

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY
3 SEPTEMBER 2009

UPDATE ON ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY 2009 – 2012 ACTION PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At Executive on 27 January 2009 Members resolved that the Arts and Media Strategy 2009 - 2012 be approved and that the Action Plan be reviewed later in the year.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update of the Arts and Media Strategy's Action Plan (see Appendix 1) that shows:
- what outcomes have been achieved to date
 - ways forward to achieve outstanding outcomes over the life of the strategy in light of current and impending budgetary constraints

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Arts and Media Strategy, and the broad strategic framework for Arts and Media development, was adopted by the Scrutiny Committee - Economy at its meeting on 22 January 2009 and considered by the Executive on 27 January 2009.
- 2.2 A further report was requested by Members to outline how the outcomes from the Action Plan might be achieved in light of tight financial constraints.
- 2.3 The Arts and Media Strategy and the Action Plan provides the focus for the activities of the Council involving directly delivered and partnership based projects working with a number of organisations and individuals, including Arts Council England South West, Exeter Northcott Theatre, Exeter Phoenix, Spacex, Exeter Barnfield Theatre, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Wren Music and many others.
- 2.4 The City Council is an active supporter of the arts, which includes its own programme of festivals and events as well as its grant support to core strategic organisations that provide the main infrastructure for arts activity within the city. Furthermore it has initiated and supported new festivals and events and has encouraged the private sector to develop public art within development schemes.
- 2.5 The City Council has recognised the value of the arts in promoting and supporting the tourism sector by raising the profile and image of Exeter and improving the quality of life for its residents and visitors. The arts also play a major part in the city's attractiveness to business investment and the recruitment and retention of staff. Through its strong support of major capital projects to improve the City's arts and media facilities the Council has recognised that the arts can also animate the city centre and revitalise public spaces.
- 2.6 The City Council has worked to widen access to the arts through its Service Level Agreements with revenue-supported organisations. Emphasis is placed upon the

importance of taking artistic activity out into the community and fostering partnerships with the education sector. It has introduced arts into its community and play programme, promoted arts and media through its tourism marketing and developed Exeter Corn Exchange as a venue for live arts and entertainment.

- 2.7 The approved list of objectives within the Arts and Media Strategy 2009 -2012 are as follows:
1. To adopt a corporate policy approach to arts and media development which places the arts and media at the heart of the City's corporate ambitions
 2. To develop and strengthen the arts and media infrastructure and support and encourage creative production in the City
 3. To develop further the City's portfolio of arts and media festivals to create a festival of regional/national significance
 4. To support creative industries growth and development
 5. To develop access to arts programmes and opportunities within community settings to encourage greater participation and involvement with the arts and media by residents of Exeter
 6. To work in partnership with relevant agencies and partners to provide more opportunities for people, and young people in particular, to engage in arts education and learning programmes
 7. To work strategically in developing new partnerships in and funding for the arts
 8. To work with the arts and media sector and other partners to develop new models of sustainability and generate new income and funding sources.
- 2.8 The Arts and Media Strategy Action Plan sets out ways to achieve these objectives within the time frame of the strategy.

3 REVISED ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

- 3.1 Many of the outcomes expressed within the Action Plan are a direct correlation to the aspirations of the organisations, in particular the funded Strategic Arts Organisations, who were consulted whilst developing this strategy and therefore the report highlights where collaboration with the City's Arts and Media partners might help achieve outcomes and ease financial constraints.
- 3.2 The revised Action Plan demonstrates that much has been achieved to date towards the outcomes across many of the strategic objectives and within existing cash limits, for example:
- delivering the City's Festival portfolio in new ways that minimises risk and maximise resources and achieves Arts and Media Strategy objectives
 - developing new opportunities to work with other Council Services: Planning, Leisure and Museums and Parks and Open Spaces
 - developing strategic partnerships within public sector: Arts Council England South West; Devon County Council; People Places and Spaces (Regional Cultural Strategy)
- 3.3 The updated plan demonstrates that the majority of outputs in the Action Plan can be realised by balancing the Council's Arts and Festivals Team's directly delivered promotions with:
- partnership based projects with other Council Services such as Planning, Tourism and Leisure and Museums
 - working in partnership with the City's Strategic Arts Organisations via agreed actions within the Service Level Agreements
 - working in partnership with City's commercial sector to promote the

