

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL****SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY  
7 NOVEMBER 2007****ARTS OVERVIEW****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an overview of the Arts activities undertaken under its purview, excluding the four festivals covered by the report given to the last Scrutiny Committee.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council supports the arts under the banner of its Arts and Media Strategy which it approved in 2004 and which sits within the Cultural Strategy approved in 2003, providing a linking framework between Leisure, Arts, Parks and Open Spaces and Tourism.
- 2.2 The over-arching aim of the Arts and Media Strategy has been to contribute to the Exeter Vision's objective of establishing Exeter's position "as a cultural and fun place to be". In particular, the priorities of the Strategy have been to both enhance the vibrancy and range of activities and to improve the quality, diversity and accessibility of cultural facilities and activities, to secure the city's reputation as an important regional cultural centre.
- 2.3 The approved objectives of the Arts and Media Strategy following consultation were to:-
- develop the arts and media infrastructure in order to establish Exeter as a county and regional cultural centre
  - improve the quality and diversity of arts and media activity in the city
  - increase access to and participation in arts and media activity
  - support the involvement of artists and their work to give added value to places and spaces in the built and natural environment, by investing them with character, social relevance and visual stimulation
  - support Exeter as a learning city through the development of arts and media activity that increases cultural appreciation and access to learning and skills
  - support arts activities that contribute to strong communities and social inclusion
  - maximise existing cultural investment in the city and increase external funding for arts and media activity and facilities
- 2.4 These objectives have provided the focus for the activities of the Arts, Festivals and Events Team which are summarised below under each objective, with only passing reference to the four festivals covered by the report to the last Scrutiny Committee.

### 3. SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

#### Developing the arts and media infrastructure

- 3.1 The Council has supported six “strategic” arts organisations, Exeter Northcott Theatre, Spacex Gallery and Exeter Phoenix, Theatre Alibi, Wren Trust and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (BSO) for some years with annually reviewed grants and more recently the Council has contributed directly to improvements to the refurbishment of cultural facilities.
- 3.2 Annual Grants have been provided on the basis of Service Agreements since 1999 linking financial support to required benefits and outputs contributing to Council objectives. Qualitative and quantitative measures were established informing the development of the Service Agreements to assess performance and impact against clear objectives for each organisation. In 2003 the Council’s Best Value Service Review confirmed the value of this approach. Annual reviews prior to agreeing the annual Service Agreements have looked at future developments of those strategic venues and providers including their three year business plans, focussing on audience development, organisational capacity and financial management and planning.
- 3.3 In 2004 Baseline Standard Checklists were introduced that require the arts organisations to indicate that they are complying with appropriate legislation and adopting best practice. These checklists have been used in conjunction with the Service Agreements. Subsequently through discussion with Grants Committee approval for 3 year rolling funding awards were approved in 2006 which specifically helps the long and medium development of these arts organisations.
- 3.4 The Exeter Barnfield Theatre is currently in the process of being added to this approach, the voluntary management board having been given specialist support and advice to improve their operational and financial position of the theatre.
- 3.5 Reports on performance and progress against each of the Service Agreements with these organisations are made to Grants Committee in February and November/December each year. The next detailed report will be provided to Grants Committee on 6 December 2007, against the Service Agreements for 2007/8. An example of an agreed schedule of activity included in a Service Agreement is attached as an Appendix. The detailed reports on the performance of all six organisations are available on the intranet.
- 3.6 The volume of cash grants to each of these “strategic” organisations against the delivery of their Service Agreement for 2007/08 is as follows:-

Exeter Northcott Theatre	£ 85,231
Theatre Alibi	£ 19,196
Spacex Gallery	£ 11,365
Wren Trust	£ 16,205
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra	£ 11,865
Exeter Phoenix	<u>£131,198</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>£275,060</u></b>

- 3.7 The City Council has also given a rents and service charge grant of £40,000 to Exeter Phoenix and a rates grant of £5,000 to Exeter Barnfield Theatre.
- 3.8 Exeter Arts Council, which continues to deliver small arts grants on behalf of the Council, of up to a total of £13,500 a year, has increased its publicity to ensure awareness of its support is reaching every community in the city. During 2006/7 18 individuals and organisations received grants of up to £1,000.

