

## Guidance on Models of Arts Services Delivery

### Introduction

The Culture and Sport Evidence Programme (CASE<sup>1</sup>) has identified that council investment in the arts in Yorkshire and the Humber increased by 15% (from £77 million to £88 million) between 2004/05 and 2008/09. This was a greater proportional increase than any other region. A significant proportion of capital investment in the arts over this period was made on new construction as part of the arts facilities and activities funding stream.

Despite this evident commitment to the arts, councils across England are currently facing tremendous budgetary pressures and, although their services provide vital investment and support for minimal cash resources, non-statutory provision can be at particular risk. There are also changes nationally with Arts Council England transforming relationships with its funded organisations, as well as assuming responsibilities previously held by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

This briefing paper provides some ideas and case studies relating to shared arts services and new models of practice that can provide the delivery of efficiencies whilst maintaining high standards of service for residents and visitors.

### Existing context of arts services

CASE has identified the following key statistics regarding culture and sport activity in Yorkshire and the Humber in 2010. Some 155,000 people are employed with a contribution of £2.6 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) and £1.5 billion per year generated in spend from domestic tourists. Around 262,000 people work on a voluntary basis. The sector attracted £394 million in non-capital investment from local government, £104 million in capital focused investment from local government and £17.1 million in private investment in the arts.

Council arts services are responsive to the needs of their communities, the physical resources therein, and their practitioners and organisations. In this respect, variation occurs depending on these factors as well as political will and financial commitment to delivery. As a generalisation, an arts service will comprise a staff resource of development officers and administrative support staff who are responsible for some or all of the following:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/research/CASE-RRYorkshireHumber.pdf>

- Access to, and administration of, grant funding for arts organisations and individual practitioners;
- Direct management of venues e.g. theatres, galleries, concert space, including programming, staff, maintenance, marketing and audience development responsibilities;
- Contract management where venues and services are managed by trusts/community organisations; and
- Direct delivery of arts activities within local communities and schools e.g. festivals, residencies, participatory activities and events.

Over and above the intrinsic value of the arts to residents' quality of life and the economic benefits associated with attracting visitors<sup>2</sup> to a council area, arts services can also underpin the achievement of positive outcomes for the health and well being, social inclusion, learning and employment of residents.

Council arts services rarely place a significant demand on the public purse and their role is frequently one of facilitation and brokerage across and between sectors. In 2010, *nalgao* commissioned a report<sup>3</sup> to examine alternative arrangements for managing council arts services in response to discussions that took place at its 2009 conference. The importance of the relationship between council arts services and the arts sector in their area was further confirmed at the 2011 State of The Arts Conference where Ed Vaizey, Culture Minister commented as follows:

*"Local government knows its local people far better than central government...and while I might not agree with every decision made by a local authority, I respect their right to make that decision themselves. The challenge to the arts is to work with their local authorities to persuade the council that the local library or the local theatre or the local arts centre are a fundamental part not just of the arts in the area, but for their entire community<sup>4</sup>."*

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<sup>2</sup> A draft Thinkpiece published in April 2010 demonstrated the size and scope of the York and North Yorkshire Culture, Creative and Visitor Economy Sector  
[http://www.ynyculture.org/images/8/81/Culture\\_Creative\\_Visitor\\_Economy\\_Thinkpiece\\_\(draft2\)\\_May2010.pdf](http://www.ynyculture.org/images/8/81/Culture_Creative_Visitor_Economy_Thinkpiece_(draft2)_May2010.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Paul Kelly (Cultural Futures) and Rick Bond (The Complete Works) *Outside In*  
[http://www.nalgao.org/e107\\_images/custom/outsideinfinalb.pdf](http://www.nalgao.org/e107_images/custom/outsideinfinalb.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nalgao.org/news.php>

## **Potential scope of reshaping arts services**

The *Outside In* report identified the following possible alternative delivery options with regard to council arts services. There is an extent to which a portfolio approach can be taken, i.e. that each is not necessarily mutually exclusive.

### **1. Partially contracted out service**

A council contracts out one aspect of its cultural provision to independent management e.g. contracting out a council theatre to commercial management.

### **2. Fully contracted out service**

The council transfers all, or the majority of, its leisure/cultural services including facility management. The common method is to transfer them to a leisure trust.

### **3. Independent voluntary trust**

A service specific model i.e. just arts or museums. It has similarities to both a partially or fully contracted out service. The main difference might be that it revolves around managing and delivering services and projects rather than around a building. An example would be an arts trust delivering arts development projects for one or more council.

### **4. External management contract**

Rather than transfer the service to a new independent body, an external management company is given a management contract to run the services and facilities for and on behalf of the council.

### **5. Shared service model – informal or formal**

Two or more councils jointly running or managing one or more cultural services. Shared service can be delivered in two ways, through:

- An 'informal' dimension in which the two services are independent but there is joint working and some sort of partnership framework or agreement.
- A 'formal' dimension in which there is a single service, serving two or more different councils.