- economic benefit of the City's Festival and wider cultural programme
- participation in strategic, regional cultural planning meetings to try and influence investment and the priorities of key funding agencies and partners
- arts related advocacy and advice for local and regional artists, arts organisations, other Council/public services, commercial sector and the public.

3.4 The achievement of outputs as outlined in the Action Plan can be achieved primarily within the City Arts and Festivals team's existing work capacity and therefore has a minimal financial implication as summarised later in the report. Should the team suffer further staffing or budgetary reduction the ability to achieve outputs and festival portfolio is accordingly reduced.

3.5 Where it is indicated in the updated plan that funding is required this is either, as in the case of outputs being achieved through Service Level agreements, dependent on the level of the City Council's Grants budgets, or in the case of public art and other one off projects, dependent on external funds being available (See item 5). The exception to this is the City's festival portfolio which relies heavily on Council funding.

3.6 The updated plan indicates where outcomes are deemed aspirational - these outcomes would definitely improve the cultural infrastructure of the city, but are not realistically achievable within the life of this strategy for financial or other reasons.

4. KEY AREAS FOR ACTION IN LINE WITH REVISED ACTION PLAN

4.1 The Arts and Media Strategy is built around two main areas of City Council expenditure on the arts: the festivals and events portfolio and grants to Strategic Arts Organisations. Officer work plans focus on delivery of the key actions as highlighted.

4.2 As a main delivery mechanism, priority will be to continue to develop and support the city's Strategic Arts Organisations and seek to minimise impact of any proposed reduction in grants funding on their financial viability. The nature and content of the Service Level Agreement with these organisations is a key way of delivering the objectives of the strategy.

4.3 The main focus of the City's direct promotion of events is the festival portfolio. The Arts and Media Strategy has as a key strategic objective the recognition that the festival portfolio, especially the Summer Festival, has the potential to achieve a more prominent regional status and possibly national recognition for the City. To support this, and to test the feasibility, it is proposed to produce a three year business plan for the festival portfolio with proposals for Council support over a three year period that:

- takes on board current financial restraints within the public and private sector and what alternative or additional funding opportunities exist
- looks at new and better ways of delivery that minimise risk and maximise impact and value for money
- explores the economic benefits to the city of a festival portfolio and the value of raising the City's cultural profile

4.4 An Arts and Media Strategy working group that does not duplicate other forums and is representative of strategic internal and external partnerships will be

established that amalgamates the existing City Arts Partnership (CAPE) and will also expect to include representation from the Arts and Festival team, tourism, parks and open spaces, play, planning and marketing officers, as well as possible attendance by officers from the Arts Council, Public Art South West plus higher and further education and schools in an advisory capacity. It will meet at least four times a year, but also as required to make progress. Its terms of reference to include:

- ensuring that Arts and Media strategic objectives are reflected in other key Corporate Policies as appropriate, for example, planning, tourism, economic development
- monitoring and advising on the progress of the Arts and Media Strategy action plan against strategic objectives
- looking at ways forward in light of the current funding situation and impact on strategic objectives
- reviewing and maximising the City's festival portfolio to best achieve the strategic objectives

- 4.5 In view of tight resources it will be necessary to continue developing existing and new partnership opportunities both within the Council, but more importantly externally amongst the City's arts and media infrastructure, the voluntary and business communities and also regionally with other local authorities and public sector groups.
- 4.6 It will also be important to continue with an arts advocacy and advisory role to other Council departments, voluntary, public and commercial sectors in support of the City Council's vision.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section highlights the grants or external funding that impact on the Arts and Media Strategy update and its outcomes.
- 5.2. **Council Grants funding:** The Council provides £285,000 annual revenue support to 6 strategic arts organisations through the Grants budget against three year rolling agreements as follows:

Exeter Northcott	£ 85,231
Exeter Phoenix	£131,198
Spacex	£ 11,365
Exeter Barnfield	£ 10,000
Theatre Alibi	£ 19,196
Wren Music	£ 16,205
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra	£ 11,865

The Grants funding for Strategic Arts Organisations 2009/10 did not include inflation, this will also be the case in 2010/11.