#### Improving quality and diversity

- 3.9 The Service Agreements and Baseline Standard Checklists as outlined above provide targets and detail the nature and quality of the programme and diversity of activities. All these organisations are jointly funded by the Arts Council who are also jointly working together to monitor and review their performance against qualitative and equalities criteria. Devon County Council also funds all but Spacex and the BSO.
- 3.10 The significant contribution of the four festivals, Animated Exeter, Vibraphonic and the Summer and Autumn Festivals, to these objectives, was covered in some detail in the report to last Scrutiny Committee. All four events have continued to improve the diversity of programming and increase range of audiences and levels of participation through workshop provision, free events or, in the Autumn Festival, by proactively encouraging local organisations and individuals to actively participate or organise events.
- 3.11 Support is provided to arts organisations and individuals to enable them to create and manage their own programmes. For example, direct support and advice has been given for the last two years to the artist-led Exeter Open Studios event enabling 32 artists and 1 group in 2006 and 39 artists and 2 groups in 2007 to invite the public into their homes and studios to enjoy and purchase their work.

#### Increasing access and participation

- 3.12 Making progress in this objective is best measured across changes in overall levels of activity in the city. An Arts Audit of professional and voluntary arts organisations was commissioned by the Economy and Tourism Unit in order to determine the level of artistic activity by professional and voluntary organisations and individuals, the breadth of art-forms covered and the scale of employment. The overall figures appear to show some growth and strengthening of a broad level of artistic activity by organisations and individuals.
- 3.13 A study of arts and media activity across the city undertaken by the City Council in 2006 highlights that overall 65% of professional organisations and 53% of voluntary organisations considered that attendance at events had increased from the last survey in 2002. Only 2 of 28 responding organisations had experienced a measurable decrease in attendances. Comparison of actual numbers is difficult because of different ways the number of respondents reported their figures for members, participants and audiences.
- 3.14 Of the 38 professional arts and media organisations that responded (compared with the 32 which responded in 2002, shown in brackets)

- 35.5% (32%) are involved in performing arts
  - 29.5% (32%) in the visual arts, craft and public art
  - 18% (12%) in electronic media, film, cinema, sound-recording
  - 10% (18%) in other art forms including literature, writing
  - 7% (6%) in combined arts
- 3.15 Of the 58 voluntary arts and media organisations that responded (47 in 2002)
- 75% (67%) are involved in performing arts
  - 16% (17%) in the visual arts, crafts and public art
  - 3% (6%) in electronic media
  - 5% (3%) in other art forms
  - 1% (7%) in combined arts
- 3.16 Of the 62 individuals who responded (31 in 2002)
- 42% (26%) are involved in performing arts
  - 36% (44%) in the visual arts, crafts and public art
  - 11% (2%) in electronic media
  - 9% (13%) in other art forms
  - 2% (15%) in combined arts
- 3.17 Another measure of growth is the change in direct employment in the arts and media sector which was also measured by the audit. The 2006 audit identified 188 full-time equivalent employees across 32 professional organisations compared with 100 employees across 33 organisations in 2002. Although employee numbers are small, their impact in terms of activities and numbers of people involved and the impact on the population of the city as a cultural centre will be considerably greater.
- 3.18 Improvements to the City Council's website and the creation of specific high profile sub-sites for individual festivals continue to increase access to cultural information. Tickets for most festival events are now available on-line through the Northcott's ticket office which is also now conveniently located in the new Exeter Visitor Information and Tickets in the Princesshay development.

