

MAIN REPORT
CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

1. This is the final report of the Cultural Provision Review Group, established by the Place Scrutiny Committee to understand the issues around provision of culture for Darlington and to identify potential solutions and make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet on appropriate governance models for the future of Cultural Services in Darlington.

Background Information

2. At a meeting of the former Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2011 it was agreed to establish an Arts Task and Finish Review Group although this was subsequently re-named the Cultural Provision Review Group.
3. A wide number of issues have been considered and discussed at the meetings and these are referred to in the notes attached (**Appendix 1**). This report describes the outcome of the Review Group, it summarises the work undertaken, the findings from the processes and the subsequent recommendations.
4. A draft Terms of Reference (**Appendix 2**) in relation to this piece of work was developed and approved by Place Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review.
5. A wide number of issues were discussed and considered at the meetings and Darlington for Culture was represented by John Dean, Chair.

Membership of the Review Group

6. All Members of Place Scrutiny Committee were invited to participate in the Review and the following Members attended meetings :-

Councillor Carson;
Councillor Cossins;
Councillor Donoghue;
Councillor Harman;
Councillor L Hughes;
Councillor Lawton;
Late Councillor Lewis;
Councillor Long;
Councillor E.A. Richmond;
Councillor Wright

The Group was led by Councillor Long.

7. Other Members who also attended meetings of the Group include :-

Councillor Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio Holder; and
Councillor Kelley.

Acknowledgements

8. The Review Group acknowledges the support and assistance provided in the course of their investigations and would like to place on record its thanks to the following :-

Richard Alty, Director of Place (retired);
Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services;
Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture;
Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning;
John Deane, Darlington for Culture;
Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager; and
Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

Methods of Investigation

9. The Review Group met on eight occasions between April 2012 and July 2014, and the notes containing the discussions held at those meetings are attached **(Appendix 1)**.

Findings

10. The initial findings of the Review Group indicate that :

- (a) during the existence of the Review Group, the Council's application to the Arts Council for funding for Project Vane had been unsuccessful;
- (b) the Council supported Theatre Hullabaloo's successful application to establish a small flagship theatre focussing on performing arts for children and young people, with £1.5 million of funding being received to enable it to build a specialist facility in the Town and that £660,000 of ring-fenced funding from the sale of the Arts Centre would also be allocated to Theatre Hullabaloo, making it a legacy of the Arts Centre; and
- (c) Creative Darlington was established in 2011 as a partnership to take responsibility for the vision for arts for the Town and it had regularly updated Members on its work and success in bringing a new dimension to arts and culture in Darlington.

Recommendations

11. That it be recommended to the Place Scrutiny Committee that Cabinet be requested to note that :-

- (a) The Cultural Review Group did have value as a conduit for information and were kept informed on developments in relation to the future of the Arts provision in Darlington; and
- (b) The Cultural Review Group notes that the strategic roles for arts within the Town has now passed to Creative Darlington and is within the remit of the Director of Economic Growth however, it is important that a close interest in Creative Darlington and its governance model be taken and it is recommended that this be done via regular reporting to the Place Scrutiny Committee.

Cultural Review Group

CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

13th April, 2012

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, L. Hughes Lewis and Long.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Grundy, Lawton, E.A. Richmond and Wright.

OFFICERS – Richard Alty, Director of Place, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Kelly.

Purpose of the Meeting – To consider the way forward for Cultural Provision for the Borough in light of the Council's unsuccessful bid to the Arts Council for funding.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- The Director of Place gave an updated position in relation to Cultural Provision following the Council's unsuccessful bid to the Arts Council. He informed the Group that the feedback from the Arts Council (AC) had been encouraging and that the AC had advised the Council to carry on. Most successful applications were the result of second submissions. The applications for AC funding had been very substantially over-subscribed and the Council had also been advised to review its funding model with little public sector subsidy.
- The Group were advised of Project Vane, an early proposal which was something new to the United Kingdom, with the venue being private sector with cross subsidies to enable a range of business/economic developments and cultural/arts to create a mixed-use hub.
- The proposals also included the provision of business incubator units for commercial industry and large spaces for galleries to bring national and international exhibitions as well as restaurants and a central venue the same size as the current Theatre but with a more flexible usage, i.e. conferences. Theatre Hullabaloo would also be based at the venue.
- It was envisaged that Officers would spend six months working on the project to assist the investors to determine if it was viable prior to consulting the AC. The Group were advised that AC funding was often allocated direct to arts organisations and not necessary involved local authorities. If the project were to proceed it would be a joint decision as the Council currently own the building and Project Vane would undertake funding arrangements and would run the building.
- The central space within the Arts Centre could be utilised well and used for a range of many things i.e. conferences, theatre. Project Vane was bigger and more exciting with a scale of investment much larger than the public sector could provide.
- The Chair stated that it was excellent that a commercial organisation had shown an interest in the work and aspirations of the Council in relation to the Arts and looked forward to seeing Project Vane's proposals.

