts Policy and priorities for action, six areas of development were identified for prioritisation. These priorities are linked to the themes of the County Strategic Plan.

Corporate Theme	County Arts Service Priority
Information & Access to services	1a) Provision of relevant, up-to-date information electronically and in print
	1b) Promotion of information
	1c) Broadening geographical and demographic spread of arts opportunities
Education and Lifelong Learning	2a) Support for training
	2b) Creation of arts training programmes
Economy and Employment	3a) Promotion of Creative Industries
	3b) Maximising resources to support Arts Plan aims and objectives
The Environment	4a) Promotion and implementation of the Public Art Programme and policy
Health & Wellbeing	5a) Promotion of the use of arts in Social Services work
	5b) Promotion of the use of arts in improving physical and mental health
Community Involvement	6a) Development of local communities and intergenerational connections
	6b) A co-ordinated approach to the provision of Youth Arts opportunities (via the Warwickshire Youth Arts Network).

Appendix 3

Consultees for WCC County Arts Service Priorities

Arts & Media Training
Arts Council of England West Midlands
Compton Verney
Coventry CC
Culture West Midlands
GoWM
Hybrid Arts
Motionhouse Dance Company
Live & Local
North Warwickshire BC
Nuneaton & Bedworth BC
Playbox Theatre
RSC
Rugby BC
Solihull MBC
Stratford on Avon DC
Warwick Arts Centre
Warwick Arts Society
Warwick District Arts Consortium
Warwick DC
Warwickshire County Council
 Chief Executives
 Education
 Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards
 PTES
 Property Services
 Social Services

And 39 individuals

Appendix 4

A Vision for Warwickshire County Council's Arts Service 2006 Onwards

Consultation Questions

Your responses to the following questions will influence CAS priorities for the coming years and how the service is configured to deliver them.

Key Areas:

- CAS works with multiple agencies to ensure a threshold of coverage for the county. Can you **identify significant gaps** in current coverage - whether by sector; audience; artform or geographical?
- Of those **areas currently supported**: Community Arts; Dance development; Youth Arts; Arts and Health; Public Art; Visual Arts & Crafts Development; Grant Aid; Information & Advocacy – what priority would you give to each? Which are secondary or even superfluous?
- In particular we would welcome your comments on the following **emergent issue**: should CAS give greater priority to: Young People? to Older People? to Rural Areas?
- **A big idea** – should CAS identify and champion a single, visionary, developmental idea? Should Warwickshire become a regional/national/international centre and if so, for what?

Grant Aid

- Is the **Key Client** approach the best way of supporting a countywide infrastructure, should all available grant funding be channeled through key clients?
- Should **resources** be allocated differently, year on year – perhaps by theme; artform or geographical area? Is there another way of doing this?
- Should the CAS investigate ways in which to re-instate a **small grants** programme to support small scale/grass roots arts organisations and activity? What importance would you attach to this?

Joint Working

- Should the CAS be developing better links with other WCC departments and if so, which ones should be a priority?
- Are there **other agencies** which CAS should be working more closely with to more effectively deliver its services?
- Are there other **ways of working** we could employ to deliver our services more efficiently?
- Which agencies should we target for our **advocacy** work?
- In which **policies/strategies** would you expect the arts to be visible?

Do you have any other comments you wish to add?