#### Involve artists to add value to places

- 3.19 There has been a major programme of public art to animate public spaces in recent years. The restoration of public art pieces from the old Princesshay and the commissioning of new works has formed a central part of the design of public spaces in the new Princesshay. A series of new commissions has been completed in the Catherine Square Almhouses, in Princesshay Square and in Broadwalk Gardens. Temporary art works were also used to reduce the impact of construction work on the surrounding area. The City and County Council have also jointly commissioned public art as part of city centre repaving schemes and of highway improvements.
- 3.20 In conjunction with other Units, mainly Planning, Estates and Leisure the involvement of artists in other redevelopments such as RAMM, the Quay, Heavitree Road and housing developments have been encouraged where possible and where funding has been available from external sources.

### Support Exeter as a learning city

- 3.21 Council support through the Service Agreements has encouraged or enabled funded organisations to support specific learning initiatives.
- the Exeter Phoenix Media Centre has developed partnerships with the University of Exeter and Exeter College to offer facilities to deliver parts of their accredited foundation, degree and MA courses
  - Spacex Gallery works with Plymouth University, Exeter University and Dartington College delivering modules of MA courses in curating and arts practice in the community
  - the Northcott Theatre offers NVQ's for theatre technicians and in stage lighting
  - Theatre Alibi and Wren Trust both work closely with formal and informal education across the city and provide highly respected training for musicians and theatre professionals in the region
  - the Exeter Barnfield Theatre continues to build links with schools, providing a venue for extra curricular performance activities
  - all have well developed relationships and activity programmes involving local schools, colleges and higher education and offer work experience and volunteer training.
- 3.22 Cultural activities are purposely used to build skills, self-confidence and the ability to learn in individuals so that they can take advantage of the opportunities available to them. The Animated Exeter, Vibrasonic and Autumn Festivals provide activities and events that encourage creative activity and group participation, such as making a short film that is publicly screened or performing before a live audience. The festivals also significantly raise public awareness of the cultural facilities available across the City.
- 3.23 Animated Exeter continues to work in partnership with Devon Arts in Schools Initiative (DAISI), Creative Partnerships and media specialist schools in Devon and at Exeter College, to provide digital and media training and opportunities for teachers and people across the County. The festival also works closely with national animation higher education colleges, industry trainers and recruiters, to provide careers information in animation and digital media technology training.
- 3.24 Projects supported financially through the Exeter Positive Steps Fund include initiatives, which use creative and artistic performance to build self-confidence and basic skills to enhance the employability of individuals (brief numbers to follow).

### Contribute to strong communities and social inclusion

- 3.25 Activities towards the achievement of this objective are based on encouraging participation and involvement with those parts of the community not traditionally engaged. The Service Agreements with the six funded organisations specifically require them to demonstrate a tangible commitment to equalities, provide services in venues which conform to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, increase the participation of socially excluded groups and deliver programming that promotes community cohesion.

- 3.26 All directly promoted festivals and events, where possible, use venues providing good disabled access and deliver programming and other activities which promote cultural diversity, respond to minority interests, and encourage community cohesion.
- 3.27 In 2006 Magic Carpet, an Exeter based organisation, that specialise in working with people with special needs was added to the organisations funded on an annual basis for their work with disadvantaged groups.

