

Improving Public Services In Cumbria



Arts Engagement In Cumbria

A scrutiny review

March 2009

Building Pride in Cumbria

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Summary of the Group's Findings and Recommendations

The Task Group was established by the Economy and Culture Scrutiny Panel at their meeting of 3 September 2008 to look at levels of engagement with the arts in Cumbria and to explore how this could be increased and developed.

During the review, the Group spoke to a range of people from within the Council, and also externally (a full list may be found on page...), and they have also examined best practice and guidance to help inform their recommendations.

From their research the Group noted several key points:

- There is a broad range of extremely good work going on across Cumbria to engage individuals and communities across various artforms – these include dance, theatre, music, design, visual art exhibitions, education and carnival. This is carried out by a vast range of organisations including the County and District Councils, partner organisations, the voluntary sector and individuals. With such a broad range of activity and partners it is difficult to establish where additional support or resources may be needed and where increased partnership working can take place. The Cultural Strategy and Arts Engagement Plan attempt to give a clear overall picture of what is going on across Cumbria linked priorities identified in the Community Plan and Local Area Agreement.
- The main barrier the Task Group encountered to participation in arts were preconceptions and an idea that art is “not for me.” The range of activities classed as art are extremely diverse, and many people may well be participating without actually realising that they are.
- Arts engagement has a great impact on individuals and communities alike, and can bring a number of benefits such as health and well being, confidence building, community cohesion, volunteering opportunities leading into work, a sense of place and belonging, understanding of ones cultural and environmental heritage and opportunities to develop educational and life skills. As such a commitment to supporting and developing engagement needs to be embedded across the Council’s policies and practices.

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group would like to thank everyone who supported and gave evidence to this Group.

The Task and Finish Group recommend that Scrutiny Management Board put the following recommendations to Cabinet for consideration:

Recommendation 1

That Cabinet acknowledge that engagement in the arts is a valuable element of community health and empowerment, and as such undertake to ensure that it is embedded across all of the County Council’s policies and areas of work

Recommendation 2

That the Cultural Policy Unit works with the Communications team to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote clarity around what can be classed as art, and to encourage arts engagement in its widest sense cross Cumbria

Recommendation 2

That information from each local committee regarding the number and level of grants given to arts related projects are collated and passed to the cultural policy unit, to help provide more accurate information regarding arts participation in Cumbria and inform future decision making

DRAFT

1 Background and Context

1.1 The Arts Council has a wide definition of arts classing it as including:

- o combined arts
- o dance
- o interdisciplinary arts
- o literature
- o music
- o theatre
- o visual arts

- 1.2 In 2005 the Culture Secretary said that "*Creativity will be at the heart of this nation's success in the future. Already it accounts for around eight per cent of our GDP, and is the fastest creator of jobs in the whole economy. The Government is determined to ensure that our young people get the best possible preparation for this bright future. Where they live, or their social circumstances, must not be allowed to hold them back. We want that spark of creativity that lives in every child to be recognised and nurtured.*"
- 1.3 The Government's continued support and drive to improve engagement in the arts may be seen in a number of their publications and directives such as the Every Child Matters agenda and the 2006 White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities which stated "*Participation in cultural and sporting activities improves skills and confidence, enhances social networks and strengthens social cohesion, and has positive impacts on health. These benefits are particularly marked amongst young people, ethnic minority groups and disabled people.*"
- 1.4 Cumbria County Council and its partners have adopted National Indicator 11 (Increasing Engagement in the Arts) as one of the county's targets within the Cumbria Local Area Agreement, highlighting Cumbria's recognition of the benefits that engagement with arts and culture in its broadest sense can bring to individuals, groups and communities. By working in partnership with other authorities, groups and communities the Council has committed to trying to improve levels of engagement by 6% between 2008 and 2011.
- 1.5 At the County Council's Cabinet meeting of 8 April 2008 The Cabinet Member for Community Development and Safety reported on the proposed expenditure for Cultural Grants in 2008/09. From an investment of £176,100 by the County Council and £41,900 from the Arts Council for England, he explained that arts and cultural projects to the sum of £7,258,437 would be able to be supported in Cumbria. Cabinet subsequently agreed this level of budget commitment.

2 Links to Council and Community Priorities

2.1 Cumbria County Council's Council Plan 2008 – 2011 has six key themes of:

- o Better – Improving council services
- o Wealthier – Making Cumbria more prosperous