### **6. Commissioned services**

Arts services 'products' (e.g. activity, package of training, residencies) are shown to deliver positive outcomes against a range of social priorities in addition to their intrinsic value, and are bought in by other services. Most common sector examples include health, education and crime (diversionary activities).

## **Operational and political considerations**

In all of these 'models', the delivery of improved arts provision for residents and visitors ought to be the core focus, albeit that collective efficiencies and economies of scale can also be achieved. By reflecting council arts services as part of the broader arts sector on a sub-regional and/or regional basis, there are benefits to be accrued through sharing arts officer expertise, avoiding duplication of effort and/or provision and reducing competition. Acting collectively can generate a single, strong voice which can offer greater force when making the case for funding and income generation.

Points for consideration when pursuing improvements include reflection on any change of emphasis for the service, with associated organisational change and differences to be managed. Different organisations and services work to different targets and timescales, which may need to be aligned. Governance and leadership need to be considered, with agreement of roles and responsibilities for particular tasks and actions; the implications for human resources are therefore a key consideration.

Learning from a cross-authority approach<sup>5</sup> in Wales, it is suggested that key questions are asked when considering a change in structure and/or delivery, as follows:

- What does it include?
- Who leads?
- Who are the stakeholders?
- What are the benefits?
- What are the risks and issues?
- How would barriers be overcome?

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<sup>5</sup> Strinda Davies, ArtsConnect <http://www.cipem.org.uk/DOCS/dec2010/arts-connect-strinda-davies.ppt>

## **Summary**

The adoption of new models of delivery takes time and requires resource as part of a clearly structured and managed change programme that has both political and managerial support. The following examples demonstrate ways in which authorities have worked jointly, as well as with other partners, in order to achieve efficiencies and generate improvements in services.

### **Creative Health Community Interest Company**

Creative Health CIC is an independent Arts and Health Community Interest Company, formed by the Black Country Arts and Health Commissioning Partnership as a result of an evaluation into previous joint commissioning work. The Black Country Arts Partnership had some money to commission Arts and Health partnerships and the formation of a separate CIC was considered the best way to do this.

The objectives of the company are, as outlined in the Memorandum of Association:

- To deliver creative interventions for the resident communities of Walsall, Wolverhampton, Sandwell and Dudley in order to tackle health inequalities in the Black Country;
- Developing and sustaining quality regional arts and health work;
- Using the arts to gather user insight into health services and involve users in assessing the impact of health services and address some of the barriers which prevent users from changing their lifestyle behaviour;
- Commissioning a series of creative interventions. Each commission may include fees for project management, programme costs and administration.

The company oversees the joint planning, commissioning, delivery and profile raising of arts in health work in the Black Country and beyond. Creative Health CIC acts as a broker between arts, health and community partners, providing both marketing skills, to advertise potential projects for consideration and support for all parties to ensure success.

[www.creativehealthcic.co.uk](http://www.creativehealthcic.co.uk)

<http://research.mla.gov.uk/case-studies/display-case-study.php?prnt=1&prjid=561>

## ArtsConnect

A regional shared service for the Arts within the South Wales area has been established, comprising 5 Unitary Authorities arts services. The service is advised by Arts Council of Wales, Welsh Assembly Government, and Welsh Local Government Association representatives, who are also members of the partnership. ArtsConnect was developed to support the implementation of key Welsh Assembly Government initiatives: Beyond Boundaries (Delivering the Beecham Review) and the Wales Arts Review. The project also looked at some of the shared operational challenges and opportunities that had been identified by council arts services, in terms of boosting their contribution to the creative economy and the cultural identity of Wales.

In February 2009 the group identified a single shared arts service as the preferred model to achieve a secure and sound future for local government arts provision, particularly in the context of public sector financial challenges. In addition the membership of the Leadership Group (made up of one chief officer from each of the participating councils) has asked for an efficiency target of 10% to be met, over the next three years, from this shared service arrangement. The setting up of a single shared service is complex, and is further complicated by the uneven contribution of funding for arts provision by each partner and its allocation of resources. The implications of a shared arts service for each partner authority include:

- A new seamless single service design and management structure;
- Coordinated services such as single regional artistic programming, marketing, box office, events team, approach to sponsorship and external funding, technical support, single administration, IT, HR, Finance and quality and performance standards;
- Avoiding duplication in functions and activity by streamlining and simplifying services and through economies of scale;
- Achieving 'more for less', by realising efficiencies to reinvest in service transformation, and reduce costs to each council partner;
- A regional approach to the professional arts programme with access to specific arts programming expertise for partners, whilst retaining local flavour and meeting local need;
- Improved marketing and the potential for a single Box Office function;
- A more focussed and strategic arts development service, drawing upon the wide expertise of Arts Development Officers, whilst retaining local flavour and meeting local need;
- Equal access and better coverage of the area, with a smoothing of resources, as arts services are currently unevenly resourced in terms of Art Development and other officers; and
- Greater capacity and wider capability through shared skills, experience and learning within the arts and improved performance through a regional workforce development plan.