Maximise existing cultural investment and increase external funding

- 3.28 The Council has recently committed to substantial funding for enhancements to a number of key cultural facilities. These financial contributions have been managed by Estates Services and the Economy and Tourism Unit, to support the Exeter Northcott Theatre, Exeter Phoenix and the Exeter Barnfield Theatre over the last four years, summarised as follows:-
- Northcott Theatre – the City Council is providing a £550,000 grant and £200,000 interest free loan repayable over five years to support refurbishment of the auditorium and front of house
  - Exeter Phoenix - the City Council has set aside a Capital budget of £30,000 for works to improve the recently vacated basement space which will provide additional studio space for established artists, artist groups, and four “incubator” spaces to provide accommodation for emerging artists or creative businesses. A revenue budget of £15,000 has also been approved to facilitate setting up the sound recording studio and radio station.
  - Barnfield Theatre - the City Council has funded a range of eternal work and new stage flooring as landlord. It has also gone further by investing £40,000 towards rewiring, £5,000 to replace boilers and £10,000 for an extraction unit over the café area
- 3.29 In addition, the Council has invested £143,000 in improving the seating and front of house facilities at the Corn Exchange, providing a much-improved venue, which is attracting more interest and bookings.
- 3.30 The City Council’s investment in arts and media has helped lever considerable external funding into the city. The investment in the 6 “strategic” arts organisations is important in retaining the confidence of organisations such as the Arts Council whose contribution to the cultural life of the city through their grants to those organisations is substantial.
- 3.31 Against an increasingly competitive background, arts organisations across the city have continued to attract considerable external funding from a mix of trusts and foundations, lottery funding and sponsorship to support their programmes of activity. In 2006/7 Spacex Gallery attracted £188,220 in addition to its annual funding from the City Council, similarly Theatre Alibi raised a further £230,074 in grants and donations excluding all box office and trading income. Animated Exeter continues to attract increasing external funding, year on year, to support the increasing programme of activity, with a record £61,500 in grants for the 2008 festival.
- 3.32 Increasingly the grants distributed by Exeter Arts Council lever other monies into the city as the Council contribution is only part of financial mix from artist, organisation and other funding sources.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 The preceding paragraphs provided an overview of progress towards achieving the objective of the last Arts and Media Strategy, which is overdue for review and renewal. Important new opportunities arising from improved facilities and developments in the city, changes in demography, the growing number of active arts organisations and individuals, and a changing role for the City Council if its bid for unitary status is confirmed, add weight to the argument for the preparation of a new Arts Strategy.
- 4.2 The priorities set out in the existing strategy as detailed in 2.3 of this report should be re-considered for their relevance to developing the City as a cultural centre. The potential of the new responsibilities for education for raising aspirations, creativity and self-confidence amongst young people, may be a new direction. Promoting and supporting the development of creative industries is considered by some to be a fruitful source of employment creation, which has not proactively been pursued in Exeter. The sustainability of the city's main arts organisations, and venues against a background of changing funding priorities, should also be considered.
- 4.3 In house resources to undertake this work are very limited as they are fully devoted to service delivery so there will be a need to engage an experienced independent specialist to undertake the necessary review, consultation and support the development of a new strategy and action plan. A contract to perform this task could be awarded by the end of January 2008 and the project completed, including all the necessary consultations by Autumn 2008. It is anticipated that this work could be undertaken for a maximum of £12,000.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Excluding the operating budgets for the four festivals, the grant allocations and the one-off financial contribution listed in this report relating to supporting individual venue improvements, the operating costs to the City Council in 2007/8 of the Arts team including employees, premises and support services, amounts to £205,030.

#### **6. RECOMMENDATION that**

- 6.1 Members note and comment upon the range of activities undertaken.
- 6.2 A new Arts and Media Strategy is prepared to provide a focus and framework for future City Council activity to promote and support the arts.

**RICHARD BALL**  
**HEAD OF ECONOMY AND TOURISM**

**ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report: None

## NORTHCOTT THEATRE'S ARTISTIC PROGRAMME OBLIGATION 2007/08

<b>THEATRE PROGRAMME</b>						
<b>ACTIVITY (Show)</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>LEVEL Performance s</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>TARGET % income</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>
<b>Total</b>			<b>135</b>	<b>19</b>		
MACBETH Northcott Theatre Company	12 July 11 Aug 2007	Rougemont Gardens	29	5	70%	
CINDERELLA Northcott Theatre Company	12 Dec 2007 – 19 Jan 2008	Northcott Auditorium	51	6	65%	Hall for Cornwall, Truro
FOOTLIGHTS University of Exeter	21 – 26 January 2008	Northcott Auditorium	7	1	Hire	
TBA Tour in	28 Jan – 2 Feb 2008	Northcott Auditorium	6	1	60%	
TBA Northcott Theatre Company	7 Feb – 1 March 2008	Northcott Auditorium	20	3.5	60%	