- Healthier – Improving the health and well-being of adults
 - Happier – Improving the life changes and well-being of children and young people
 - Safer – Creating safe and secure communities
 - Greener – Creating and protecting a high quality environment for all
- 2.1 Under the “wealthier” theme two specifically culture related outcomes have been identified as being key for the Council to focus on, these are:
- 6 *Cumbria’s cultural life, including libraries, sport physical activity, parks and open spaces, heritage and the arts, and the outdoors meet the needs of the community.*
 - 7 *Individual lives are enriched, communities are strengthened and places where people live are improved through culture, sport and leisure.*
- 2.2 In addition to these specific outcomes however, engagement in arts and culture helps to deliver and underpin each of the Council’s key themes, and through this report the Task Group hope to be able to illustrate some of the variety of ways this is happening across Cumbria.
- 2.3 The Cumbria Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008 – 2011 highlights those issues that are important for Cumbria, and it identifies the areas that the Council and its partners needs to work on collectively to help drive improvements in these areas.
- 2.4 Cumbria is one of only three areas in the North West to adopt the government’s NI11 target (Increasing engagement in the arts) as a local target within the Cumbria LAA. The aim is to increase the number of adults participating in the arts by 6% from 2008 to 2011, and this target will be measured through a national active people’s survey, monitored by the Healthy Communities and Older People LAA thematic group.

3 Role and Membership of the Task and Finish Group

- 3.1 At their meeting of 3 September 2008 the Economy and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Panel received a report from the Head of the Cultural Policy Unit, who explained the County Council's intention to focus on arts engagement opportunities at a strategic level across Cumbria. The Panel subsequently agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to review the current levels of arts engagement across the County and to consider whether this is sufficient to meet the Council's aspirations or whether this needs to be further developed and improved.
- 3.2 Membership of the Task Group was confirmed as being:
- o Councillor E Barraclough
 - o Councillor R Bird
 - o Councillor D Southward
 - o Councillor E Wilson
- 3.3 The Task Group held its first meeting on 7 October 2008 where it discussed how best to carry out the review and what the focus of this time limited piece of work should be. Members agreed that Councillor Roger Bird would be Chair of the Group, and that their aims would be to:
- i. Clarify what exactly is meant by "arts" and how levels of participation are measured.
 - ii. Look at whether it is possible to identify areas of particularly good practice or high levels of engagement in Cumbria, and if so investigate the possibility of sharing this best practice.
 - iii. Examine other bodies and organisations use of arts engagement, and review whether the Council could link into any of this ongoing work.
 - iv. If appropriate, develop recommendations to help support methods of increasing arts engagement across Cumbria or within certain areas or groups.
- 3.4 Due to the time limited nature of this review, Members agreed that although they would looking at young people's engagement with the arts, this would not be the main focus of their review. Instead they would try to take a wider perspective, considering a range of groups and sectors across the community in different areas of Cumbria.
- 3.5 The Task Group held a total of six meetings where they reviewed a range of written evidence and conducted a number of witness interviews to help them develop their recommendations. As a key part of this process they visited a number of different groups and areas within Cumbria to examine what arts engagement and participation is happening in different communities, and identify whether there is learning and best practice that could be shared countywide.

- 3.6 This final report has been drawn up as a result of the Task Group's investigations, and full details of who they met with and the evidence gathered are shown below.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 At the Task Group's first meeting Members met with the Head of Cultural Policy, the County Arts Participation Officer and The Cultural Development Officer, who provided some background to the review. They highlighted that the Council has adopted National Indicator 11 to increase arts engagement, and that they were in the process of developing a Draft Arts Participation Plan for the County (attached at Appendix A). It was felt that the Scrutiny review of this key area was very timely and would help provide valuable information on the levels of participation and understanding of what is meant by arts across Cumbria, whilst providing an objective critical friend challenge.
- 4.2 The first area the Task Group felt important to clarify was what exactly is meant by "art." It immediately became apparent that even among this small group there were different perceptions. The officers explained that many different activities can count as taking part in art, and the list below illustrates some of these activities:
- o Ballet
 - o Other dance
 - o Played a musical instrument
 - o Performed in a play/drama/opera
 - o Made films or videos for an artistic activity
 - o Written poetry/stories/plays
 - o Carnival
 - o Being a member of a book club
 - o Textile crafts e.g. embroidery or knitting
 - o Photography as an artistic activity
 - o Other crafts such as pottery or jewellery making
 - o Painting, drawing, printmaking or sculpture
- 4.3 Members agreed that although not extensive this list gives an excellent indication of how many different ways there are to take part arts in Cumbria, however it was felt that many people would not necessarily class some of the activities they take part in as being art. This means that when surveyed the results may be extremely inaccurate with people reporting that they did not participate when in fact they did.
- 4.4 In addition to those people who actively participate in various art forms, the Task Group would also like to recognise the vast number of people who support these pieces of work, such as volunteers selling tickets, working back stage, planning events and publicising them. Without their work and engagement Members are conscious that much of the engagement they have seen would not have been possible.
- 4.5 On 18 December 2008 the results of a national poll provided a base line for arts engagement in Cumbria. This showed that 42.7% of 1,508 people surveyed of Cumbria's population (aged over 16 years of age) take part in a range of arts

activities or attend arts events. This figure compares well with the regional average of 42.8% across the North West although falls a little behind the England figure of 45.2%.