- 5.3 Funding is approved on the basis of the annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the organisation and the City Council, which is drawn up by the City Arts Officer in conjunction with individual organisations. The individual SLA outcomes reflect both the city's priorities and also those of other key revenue funding bodies such as Arts Council England and Devon County Council. The organisations provide 6 month and 12 month monitoring reports which are presented to Grants Committee to release the funds.

- 5.4 Individual annual reviews of the Strategic Arts Organisations (SAOs) are held in the autumn with Arts Council England, Devon County Council and Exeter City Council. The review updates the SAO as to current funding priorities, expectations and funding situations as well as discusses work programmes for coming year.
- 5.5 In addition to the City's funding the SAOs are able to generate a further £1.6 million from other funding annually. This represents leverage of more than five times the Council's investment, but it is important to note that this figure does not include other generated income, for example, from tickets sales, bar sales, and venue hire
- 5.6 The Grants Committee also provides annual project funding for certain arts organisations, such as Exeter Arts Council, a group of volunteers who administer a small grants scheme for the arts open to artists who wish to produce an event in the city (£13500 core funding in 09/10), and Magic Carpet, a voluntary arts organisation who deliver accessible creative arts programmes for people and children with disabilities (£4,500 rent and core funding in 09/10).
- 5.7 It is likely, as with other Council budgets, that the Grants Committee will review its portfolio in light of budget constraints. It is recommended that the priority should be to maintain support for and minimise impact of any proposed reductions on Strategic Arts Organisations and instead review levels of support for project funding.
- 5.8 Sources of key public funding are currently under review. Arts Council England is currently undergoing an extensive review which will see the South West Office merging with the Midlands Office, against also the background of likely tightening of central government funding. The Arts Council current funding agreements with Exeter's Strategic Arts Organisations stand until March 2011, but the position after that date is unclear.
- 5.9 The Arts Council are waiting to learn the outcomes of the Government's spending review before they can set budgets and therefore funding agreements with its funded organisations for 2011 – 12 and beyond. It is likely they will set an interim one year agreement with funded organisations for 2011/12 until the outcomes of spending review are known.
- 5.10 Devon County Council is also reviewing its funding allocations for cultural activity for 2010/11 and the outcome of this review is not expected until early 2010.
- 5.11 Officers will seek to maximise opportunities through external project funding as appropriate to support Council programmes such as the festival portfolio and public art and also to provide funding advice and support to external organisations. Successful applications have been made this year to National Lottery via Grants for the Arts for Exeter Summer Festival and officers are supporting a major application on behalf of Animated Exeter for February 2010. The difficulty of obtaining additional external funding over the next few years will certainly increase.
- 5.12 It is recognised that obtaining sponsorship will be difficult in light of the current economic climate. Officers will continue to assess the Festival portfolio, its programmes and the ways in which it might appeal to current sponsorship trends

of the commercial sector. Festival sponsors for Exeter Summer Festival 2009 were happy with both the process and the product and have expressed a willingness to sponsor the event in the future.

6. RECOMMENDATION THAT:-

- 6.1 Scrutiny agree the revision of the Arts and Media Strategy Action Plan 2009 - 2012 and the revised key areas for action as outlined in item 4.

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)
Background papers used in compiling this report:-

1. Arts and Media Strategy 2009-12
2. Draft Arts and Media Strategy Action Plan 2009 - 2012