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[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/our\\_council/council/minutes\\_agendas\\_reports/reports/cabinet/2010/10-06-23/arts\\_connect.aspx](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/our_council/council/minutes_agendas_reports/reports/cabinet/2010/10-06-23/arts_connect.aspx)

<http://www.cipem.org.uk/DOCS/dec2010/arts-connect-strinda-davies.ppt>

## **This is Art, Lincolnshire**

Arts Council England provided funding to Lincolnshire under its organisational development Thrive! programme from 2006-2010. The Lincolnshire One project targeted support for improved working and shared services between the arts community, the county council and the seven district councils. In 2009 Lincolnshire County Council set a local target to increase adult engagement in the arts. Developing the This is Art! brand provided the catalyst for collaboration and formed the basis for a marketing campaign and audience development activity.

This is Art! is defined as an advocacy brand, not a marketing or quality brand. Although guidelines are available on how to use it, anyone can use the brand however they wish as long as they promote participation in the arts in an inclusive way. They make no reference to Lincolnshire County Council or its district council partners but buy-in was generated through:

- a matrix project management team, which drew on skills and experience from across Lincolnshire County Council's cultural services and adult education directorate
- Lincolnshire Senior Cultural Officers Group - every council in the county incorporated the marketing campaign in their action plans
- Lincolnshire One Steering Group - this kept all eight council chief executives and cultural portfolio holders informed about the campaign
- a participative approach that put decision-making in the hands of stakeholders - for example, enabling the arts community to choose the brand and how to promote it, and to decide how to spend a £50,000 grant from the Arts Council
- boosting the community grants scheme to fund projects aimed at specific audience segments - this connected the campaign to the voluntary and community sector

A clear target for increasing engagement in the arts proved an effective tool to bring about organisational change. Engaging with all the strategic partners (council leaders, portfolio holders, chief executives and senior managers) from the start ensured their support and collecting local data meant progress could be tracked and reported to decision makers.

Future plans are to broaden the This is Art! brand across the wider cultural sector and embed it within a new culture network, to create a sustainable model outside the county council.

[www.thisisartlincs.org.uk](http://www.thisisartlincs.org.uk) or [www.myebook.com/lincolnshireone](http://www.myebook.com/lincolnshireone).

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-work/art-lincolnshire/>

## **Sustainability for the Arts in Dorset**

With a similar focus to Lincolnshire, In 2008 Dorset County Council set a target to increase adult engagement in the arts. It used this target as a tool to bring the sector together to pursue long-term organisational development. An established group of arts organisations and individuals are now committed to working together to increase engagement in the arts as well as achieve Dorset's strategic cultural outcomes, within a climate of less funding.

An initial meeting with seven Arts Council-funded organisations in the county established a set of principles for genuine collaborative working towards achieving the target. These principles - reiterated at each meeting every two months - have guided the group's thinking ever since. Over time more than 50 people have been invited to join the group. Subgroups have also formed, such as the visual arts group, which focuses on joint marketing and programming.

Dorset's principles for collaboration

- increasing engagement in the arts is a good thing
- we can achieve more together than as separate organisations
- we don't have to stay a member of the group if we don't want to
- we will question assumptions made at meetings

The group has faced challenges similar to those experienced by any other collective of independent-minded people, for example: reluctance to take things on, individuals not always doing what they agreed to, shadow meetings and personality issues. Dorset County Council has provided strong leadership and support for the group throughout. Its role has been to facilitate discussion, enabling organisations to work things through for themselves. It has also nurtured a small core group to the point where they are in a position to provide the leadership necessary.

The approach has enabled organisations to think through how to direct existing resources better, helping to reduce their dependence on public subsidy and increase their resilience. It has created a structure for sustainability based around an organisation's contribution to an outcome rather than the organisation itself and established a critical mass of arts organisations able to respond collectively to strategic commissioning opportunities and bring in expertise and funding from outside the sector

For more details, contact Mike Hoskin, Arts Development Manager, Dorset County Council, [m.hoskin@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:m.hoskin@dorsetcc.gov.uk).

<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-work/sustainability-arts-dorset/>

## **Sources of information and guidance**

### **Arts Council England**

As the strategic agency responsible for supporting a thriving arts sector for all to access, the website includes a vast amount of information, advice and guidance.

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

### **Local Government Improvement and Development (formerly IDeA)**

The LGID website includes a wide range of resources and case studies on service transformation, shared services and collaboration. [www.idea.gov.uk](http://www.idea.gov.uk)

### **Museums Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)**

The MLA Councils Research Evidence Resources Website hosts a wide range of research publications and practice case studies relating to best practice and innovative models of service delivery. <http://research.mla.gov.uk/>

### **nalgao**

The National Association of Local Government Arts Officers offers peer support and advocacy. It has been announced that the organisation will be re-named and re-launched in spring 2011 as Arts Development UK. This reflects the commitment to partnership and collaboration with a range of arts organisations and individual practitioners.

<http://www.nalgao.org/news.php>

### **Yorkshire and Humber Improvement & Efficiency Partnership (YoHr Space)**

The YoHr Space website provides a range of case studies from across the region relating to funded programmes and projects focusing on improving service efficiency. [www.yohrspace.org.uk/](http://www.yohrspace.org.uk/)

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