- 4.6 Although these figures are encouraging, the Task Group have raised a concern with the method in which these figures are collected, as this work is undertaken in the form of a telephone survey. Members are conscious that there are limitations to telephone surveys, such as the time of day the phone calls are placed, which will potentially influence the type of person who will be available to respond (for example if it is during the daytime many people will be at work). In addition many people are not always willing to undertake a telephone survey at all and as such their participation or lack of, will not be recorded. The Group therefore whilst acknowledging that these figures may be indicative of trends in Cumbria are conscious that they are not necessarily fully representative or fully accurate.
- 4.7 At their second meeting the Task Group met with the Senior Policy Officer – Information and Intelligence, to look at what information regarding levels arts participation in Cumbria the Council already held. This it was hoped, may help the group to identify areas to visit to explore examples of barriers or best practice that could be learned from and used to help inform future efforts to improve arts engagement in Cumbria.
- 4.8 At this meeting it became apparent that currently there is only limited information available regarding levels arts participation, however it did indicate that uptake was not the same in all areas of the county, with current figures suggesting that some areas on the west coast had lower levels of participation than some other parts of Cumbria.
- 4.9 The Task Group agreed that having reviewed the background to arts engagement in Cumbria, and having considered the national picture, it was essential to visit different areas of the County and to meet with groups and individuals who either deliver arts or who participate in various forms of arts. This it was felt would help to provide qualitative evidence of barriers to participation as well as examples of good practice that may be able to be rolled out to other areas. It was also hoped that this approach would also help to identify specific examples of how arts engagement can benefit individuals or communities.
- 4.10 The Task Group agreed to undertake visits to Barrow, the West Coast and Eden in order to look at a mixture of areas in Cumbria both in terms of geography, centres of population, access and facilities available. Details of these visits and the witnesses spoken to are shown below.

5 Site Visits and Witness interviews

Task Group Visit to Barrow 17 December 2008

- 5.1 Details of the Task Group's visit to Barrow and of the people and groups they met with are shown below.

Art Gene:

- 5.2 Members met with Stuart Bastik and Maddi Nicholson who explained the background to the Nan Tate Centre, which used to be the former Barrow Technical College. Following a redevelopment the building reopened in 2002, and Art Gene now occupies the building with other arts organisations such as the Barracudas and Dare Dance and some County Council functions for example the registry office.
- 5.3 They explained that they do a range of work with communities and individuals, including teaching skills such as film making and using software like Photoshop. Art Gene is also involved in a variety of other projects such as working with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to where they have run some film projects for young men aged between 18 and 26.
- 5.4 The group were also given a short tour of the building and its facilities including an office which had several computers in it that anyone can come in and use, so providing an additional community resource.
- 5.5 The Task Group discussed how Art Gene attracts people to participate and any barriers they encounter. They explained that they use a variety of methods to encourage people to take part, although they have found that word of mouth is the most effective. At present they are currently trying to find and develop community champions who are ordinary people who have a real passion for arts in some of its various forms, with the aim that they can then act as advocates within their own communities further raising the profile. They have also done some work with schools, and highlighted that working with families is very good as this increases the potential audience from perhaps just the child to include the whole family. Other things they do to break down barriers include putting good food on when they are holding an event, as this changes the atmosphere, with people not just feeling they are coming to a gallery, rather they are coming for a social event and something to eat that happens to be in a gallery. In addition to these more personal methods they do use traditional media such as mailing lists and posters.

The Barracudas

- 5.6 The Task Group met with Julie Hammerton who explained that the Barracudas were formed in 1988 and that it is an art organisation that creates carnival, visual performance, costume, music and events. One of its main projects is Barracudas Carnival Band, which performs at Carnivals and events all over the country. It has performers of all ages, which together form a Carnival band with musicians, drummers, dancers and stilt walkers. They provide workshops for beginners and more advanced performers as well as creative workshops for teenagers. On the

Internet they also bill themselves as being “all about having fun, dressing up and celebrating whilst learning new skills at the same time.” They hold between 150 and 200 workshops per year in total.

- 5.7 The group also met a gentleman who recently joined the Barracudas. He explained that he suffers from anxiety and finds that being a part of the Barracudas helps to ease this. He originally joined because a friend brought him along, and he now thoroughly enjoys his time with the group.
- 5.8 Members queried whether Julie felt that the concept of Barracudas was transferable, for example setting up a similar scheme elsewhere in the county. She confirmed that she felt this was definitely a transferable scheme although it needs dedicated support to help it work.

Dare Dance

- 5.9 The Group met with two of the directors of Dare, who explained that the organisation’s aim is to deliver dance developments through a range of projects, both at community and professional levels. The main problem they find is having adequate space for rehearsal and productions. At present they use Forum 28 once a week and people come from all over Barrow and from further afield for their sessions. On their website Dare they that “*Since 2002 DARE has led 2000 dance workshops with more than 12'000 people of all ages and abilities led by 30 dance artists from around the World.*”
- 5.10 The organisation undertakes a number of pieces of work and have recently received funding for two projects on dance movement with schools on Walney, and they are interested in doing other projects for example working with fathers and sons. They find that this work is very beneficial and people travel from some distance to take part in their workshops. With regards to the best way to encourage people to get involved, they have found that word of mouth and getting to know individuals in particular communities that encourage people to “give it a try.”