## NORTHCOTT THEATRE'S ARTISTIC PROGRAMME OBLIGATION 2007/08

<b>ACTIVITY (Show)</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>LEVEL Performance</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>TARGET % income</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>
EUTC University of Exeter	3 – 8 March 2008	Northcott Auditorium	7	1	Hire	
G & S University of Exeter	10 – 15 March 2008	Northcott Auditorium	7	1	Hire	
TBA Northcott Young Company	22 – 29 March 2008	Northcott Auditorium	8	1	50%	

## NORTHCOTT THEATRE'S ARTISTIC PROGRAMME OBLIGATION 2007/08

<b>OUTREACH THEATRE PROGRAMME DURING CLOSURE</b>						
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>LEVEL Sessions</b>	<b>WEEKS</b>	<b>TARGET Participants</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>
The Matford Project (Pen and Trough) NYC and NCC	January June 07	Emmanuel Hall Matford Livestock Centre	50 + (including rehearsals and performances)	25	25 writers + up to 130 actors, Directors, backstage crew	Matford Centre /ECC
Gospel Choir (NYC + NCC)	Termly	Emmanuel Hall	30 + extra rehearsals and performances	30	50 +	
NCC Theatre Experiment	Thursdays Spring Term 07	Emmanuel Hall	10	10	25	
NYC Acting Classes (13 21 yr olds)	Weds Eves Termly	St Leonards Church Hall Roberts Road	30	30	24	
Northcott Younger Years Evening Classes (5 10 yr olds)	Thursday Eves Termly	St Leonards Church Hall Roberts Road	30	30	16	

## NORTHCOTT THEATRE'S ARTISTIC PROGRAMME OBLIGATION 2007/08

ACTIVITY	DATE	LOCATION	LEVEL Sessions	WEEKS	TARGET Participants	PARTNERS
Northcott Younger Years Half Term Workshops	Spring, Summer and Autumn half term holidays	Emmanuel Hall and St Leonards Church Hall	18	3	20 at each session	
Northcott Younger Years Summer School	August 2008	Emmanuel Hall	10	1	20 at each	
Northcott Young Company Easter Street Theatre Project	Easter 2007	Emmanuel Hall with performances In Exeter High St	10	1	24	
Northcott Young Company Summer School	August 2007	Exwick Community Hall	10 - 20	1 - 2	30	
NCC/NYC in the Park	August 2007	Rehearsals at Emmanuel Hall performances in Rougemont Gardens	60+		35 (Cast and crew)	ECC
A Sense of Place	April Dec 2007	In and around Exeter City	30 +		30+	RAMM + Exeter Phoenix

## NORTHCOTT THEATRE'S ARTISTIC PROGRAMME OBLIGATION 2007/08

ACTIVITY	DATE	LOCATION	LEVEL Sessions	WEEKS	TARGET Participants	PARTNERS
NYC Easter Show 2008	Jan Easter 08	Northcott Theatre	60 +		50 plus Cast and crew	
Northcott Theatre/NCC + NYC Production	Feb/March 2008	Northcott Theatre	60 +		50 + including local choirs, schools etc	
Dance Taster Sessions	Feb 07, Sept 07	Emmanuel Hall	2		20 +	
Childrens workshops in local community	Summer/ Autumn 07	Whipton, Beacon Heath Exwick etc	30		60+	ECC
Theatre Tours	After Reopening	Northcott Theatre	10		200+	
Work Experience	Ongoing	Northcott Theatre	5 young people		5	
Careers Talks etc	Ongoing	In schools and colleges	10		300+	