

## **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**CABINET - 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2008**

**ARTS STRATEGY FOR TELFORD & WREKIN 2008-2013**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY SERVICES**

### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the report is to outline the key findings of the new Arts Strategy for Telford and Wrekin and seek approval for it to be adopted as a corporate strategy.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the key findings and development opportunities are noted and members endorse the final version of the Telford & Wrekin Arts Strategy 2008-13;**
- 2.2 That members give delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Community Services to establish a cross portfolio strategic cultural development group to ensure an arts led approach supporting development in Telford & Wrekin.**

### **3. SUMMARY**

This Arts Strategy is a key requirement of Arts Council England in relation to future funding plans and has been part funded and developed in partnership with the regional office.

The Arts Strategy seeks to ensure that art is an integrated part of the major strategies, thematic plans and social delivery for the Borough.

This report will outline the reason for the new strategy and how it has been achieved.

The strategy will highlight a number of key areas where art can have a major impact including; physical and social regeneration, raising aspirations and achievements with our young people, supporting the world heritage site as a key cultural asset, improving opportunities and attainment amongst vulnerable groups, enhancing the cultural offer within rural areas and helping to stimulate creative industries.

### **4. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Not Applicable.

### **5. BACKGROUND**

- 5.1 The authority has a good track record of delivering arts services for a diverse community, supporting arts activities and demonstrating its impact at a national level. There is an increasing opportunity to maximise the benefits of 'cultural**

partnership' working, maximise possible investment and develop a long lasting legacy and the Arts Strategy creates a context and a shared vision for this work.

- 5.2 Arts activity is co-ordinated by the Arts & Culture team in Community Services, together with the Creative Arts Service in Children's Services. The Community Arts & Culture Team is a relatively small service including the management of the Place and three full time and one part time Arts Development officers. The Arts & Culture team have attracted £450,000 to the authority for specialist areas of activities with children and young people and people with disabilities since 2004. In 2008/09 a further £250,000 (over three years) has been secured from the Big Lottery for the Disability Project Arty Party and £50,000 from a local business partnership with the Children and young people's team. In addition the Leaps and Bounds project with disadvantaged young people is being delivered through internal partnership money totalling £80,000. The newest area of delivery, Arts & Health has attracted £65,000 for the delivery of joint projects with the PCT in its first few months.

The Telford Culture Zone, led by Children's Services, has brought £1.5 million to the authority over three years from 2005 and has attracted a further £100,000 from the Arts Council, match funded by the authority, to continue this work. In addition Telford has been awarded one of 10 national 3 year pathfinders 'Find Your Talent', funded through DCMS and DCFS, to explore the 'cultural offer' for children and young people both in and out of schools, worth £1.8 Million.

- 5.3 Both the Community Arts & Culture team and the Children's Services Creative Arts team have demonstrated a remarkable ability to deliver on a range of priorities.

Recent examples of this work include:

- The Leaps and Bounds Project focusing on creativity and personal development of young people at risk leading to a major performance at the Birmingham Hippodrome.
- 'Arty Party' project work with adults and children with learning disabilities providing creative activities and social events.
- Underground Arts project at Hollinswood with young people at risk of ASBOs to paint the underpass.
- Learning Mentors projects with the Education Improvement team, raising self esteem and improving social skills through positive creative experiences.
- Culture Zone Young Voices event at Birmingham NIA with the CBSO
- Culturefest 2008 in Telford Town Park celebrating our community's culture and creativity.
- Involvement, advocacy and contribution to WM Cultural Olympiad 2012 Launch in Ironbridge and the World Heritage Festival 2008.

- 5.4 This strategy begins to map out the ambitions for cultural development and arts influence including public realm, building schools for the future, Regeneration, the rural agenda and cultural tourism within Telford & Wrekin. The objectives and targets in this strategy were developed as a result of considering:

- the national policy and targets for improvement
- data and information about the population needs now and in the future
- performance monitoring of the service

- what the public say that they want and the experiences of people who use cultural services
- what local authority officers and partners to the Council recommend to improve the visibility and use of arts and cultural services

5.5 A long term strategic framework is required to plan for future cultural needs of our growing population.

## 6. INFORMATION

6.1 From the Government Office Led Regional Commentaries analysis and the Arts Council's Self Assessment of arts services, it became clear that an Arts Strategy was necessary for future proofing the service with external funders and partners. Arts Council England West Midlands (ACEWM) have highlighted Telford as an area of spatial development and want to work with the authority on the major developments planned and have jointly funded the development of this strategy. Telford is also part of the West Midland City Region.