Whitewood and Flemming

- 5.11 The Task Group met with Elaine from Whitewood and Flemming. She explained that in early 2008 they were asked by the Arts Council and the National Children’s Bureau to look at working with Children in Cumbria. They met with the County Council’s Head of Children and Family Care and she has strongly supported them in working with looked after children in Cumbria. This work has been extremely beneficial, and the Task Group were extremely supportive of these projects.
- 5.12 Some of the tools that this organisation is developing include creating young advocates, who can encourage engagement among their own peer groups. They are also training older young people to be able to work with and mentor the younger ones, which not only helps the younger ones but also gives the older ones additional skills and experience.

- 5.13 A discussion was held on the need for continuing to develop the relations between the Council and all kinds of artists, as it is often the case that artists want to work with young people but do not necessarily know how to go about this and what training is needed. Similarly the Council may want to use art as a medium to engage young people but do not know the relevant artists to contact. Methods of communication and ensuring that the relevant information is available is therefore crucial.

The Barrow Arts Officer

- 5.14 The Final visit of the day was to meet with the Arts Officer for Barrow Borough Council. This began with a 17 minute film illustrating the range of activities and organisations running in Barrow at present. The Arts Officer explained that the film was produced for a conference on a limited budget in a short space of time, and that each organisation shown was responsible for how they were portrayed and the content of their section.
- 5.15 The Task Group discussed how Barrow has achieved its current participation levels and how this can be developed and possibly used as best practice that could be adopted elsewhere. The Officer responded that although there is a lot going on it has taken many years to build up the infrastructure supporting these activities and the concern is that it would take very little for it to collapse. Succession Planning for example is a big issue.
- 5.16 Regarding barriers to engagement she highlighted that perception is very important, with many people there is a perception that arts "isn't for me," perhaps driven by a lack of understanding of what "arts" actually includes. It was thought that the majority of young people who attend festivals would not consider themselves as visiting or taking part in an art form for example.

West coast 15 January 2009

- 5.17 Details of the Task Group's visit to the west coast and of the people and groups they met with are shown below.

Rosehill Theatre

- 5.18 The task group met with Richard Elder the Director of Rosehill and he gave a brief overview to the background of the theatre from its opening in 1959 through to its current position. He highlighted that one of its unique selling points is its history, and that September 2009 will mark the theatre's 50th anniversary, and as such they are planning a number of events to mark this. As part of this celebration he has been to meet the Cultural Attaché of the Hungarian Embassy, and is hopeful that they will be getting involved with both the anniversary and also the theatre, perhaps leading to links with Hungarian establishments and/or reciprocal visits. Having these links to the Embassy should also help raise the theatre's national profile.

- 5.19 The Task Group explored the theatre's relationship with other similar establishments in the County such as Theatre by the Lake, and were encouraged to find they appear to complement each other as they do differ greatly, but also that they work in partnership in some areas, for example sharing a marketing manager.
- 5.20 The discussion moved on towards the events that Rosehill puts on and how it engages the community. The Director explained that they put on a very diverse range of events from tribute bands to classical music, and he feels that it is crucial to demystify going to the theatre – you don't need to be a certain type of person or wear a specific outfit to attend, rather it is about people coming along to enjoy a variety of productions. It is also important to be proactive rather than reactive – rather than wait for people to say what they want to see, he wants to provide opportunities for them to see a range of productions and develop their experiences and engage further.
- 5.21 Regarding the range of people that attend the theatre the Task Group were advised that the current audience is mixed with some locals and some from further afield, and the Director is intending to analyse their mailing list to look at socio economic and population profiles for his current clients to help him develop and target specific audiences. He also highlighted his plans for redeveloping and improving the theatre complex, although highlighted that this would depend on further funding.

The Beacon

- 5.22 The Task Group visited the Beacon and were shown around the facility which originally opened in 1996, and now houses the museum and 2 tourist information centres. The gallery at the top of the facility can be hired out to parties and events and as such brings in additional income. The museum has also been designed to be very interactive and in line with elements of the national curriculum to help encourage schools to visit.
- 5.23 A discussion was held regarding the visitor profile of the facility. Since the beginning of this financial year they have had in the region of 50 – 55,000 visitors, and the opening of the new bistro is attracting more. They aim to have over 60,000 next year. Originally 13% of their visitors were identified as being local with 87% being from out of the Borough. To try to combat this and reengage the local community they ceased advertising nationally and worked to remove people's perception that the Beacon is a tourist attraction, emphasizing instead that it is their museum and facility. Now the figures have changed radically with a split of approximately 40% locals and 60% from out of the Borough.
- 5.24 Members queried how they are attracting local people to the site, and a number of different methods were discussed, such as taking some of the museum attractions out to other locations around the Borough for example to local supermarkets, to give a "taster" of what they have, to people who may never have considered visiting before. The exhibitions are changed between 8 and 10 times per year to always keep it fresh, and perhaps one of the key things is their pricing structure. Although it is £4.50 for an adult ticket, their season tickets allowing unlimited access for 12 months only costs £8 which encourages repeat visits. The art gallery

is also free entry to all, once more helping to draw people in. The art gallery space is over subscribed with over 100 artists wanting to display there, and the Beacon only charges them if they are selling their art, and their fee is 30% commission on all sales.

