

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: New Communities Portfolio Holder 10 March 2009
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Corporate Manager (New Communities)

ARTS SERVICE REVIEW

Purpose

1. To consider the consultants' report on the Arts Service Review and the officer recommendations on the way forward for the Arts Service from April 2009 onwards.
2. Senior Management Team (SMT) considered this report on 18 February and approved the recommendations.
3. This is not a key decision. It does not require or ask for additional resources but rather best use of existing resources.

Background

- 4 Following previous reports to SMT on delivery of the Arts Service, in July and September 2008, it was decided to invite external consultants to review the Arts Service and provide advice and guidance to the Council on how it should make best use of its resources in continuing to deliver a quality arts service into the future.
- 5 A brief was prepared which included review of current arts services within South Cambridgeshire, consultation with stakeholders and consideration of good practice from other areas. The consultants were asked to make a recommendation on the best way forward based on existing budgets and taking account of the financial climate, growth agenda and needs of existing communities.
- 6 Consultants Robert Sanderson (Arts Portfolio) and Rick Bond (The Complete Works, UK) were appointed in November 2008 and completed their report on 12 January 2009. The report and its appendices are attached as appendices 1-5.
- 7 The South Cambridgeshire District Council Arts Service was established in 1994 to promote arts participation across the district. Since that time the service has continually developed, offering high quality and value for money services to people of all ages and backgrounds and of different abilities.
- 8 The main work areas for the Arts Service are:
 - (a) Partnerships with the Village Colleges including five joint-funded Arts Development Managers and dual use of school buildings. The Arts Development Officer currently retains a significant hands-on role in co-ordinating and delivering arts projects within this area of activity. These include an arts equipment bank, mobile cinema service, film projects and digital storytelling and rural touring theatre.
 - (b) Arts Partnerships including agreements with agencies such as Vital Communities, Arts in Cambs on Tour, Orchestras Live and Arts and Business (East).

- (c) Public arts programmes and cultural facilities in new and expanding communities with support through Section 106 agreements, such as the well-regarded arts programmes at Orchard Park.
- (d) An arts marketing service: The Event which is a guide promoting amateur and professional arts events and activities, delivered to all homes with the SCDC magazine.
- (e) Managing the SCDC Arts Capital Grants programme.

Key Findings from the Report

9. The Consultants concluded that the Arts Service appears to be punching well above its weight, given that it essentially comprises a single post, the Arts Development Officer, with an annual budget of £90,000.
10. At present, it is challenging for the Arts Service to identify what not to do. It can be hard to turn down requests, or accept that some activities consume resources in excess of the benefits they deliver. The report identifies two key priorities: increasing focus on outcomes and communication.
11. The collation of the SCDC events guide and directory of local arts groups is time-consuming, and the report suggests various means for the Arts Development Officer to delegate parts of these tasks, including using the new stART infrastructure.
12. The Dual Use Arts programme is recognised as a particular strength. The Village Colleges contribute about 75% of the cost of employing the five Arts Development Managers, and they value the direct link with SCDC. SCDC has provided strategic leadership and training, as well as a vital financial contribution. The Village Colleges have used the SCDC funding as leverage to attract significant external funding that amounted to over £200,000 in 2007/08. In the last full year, there were over 80,000 participants in the Dual Use Arts Programme. The report recommends that the effectiveness of the Dual Use Arts Programme will be increased if there is greater collaboration between the ADM's and external partners, facilitated by the Arts Development Officer.
13. Less positively, the Arts Service is seen as a stand-alone function within SCDC. It is seen as 'a good thing', but not yet as a potential mechanism for community engagement and social cohesion. The new structure within New Communities should offer greater means for joint programmes to be delivered. The report also identified relatively weak cross-departmental working and communication with internal stakeholders including Members and officers. There is potential to increase joint working with Community Safety, Strategic Sustainability, Economic Development and other disciplines.
14. Regarding the Council's Public Arts Policy, this is a time of opportunity. The ADO must re-focus his current workload in order to ensure that public art is brought into projects at the right time, and that there is effective local consultation, control and accountability.
15. The report recommends that the most effective approach to continued delivery of a first class arts development service is to retain the Arts Development Officer post as a full time or job-share post, rather than to outsource part or all of the service.

Implications

16	Financial	There are no additional financial implications. The review is based on best use of existing resources.
	Legal	None
	Staffing	No new staffing implications; continuation of 1 FTE Arts Development Officer post is proposed.
	Risk Management	None
	Equal Opportunities	The Arts Service provides a very positive benefit to some of the districts vulnerable residents.

Consultations

- 17 The consultees are listed at appendix 2. In all 32 interviews were conducted including the Portfolio Holder, representatives of external agencies, the Arts Development Managers and SCDC officers.

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

18	Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future
	The Arts Service provides essential expertise to the New Community Service on public art, the planning for arts services and facilities in new communities and in developing community cohesion and engagement in major growth sites.
	Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community
	The Arts Development Officer provides high quality, accessible services, and the review identifies routes to enhance in a most efficient and effective way.
	Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work
	The Arts Service is a key deliverer of quality of life services and helps provide a sense of place, supports volunteering and sustainable community infrastructure.

Recommendations

- 19 It is **recommended** that:
- a) The Council continues to employ a full time (FTE) Arts Development Officer.

[This works well, has been identified as important in ensuring the continued success of key partnerships including the Dual Use Arts programme, and in supporting the development of new communities]
 - b) The following actions are developed in parallel, with a view to commencement of a re-focused Arts Service from June 2009; they are interdependent.
 - l) The Arts Development Officer's Job description is reviewed and re-focused in line with the recommendations of the report to develop the strategic, advocacy and cross cutting elements of the role and to reduce the day-to-day operational responsibilities.

- II) The Council secures the support of the village colleges in re-focusing the Arts Development Officer's and ADM's work through the annual dual use partnership agreements by end of March 2009.
- III) The Arts Development Officer prepares a project plan for developing the new initiatives including member and senior officer briefings and liaising with other service heads on developing cross cutting initiatives. This will commence following the PFH meeting in March for approval in June 2009.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Arts Service Review Report plus appendices by Robert Sanderson and Rick Bond, January 2009.

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