6.2 The objectives of the consultation for the development of a strategy were to:

- Inform the council and test findings against the current arts provision and advise on future sustainability of new and existing arts provision in the borough.
- Estimate future requirements and recommend a strategy for the council to adopt in order to ensure optimum spread, integration, usage and type of arts activity across the borough.

## 7. CONSULTATION

7.1 A steering group was established bringing internal partners from across all of the Portfolios together to provide advice and information and to expound the strategy document through regular feedback meetings.

7.2 Consultation was carried out with internal and external stakeholders, partners and agencies to produce an arts strategy that provides robust and objective justification for the future provision of accessible, high quality, financially sustainable arts activity within the borough. A full list of consultees is attached as **Appendix 1**.

7.3 Community Group consultation was carried out on the draft strategy with representative groups to draw a sample evaluation of the developed themes. Feedback from the public consultation are attached as **Appendix 2**.

7.4 The final strategy reflects the findings from the consultation with the stakeholders, partners and officers and community groups listed. **The full report (An Engine for Change – An Arts Strategy for Telford & Wrekin) is available in the Members room and electronically.**

7.5 Consultation with the proposed cross portfolio strategic cultural development group, key forums, stakeholders and partners will be used as part of the annual review process for the Arts Strategy.

## 8. NATIONAL INDICATORS

8.1 The new national indicator set has highlighted the need for engagement with communities, increased participation and engagement in positive activities

which improve the quality of life, create community cohesion and increase health and wellbeing.

- 8.2 Of these national indicators the Arts can be used as a positive tool to deliver on a diverse range of the key indicators across the framework of 198 as well as supporting on the delivery of others. Those of potentially greatest significance have been highlighted in the strategy document.  
( A full list of related indicators is attached as **Appendix 3**)

## **9. KEY FINDINGS AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The strategy is subdivided under key themes grouped into areas of work to be developed as part of the cultural improvement of Telford & Wrekin. These are supported by key principles for delivery including priority targets and actions. A summary of these themes and principles is listed below.

### **1. THEME : STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

*Principle 1.1: To ensure Arts is at the heart of the vision for Telford & Wrekin*

To ensure that arts are at the heart of the vision for the transformation of Telford & Wrekin through the launch and dissemination of the arts strategy to stakeholders, partners, council officers, Members and the Community thereby creating ownership at all levels. By ensuring that creative activity is embedded in all major policies and workplans of the Council.

*Principle 1.2: Maximise partnership and stakeholder potential*

To develop consistent art involvement at borough, neighbourhood and locality level through involvement of strategic partners, area panels and groups across the Local Authority. To also be a key partner on strategic partnership initiatives which provide opportunities for cultural learning through schools, out of schools and extended learning, and those partnerships which reinforce the development of the cultural offer and assets for Telford in the region through initiatives such as the Cultural Olympiad and City Region Quality of Life Group.

*Principle 1.3: Embed arts & cultural activity in corporate and priority plans*

Ensuring that Arts and Culture are embedded in corporate and priority plans and that the local strategic partnership, the authority, Members, partners, stakeholders and the strategic steering group are regularly informed on cultural success and strategic aims to gain wider representation and champions for future partnerships.

*Principle 1.4: Support the delivery of targets against national performance indicators*

Providing and support initiatives that seek to maximise the impact on delivery on a number of new national indicators where the arts can have a significant influence as well as the cultural indicators.

### **2. THEME: INFRASTRUCTURE AND DESIGN**

*Principle 2.1: Develop an ethos of artist involvement at the design stage of development*

Advocate for the inclusion of the arts within urban design and enrichment of the local area through the development of a planning obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) including 'percent for art' and the development of a robust artists commissioning plan.

*Principle 2.2: Support for heritage and the world heritage site*

Investing in Festivals and events in Borough parks and Telford Town Park and Ironbridge Gorge to increase ownership and community pride. Developing a partnership plan with Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust to ensure synergy and maximising of tourism potential between the town centre, the town park and the Gorge and support for creative industries.

*Principle 2.3: Develop a positive image of the Borough*

Working in partnership to create a major focus on culture in the borough encouraging our community and tourists to explore the borough and its cultural attractions and create a cultural aspiration for better and wider opportunities to participate and enjoy  
To influence development plans, such as The Southwater Development Plan, to create added value where possible to public realms and new builds.