Pathways to Arts

- 5.25 The group received a small presentation from Dave Chapple the Arts Development Officer from Copeland Borough Council, and met with Peter Tyas their Cultural Services Manager, as well as a lady who takes part in one of the Pathways to Arts Groups. They explained that this work began following some discussions with Job Centre Plus about the levels of incapacity benefit being claimed in the Borough and whether any arts projects could help to reduce this. The concern was that once a person ends up on benefits they may develop problems such as a diminishing confidence and finding it more difficult to network and as a result this starts to create barriers to them getting into work or further re-education. The project therefore tries to help people develop new skills and interests, meet people and gradually develop the confidence to take that next step. Examples of groups they run include "get into reading", "writer's workshop", photography and ceramics and with regards to encouraging engagement they use a variety mediums to do this, including putting everything on the website, producing leaflets and posters, and crucially through personal contact, such as speaking to people in libraries.
- 5.26 The Task Group were advised that the Officers are currently looking at the out points to this project such as volunteering, education and employment. Currently they are finding that approximately 30% of participants go on to do something else such as volunteering (they have a higher success rate than the Job Centre for this) and some of this 30% do go back into full time employment (their figures are similar to the Job Centre for this).
- 5.27 In year 2 of this project (the current figures) they have had 1353 participants and held 262 sessions. Of these people 21 were referred from the job centre, 53 from other agencies and 185 contacted the team themselves. (Some participants have continued from year 1)

The Rural Touring Group Arts Out West

- 5.28 The Task Group met with Bob Pritchard and four promoters from villages around the area. It was explained that this scheme has a good geographical spread, primarily covering rural areas although it does cover one or two larger settlements, and Arts Out West is one of approximately 30 rural touring schemes across England, with an aim to bring high quality arts events to places that would normally be unable to access them.
- 5.29 Each participating village hall is provided with a menu of artists and they choose those events they would like to host, these are then allocated out. One of the key features of this scheme is that attendance is normally very high with most events being sold out. They attribute this success to the fact that the prices are reasonable with recommended adult tickets being £6, and perhaps crucially with the venue being the village hall, most people can walk to attend so do not have to

travel far, they also often feel they are supporting the community and like to meet their friends and neighbors.

- 5.30 The Task Group discussed the types of funding this work receives and were pleased to note that the individual village halls often manage to make a small profit from the events, which they can then put back into the facilities and community. The Task Group were also advised that Arts out West is also beginning to work with primary schools and some secondary schools bringing artists into them.

The Settlement

- 5.31 The final location the group visited was The Settlement in Maryport where they met Jane Donaldson and Michelle Cattanach who work for and support the scheme. They explained that they work with a range of different people, often in partnership with other organisations such as Barnardos, who already have links into particular communities and groups. In order to encourage people to come to the Settlement and participate they use a range of different methods, such as leaflets and posters, however they have found that the best form of advertising is word of mouth – when someone comes along to one of their events they often tell other people, and usually come back again themselves. The Task Group looked at a schedule showing the events they are putting on between January and March; these include jewellery and beading, bookmaking, mosaics and digital crafts.
- 5.32 An example of a successful project they have run is in their garden where they employed a gardener and therapist, and a person with mental health problems was encouraged to come along to learn gardening. He was then able to use his experiences from this skill in the therapy sessions, and this project really helped the individual in question. They are hoping to do a similar but larger scale project this year. Another area they are developing is recycling, where they are encouraging individuals and local businesses to donate their scrap materials for example old cloth, wool, wallpaper, and bottle tops which they then use in children's art projects or swap schemes.
- 5.33 During 2008 the Settlement ran 5 partnership projects, recruited 25 new volunteers, 3 of who are under 25 years old, and they have worked with over 1256 adults and young people through their various projects and events.

Visit to Eden 29 January 2009

- 5.34 Details of the Task Group's first visit to Eden and of the people and groups they met with are shown below

Creative Futures Cumbria

- 5.35 The Task Group met with Margaret Riches and Paul Jenkins to discuss the work that Creative Futures undertakes. They explained to Members that originally Cumbria Arts in Education was established in 1992 as a Charitable Trust and it facilitated schools' contacts with artists and established new opportunities for children and young people to participate in the creative process. However in April

2008 Cumbria Arts in Education became the host organisation for Creative Partnerships Cumbria. They now work with creative professionals, including artists, scientists and architects, to promote the capacity of the creative and cultural sectors to work within education and across the community to put creativity at the heart of learning.

