

CABINET	Paper No. 7(3)(b)
Meeting date: 5 May 2009	
From: Acting Corporate Director – Adult and Cultural Services	

RESPONSE TO ARTS ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY REPORT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report responds to the recommendations made in the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Report 'Arts Engagement in Cumbria, a scrutiny review of the current situation regarding the arts and participation in Cumbria.**

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Arts Engagement Plan supports delivery of the Cumbria Community Strategy, Cumbria Local Area Agreement, Cumbria's Health Strategy and Cumbria Council Plan themes**
- 2.2 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 Cumbria Local Area Agreement. The aim is to increase the number of adults participating in the arts by 3.5% by 2011 (Note – the target has subsequently been reduced from 6% as indicated in the Scrutiny Report as a result of a national decision by the Arts Council). This target will be measured through a national active people's survey, monitored by the Healthy Communities and Older People Local Area Agreement (LAA) thematic group**
- 2.3 Arts Investment Grant applications are ratified by Cabinet on an annual basis and are contained within Adult and Cultural Services directorate budgets. In 2009/10 the total available arts engagement investment grants are as follows: £171,000 Arts Engagement Investment Grants, £50,000 Transforming Social Care Reform Grants, £20,950 Arts Council North West funding, £20,000 Arts Council North West Managed Funds (to be confirmed).**

2.4 Equality implications arising from Equality Impact Assessment 2008/09 were to:

- **Instigate targeted high level advocacy re the social capital offered by arts engagement in supporting wider, community cohesion, positive activities, and health benefits with CSP, LSP and Local Area Committees.**
- **raise awareness of existing arts opportunities, celebrating Cumbria's arts diversity through the design and implementation of a countywide media campaign and upgrade of County artefacts web site.**
- **work with CVS and Audience Alliance to offer training in family friendly activity and audience development.**
- **undertake consultation with excluded, disenfranchised community groups, and BME groups to identify their arts engagement needs and ambitions.**
- **prioritise arts engagement for older people through transforming social care grant support.**

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Cabinet is invited to accept the Scrutiny Report and ask officers to respond to the report's recommendations as outlined in this paper.**

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1** The Economy and Culture Scrutiny Panel have completed a Task and Finish investigation into engagement in the arts in Cumbria. This report is a very welcome review of the current situation and complements both the Arts Engagement Plan recently considered by cabinet and some statistical work also being undertaken in order to build a picture of the scale and impact of culture across the county.
- 4.2** 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. 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.
- 4.3** 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 3.5% between 2008 and 2011

4.4 The Scrutiny paper makes a number of recommendations and this report responds specifically to each of these points.

4.5 **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

This recommendation is supported and welcomed. Much new work is being developed around the area of health and wellbeing as a part of the Arts Engagement Action Plan. Closer working with health partners and within the Adult and Cultural Services Directorate is leading to a fresh understanding of the role and contribution of art and culture at a time of increased pressure on resources and individuals. This complements the Council's new Anti Poverty Strategy and officers will work to develop new initiatives around the shared objectives of the Council and its partners.

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.

This recommendation is supported. Work has already started with the Communications team on a 'See it, do it' campaign aimed at both Council staff (and members) as well as the wider public. The Arts Engagement Officer has produced a number of new initiatives around raising awareness of art and the encouragement of participation. These actions are built into the Arts Engagement Action plan.

Recommendation 3

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 to inform future decision making.

This recommendation is supported and we are working with the Community Team to develop effective communication of the data and information needed to build a clearer picture of how the Council interacts with local communities and the levels of support it gives to smaller scale more localised arts activity.

5.0 OPTIONS

- 5.1 Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the responses to the recommendations outlined in this report.
- 5.2 Cabinet could accept the recommendations and their responses and request that officers continue to develop the responses as outlined.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this paper other than the assumption that resources will continue to be available from the Arts Engagement Grants budget and the current Transforming Social Care allocation. It is appropriate to emphasise however that we are entering a period of increased pressure on resources both internally and externally and we will need to ensure continued effective partnership working with partners in the health sector and social care.
- 6.2 At the County Council's Cabinet meeting of 7 April 2009 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 £40,950 from the Arts Council for England, she explained that arts and cultural projects to the sum of £7,955,562 would be able to be supported in Cumbria. This represents extremely good value for money as regards the Council's investment.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no legal implications in respect of this report.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The involvement of Council in producing the scrutiny report has been a welcome opportunity for the community, providers and officers to explain the scale and impact of the Council's investment and support of the arts in Cumbria. It is timely in respect of the inclusion of the NI11 indicator Increasing Engagement in the Arts in the Cumbria LAA and with the work ongoing around statistical analysis of the impact of culture in the county.
- 8.2 The process has raised awareness amongst both the members involved and the recipients of grant support of the value of the arts in these difficult times. The message needs to be spread through the wider member network and the Directorates that the arts can contribute to their own agendas, can support the work to mitigate against the impact of the current recession and continue to contribute towards the wider Council's aims and objectives.
- 8.3 The key to future developments will be an increased acknowledgment of the need to measure the impact of investment and support, to work with partners particularly in the health sector and to ensure the continued targeting of specific key areas of activity measured against strong and clear criteria.

APPENDICES

No appendices.

Electoral Division(s): Countywide

Executive Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and the Head of Member Services and Scrutiny has obtained the necessary approvals.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
[including Local Committees]

No previous relevant decisions.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

This report responds to a scrutiny review.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers.

RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER

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