*Principle 2.4: Support for cultural facility investment*

Maximising the opportunities that lottery, endowment and external funding provide, to invest in strategic infrastructure, affordable exhibition, performance studio and digital workspace

### **3. THEME: INVESTMENT IN CREATIVE DELIVERY**

*Principle 3.1: Commitment to creativity in schools*

Through Telford Culture Zone and the Find Your Talent Pathfinder, developing the cultural offer to schools and out of schools, maximising the opportunities provided for young people 0 – 19 years within the Borough.

*Principle 3.2: Commitment to offering a mix of cultural experiences for young people in out of schools settings*

Developing and supporting programme strands such as the Community Children's arts team, Youth Offer, Youth Music Action Zone, Leaps and Bounds and Kreative Kidz (disabled children & young people) development and through the Find Your Talent Pilot exploring a 'cultural offer' for children and young people outside of schools, developing young people as the drivers of their cultural future.

*Principle 3.3: Commitment to lifelong learning*

Support the development of the Art and Cultural sector, enabling individuals and organisations to hone talents and develop skills, leading to greater productivity, effectiveness and achievement. Supporting the transition of our new 'youth cultural practitioners' in their chosen career paths.

*Principle 3.4: Engagement with communities*

Consistently develop the use of art and culture to develop community engagement, capacity building, economic and social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and environmental improvements. Acknowledging and valuing local cultural activity as a tool for celebrating and shaping distinctive communities and defining the borough as a whole as well as increasing the number of people participating in and engaging with local arts and cultural activities.

*Principle 3.5: Develop healthier communities*

Improve the physical and mental health of communities, playing an active part in health improvement and education and in creating environments in which people feel fit and well and choose healthier lifestyles. Capitalising on initiatives such as the 2012 Olympics to develop wider participation through dance with older and young people.

*Principle 3.6 Support for Creative Practitioners*

We will support the development of the borough as a place where creative artists wish to live, work and enjoy, for the benefit of residents and visitors.

*Principle 3.7: Equalities and Diversity*

To ensure equality and diversity of opportunity for all. To increase and improve access to services through active programming and development of our community provision.

## **10. OUTCOMES**

The ambition for this strategy is to place arts at the strategic centre of everything the council does. By aligning itself with the ambitions of the authority and complimenting existing key policies, the Arts can embed itself as a delivery tool on local, regional and national agendas and priorities.

The strategy is relevant to the residents and visitors to Telford & Wrekin, demonstrated in our commitment to promote equality and diversity of opportunity, maximising capacity and resources through partnership and making sure that people are at the heart of what we do and that we listen and effectively engage with the community through quality experiences.

The strategy provides a framework for district Arts delivery and identifying that the Arts makes a valuable contribution to many aspects of life in the borough. It provides an advocacy tool for communicating with partners and stakeholders about the arts service and what it provides.

## **11. SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR THIS REPORT**

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Inclusion is a key component of the strategy framework and is reflected within recommended principles and strategic objectives.

The Strategy has been Equality Impact Assessed as a Level 5 New & Emerging Policy.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

There will be a significant environmental impact where the Arts is employed in a more strategic manner to develop and regenerate public areas and buildings. The quality of the public realm will be enhanced.

## **LEGAL COMMENT**

The Arts Strategy does not form part of the Council's Budget & Policy Framework and therefore is not reserved to full Council for approval. Approval of the Strategy is a function of the Cabinet.

## **LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The Arts Strategy will link with all the corporate priorities.

## **OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS**

The full Corporate Risk Management methodology will be complied with when considering any delivery initiatives arising from this strategy.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The costs associated with developing the strategy have totalled £20k. This was funded by a £10k grant from the Arts Council and £10k from Community Services resources. Other costs associated with producing the Arts Strategy was in the form of officer time which was funded from Community Services base budgets. Any additional costs that are identified as a result of implementing the recommendations outlined within the Arts Strategy will need to be met from existing resources or from funding secured from other sources.

## **WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Borough Wide Implications in terms of delivery plans, consultation and dissemination.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cultural Strategy 2003-08

Arts and Entertainments Strategy 2002-07

Consultation Events– Youth Forum September 24<sup>th</sup>,

Senior Citizens Forum October 6<sup>th</sup>, Your Community Matters Event October 8<sup>th</sup>,

Public Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> October 2008

## **End of Report**

***Report prepared by Psyche Hudson (82362), Arts and Culture Manager  
Update 19.11.08***