- 5.36 Creative Partnerships is part of a national programme which began in 2002, and the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) put in approximately £35 million into this nationwide in order to help develop the creative attributes of children and students. Here in Cumbria schools bid to have Creative Partnership programmes which last between 1 and 3 years – they pay 25% of the costs and Creative Partnerships pays the remainder.
- 5.37 They highlighted that young people do not just learn in the classroom but also with their families and carers, and as such it is key to work with families as well, not just schools. An example of the kind of work they have carried out is can be seen from last year when they received funding from museums, libraries and archives. Here they took on a storyteller and musicians, and held 3 sessions in each library storytelling for young children. The feedback they received from these events was excellent and they have requested that more of these sessions are held. This year they are planning to work across 5 different childrens' centres along Early Years Practitioners doing something similar. As part of this they will be training the practitioners to do the storytelling themselves to help them continue this work when Creative Partnerships have finished theirs.

Cumbria Police

- 5.38 The Task Group met with Tony Kirkbride from Cumbria Constabulary, and he explained to the group that he addresses arts engagement from a Respect point of view, and looking towards reducing antisocial behaviour. He works with various organizations and groups and they aim to try to direct young people away from antisocial behaviour. He gave an example of some of the projects that they have done such as creating a storyboard or encouraging young people to express their feelings through various mediums such as self portraits or film. One of the key points highlighted was that it is important not just to work with the individual young person but also their family, as without the support of their family and communities, it is unlikely they will continue to carry on with the art and may revert to their previous behavior.
- 5.39 He proceeded to explain that as part of his role he helps find funding for these projects for example through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), but one of the problems they have is knowing what expertise is available, and what support there are for the arts in Cumbria.
- 5.40 Then Task Group queried what he felt were the main barriers to participation from his experience, and he advised that some of the most practical ones are the cost and transport to attend activities, as well as childcare issues for other children in the family if you are trying to encourage parents to support and participate with the young person.

Eden Arts

5.41 The Task Group met with Irene Faith from Eden Arts which is the Local Arts Development Agency for Eden District Council, and its remit is to promote, support and help develop arts and cultural activities in the area. Specifically Eden Arts:

- Support and enable local professional, amateur and visiting artists to work within the local community and further afield
- Encourage local people to be involved in arts activities - as audience or participants
- Offer access to high quality arts events to all sections of the community by promoting our own events - e.g. visits by RSC, Northern Sinfonia, touring opera, theatre and dance companies - and giving assistance and advice to other promoters
- Promote enjoyment of the arts for all ages, and develop new audiences, through education - including artists' residencies in schools, community homes, hospitals, day centres and with community groups
- Provide information, advice, advocacy and expertise on all aspects of arts development, e.g. funding and marketing advice to local groups; research and consultancy work for other organisations
- Actively seek opportunities for integration of the arts with health programmes, tourism, community regeneration and education, working in partnership with local authorities, strategic partnerships, tourism organisations, NHS and the voluntary sector
- Hire portable sound and lighting systems to groups in Eden District.
- Market and promote arts activities across the district through local press, TICs, notice boards, and their quarterly newsletter
- Lobby and campaign for improvements in arts provision
- Give grants and guarantees to local promoters, for events, exhibitions, training bursaries and a variety of different arts projects in the community and in schools
- Support North Pennine Highlights, the rural touring programme which brings theatre, dance and music events to village halls throughout Eden, South Lakeland, Teesdale, Weardale and Tynedale

5.42 Irene confirmed that because they are a charity they are independent, and as such they can go beyond the District boundaries as part of their work. She also confirmed that they also work with a number of different organisations to help deliver their projects and they also sit on various boards helping to provide support and guidance, for example Irene sits on the board of Creative Futures, and Highlights Rural Touring.

- 5.43 Details of the Task Group's second visit to Eden and of the people and groups they met with are shown below

Penrith Players – The Playhouse

- 5.44 The Task Group met with Mike Head who gave a tour of the Playhouse theatre and outlined the work of the Penrith Players. He explained that the organisation was founded in 1922 and is entirely owned and run by its 200 members, who each join for a £15 fee. Members can be involved in all aspects of theatre productions including acting, directing, script-writing, set design, lighting and sound. The theatre is run entirely by member-volunteers with the exception of a single part-time employee, hired to run the theatre bar. The Playhouse seats 160 people, and in addition to hosting the 6 Penrith Players productions annually, it is, on occasion, also hired out to local groups. The Players are also looking to transform an underutilized room in the building into a studio area that could be used by themselves or hired out to other groups.
- 5.45 The Task Group also met with the lady who works with the Juniors group which is made up of young people from 9 years old to 17 from across the area. During term-time the 25 Junior Players meet every week and learn general stagecraft skills, they also produce an annual summer production for which they meet more regularly to prepare and rehearse. The junior group is currently oversubscribed to the extent that they have had to close the waiting list for membership, with the availability of volunteers to maintain the necessary adult/child ratio being the main barrier to expansion at present.

Vista Projects (UK) Ltd

- 5.46 The Task Group met with Lynne Fade the Dance Co-ordinator for Cumbria County Council to discuss dance engagement in Cumbria. She explained that Vista Projects was commissioned by the Council to provide a 3 year Dance Development Plan (2005-2008) to re-examine dance provision across the county and improve the quality and quantity of dance. Two Dance Workers are also employed to work across the county and help provide dance opportunities through working with schools, local groups and setting up individual projects. She highlighted that for the long term one of the key priorities is to skill-up teachers in the area of dance to enable them to continue to deliver this area of work in the long term.
- 5.47 The Task Group were advised of a project which is being run by Bradford Youth Offending Service who had developed a programme of activity as an alternative to custodial provision. This project has been a great success in instilling discipline and team working values into the group of participants and highlights many of the wide personal and social benefits of arts engagement.
- 5.48 Lynne also advised Members of the We're Still Dancing project, which is a dance based approach to improving the mobility and quality of life of people with Parkinson's Disease. Participants join the project in a number of ways such as by a GP referral, and take part in a number of weekly sessions led by a neurological

psychotherapist and independent dance artist based in South Lakeland. The benefits of this project such as improved coordination, memory, and reducing the feeling of social isolation for some individuals was discussed.

“Every session makes me feel energised and hopeful. I am aware that without this I would be far more despondent and unmotivated as I wouldn’t know as much about how to move with as much control and safe feelings.” – an extract from a participant of the We’re Still Dancing, park diary

Cumbria Tourism

- 5.49 The final witness the Task Group met over the course of this review was Jan Shorrock the Cultural Tourism Marketing Executive for Cumbria Tourism. She explained that the post of Cultural Tourism Marketing Executive was only 1 year old and had originally been established with the remit of bringing new people to Cumbria by promoting awareness of arts activities in the county. The focus of the next 3 years will increasingly be looking to develop the internal market and shifting the emphasis to better market what is on offer to people across Cumbria, and looking to raise awareness of these attractions and activities. She noted that, since start of the project, the cultural pages of the ‘Go Lakes’ website have experienced more than a 50% increase in the number of hits.
- 5.50 The Group were also advised that a national pool of funding has been established for the ‘Cultural Olympiad’ which covers the 4 year lead in to the 2012 Olympic Games. Kendal Arts International has secured just under £1 million of this funding (the biggest single grant in the North West) for a series of outdoor / street art events across Cumbria as a whole. The hope is that this approach to arts will bring the arts to vast numbers of participants across the county as a whole, including many who may class themselves as not participating or interested in arts normally.

University of Cumbria

- 5.51 As part of the research into arts engagement in Cumbria, the University of Cumbria was contacted by one of the support officers to provide information relating to the university as both a supplier and consumer of arts activities in the county. Both the Head of the Arts Faculty of the University and the Vice President of the University of Cumbria Student Union (UCSU) kindly provided information for the review.
- 5.52 The current University was formed on 1st August 2007, and the Arts Faculty is a particularly significant component. It both produces a large amount of visual and performing arts and attracts a significant population of culturally aware individuals with potentially high demand for arts opportunities. The University has core campuses in Carlisle, Penrith, Ambleside and Lancaster.

University as producer of the arts

- 5.53 The University regularly exhibits student's visual art in Carlisle in the Bank Gallery, and exhibitions at Bank Gallery are regular and achieve a good student audience but are rarely formally advertised and never advertised to the community beyond the university. They also exhibit graduate visual artwork in various locations across the County such as at the Theatre by the Lake in Keswick.
- 5.54 The University regularly presents performing art and, has its own theatre on the Carlisle campus. Whilst this theatre has previously produced a regular flow of professional theatre, it is now dominated by the (approximately) 150 student productions a year. The University is also in consultation with the Carlisle Renaissance team to explore including more professional theatre in their new build.
- 5.55 One of the main problems they find is in getting an external audience to their visual or performing arts productions, and the main barriers they have identified include:
- Advertising costs;
 - Student lack of confidence in exhibiting / performing art to an external audience;
 - Nature of student work: much art is highly contemporary and not appealing to the mainstream;
 - Copyright legislation prohibits charging for some performances;
- 5.56 Though awareness of arts opportunities provided by the University is inconsistent county-wide and generally very low, the University does engage in some outreach work and sponsor community arts projects, working with targeted groups. They are currently developing a strategy for spring 2009 to look at how the 17 University sites engage with the communities around them, specifically looking at the sites and campuses as venues for cultural activities.

University as consumer of the arts

- 5.57 There are currently three student arts societies in Carlisle: photography, music, and musical theatre. The UCSU Governance Review (Sept 2008) describes the Lancaster and Carlisle campuses as "significantly larger in terms of students numbers than both Ambleside and Penrith" and a large proportion of formal cultural activities are concentrated in these areas. Cultural provision in terms of live music is enjoyed on a more level footing with Penrith and Ambleside campuses both having lively music scenes, and Ambleside's student union recently hosted a very successful live music festival – 'Hot Cream' – which attracted a large and diverse audience.
- 5.58 The Vice President of UCSU highlighted the following barriers to student engagement in the arts:
- Awareness of cultural activities beyond the university;
 - Lack of space and quality of facilities available;
 - Diversity and geographical spread of students;

- Cost and time of travel;

5.59 Though young and still establishing itself with all sections of the student population, the University of Cumbria Student Union is a body whose responsibility it is to facilitate communication between and with students and is becoming increasingly successful in doing so. They have a dedicated marketing and communications officer and have recently started a magazine - 'The Scene' – to be circulated to all students in the county. There is great enthusiasm to have any arts/culture information included in this publication. Though some larger institutions send on leaflets or information to the UCSU, there is definite opportunity for a better dialogue to be established between arts institutions and the UCSU, which potentially provides a single point of contact for a relatively diverse section of the county population.

6 Findings and Recommendations

When starting this review the Task Group began by looking at levels of engagement with art across Cumbria, and considered the benefits this may bring. One of the key points that has been highlighted by their work is that the benefits of participation go far further than people just taking part in an arts project. There are often a much wider range of benefits and outcomes such as health benefits, educational achievement, it may lead to more self confidence, it can help reduce antisocial behaviour and in some cases it may even lead to employment.

The range of arts projects is also vast, and it rapidly became clear that there is no one size fits all approach to engagement. The various projects that Members have looked at have ranged widely in size, location and target audience, with some taking place very locally within specific communities, whilst others such as theatres can attract audiences from much further afield. The Task Group also noted however that there are a number of excellent facilities across Cumbria that are not necessarily used as venues at present, but which have great potential to do so in the future. Members are keen to encourage where possible, increasing the capacity and diversity of the venues and facilities across the county to encourage further engagement to be able to take place in localities.

One of the main problems that has been highlighted however, is that in many cases the excellent work that is being done and the opportunities that are being provided are often led by one or two individuals who have a passion for their area of work. If for some reason these individuals were no longer able to carry on working in that community or on that particular project, in many cases there would not be anybody else to continue the work. This highlights the fragile nature of some arts engagement opportunities across not only Cumbria but also the country, and emphasises the need for where possible, support, training and succession planning to be developed.

Current research and guidance shows that creative communities are seen as one of the fundamental building blocks to real community empowerment, and Members are pleased to see that this drive appears strong in Cumbria. The Task Group's research has highlighted that many partners, organisations and individuals are all working to encourage and provide ways for people to engage with the arts to bring about real community benefits, such working towards reducing levels of antisocial behaviour. It is essential therefore that where possible this work is carried out in partnership, and that as one of the lead bodies in Cumbria the County Council

ensures that the value of arts engagement is recognised and embedded across all of its policies and areas of work.

At the beginning of this review one of the Task Group's key aims was to investigate the barriers to arts engagement and look at whether any lessons could be learned from examples of good practice so that these barriers could be reduced across the county.

One of the main barriers that the Task Group have encountered throughout the review is a lack of awareness of what is actually meant by "art." This is a very subjective issue and means something different to each individual, even within the Task Group itself. Members feel that it is crucial as part of future work in Cumbria to provide a clear message of what art can be and how it can benefit and have relevance to people's everyday lives.

The Task Group have identified three main barriers to arts engagement – knowledge, opportunity and inclination. Communication is key to engagement, as if people do not know what is available to them they will not be able to take part or attend. Opportunity is also a key factor, as the cost of attending events or joining groups and the ability to travel to and access them will often be a deciding factor in whether people engage. Perhaps the most difficult to address however are people's preconceptions of what art is and that it is "not for me," which can form one of the biggest barriers to participation. When considering marketing and advertising arts it is important not just to market them to existing audiences but also to look further afield at potential future audiences.

Many of these barriers affect individuals in different ways and as such there is no quick solution to removing them, however in order to provide as many people as possible with opportunities to engage in arts the Task Group would strongly recommend that the County Council continues to support a variety and range of different artforms across Cumbria to enable as many people as possible to take part in ways that suit and benefit them.

Recommendation 1

That Cabinet acknowledge that engagement in the arts is a valuable element of community health and empowerment, and as such undertake to ensure that it is embedded across all of the County Council's policies and areas of work

Recommendation 2

That the Cultural Policy Unit works with the Communications team to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote clarity around what can be classed as art, and to encourage arts engagement in its widest sense cross Cumbria

Recommendation 2

That information from each local committee regarding the number and level of grants given to arts related projects are collated and passed to the cultural policy unit, to help provide more accurate information regarding arts participation in Cumbria and inform future decision making

Report ends.