- If a decision was made by Cabinet to work with Project Vane, any proposals for a Hub would be kept under review, Project Vane had high aspirations for young people and Creative Darlington's aspirations were also achieved.
- If Project Vane was pursued the current model for funding a Hub would fail although a home would be provided for Theatre Hullabaloo.
- It was envisaged that the incubator units would not have implications for the Central Park Enterprise Zone as Darlington was short of incubator space which was aimed at different markets, a creative environment would be provided for businesses and all opportunities needed to be pursued.
- Following a question the Group were advised that Project Vane currently felt like an inward investment enquiry, Officers worked 110% to secure the investment but always in the back of your mind was the thought that the investment may not progress, however, the AC were keen to progress as well.
- A Member stated that the proposal was good but there was a need to think about how arts by the people for the people would be progressed, the Creative Darlington Manager, which had recently been advertised, would need to seize all opportunities for the people of Darlington and that there was a preference for the Hub idea to progress to ensure that community arts provision is catered for.
- The Director of Place advised the Group that it was a notion of Project Vane not to exclude a Darlington focus but to enhance it and have a national/international focus. The interior space of the Arts Centre could be developed to ensure a wide range of activities including space for business incubators and the opportunity to commission national and international events in that space. The work of the Arts Enquiry Group had encouraged Officers to think differently on Arts and an exciting opportunity had arisen for a Creative Darlington Manager.
- The Creative Darlington Manager position had resulted in a large number of applications, some from Europe. There were opportunities available for some good networking to take place.
- A Member referred to a successful Arts Evening held by Darlington School of Mathematics and Science (DSMS) and stated that Darlington had many talented young people and schools could be utilised as venues to hold events. It was the role of the Creative Darlington Manager to facilitate networks to be able to co-ordinate and help young people and teachers and provide the necessary support.
- The Group also highlighted that Darlington was lacking a good conference venue and if that could be provided the economy of Darlington would benefit.
- With regard to the current Arts Centre the Group were advised that negotiations had been held with all tenants and almost all had found relocations to a satisfactory alternative venue within the Borough and that the Officers involved in that work could attend a future meeting of this Group to give further details. As the Tenants in the Arts Centre would relocate to many different venues the Group felt that it would be helpful if the information regarding relocation could be published on the Council's webpage to ensure the public were aware of what was available, where it was located and any upcoming

events and that a directory on the lines of the existing ‘what’s on’ could be published in future.

- Particular reference was made to a report received by Cabinet on the Strategic Options for Place which concluded that a Trust for the Civic Theatre and Dolphin Centre could have been a good idea but it was decided it would be financially beneficial to keep them in-house due to government legislation affecting business rates. A Creative Darlington Board (CDB) had been established and would operate on similar lines to the Darlington Partnership. The Creative Darlington Manager would report direct to the Board and support the network to ensure that arts activities are well advertised.
- It was stated that it was the aim of the CDB to work with the community and schools and that the majority of people who sat on the CDB lived or worked in Darlington or had connections to Darlington Arts Groups. The Arts Council funded a group of regional organisations who have to do outreach work to bring Arts to the people and senior people from those organisations had also been invited on to the Board as well as local businesses that could provide funding from the private sector to enable the arts to be developed. The proposed Chair of the Board lived near Darlington, was passionate about the arts and was the President of a Petro-chemical Company based in Teesside. It was envisaged that the first meeting of the Board would take place at the end of April.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That this Group look at the operation of the Creative Darlington Board and its role in relation to governance arrangements.

(b) That further information be provided on the interim arrangements for Cultural Provision.

(c) That an update on Project Vane be brought to a future meeting of this Review Group.

(d) That the next meeting of this Group be arranged in consultation with the Chair.

(e) That the Chair of this Scrutiny Committee be allowed to attend CDB meetings as a non-participating observer.

CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

17th May, 2012

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, L. Hughes Lewis and Long (in the Chair).

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin and Grundy.

OFFICERS – Mike Crawshaw, Cultural Services Manager, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Claire Hutton, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Kelley.

Purpose of the Meeting – To consider the position of the interim arrangements for Cultural Provision.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- Mike Crawshaw, Cultural Services Manager circulated a programme that had been developed detailing the position in relation to the relocation of each of the organisations currently using the Arts Centre and the discussions that have taken place with each of them and options for their proposed future location.
- The Group were advised that the Arts Centre would be closing on 7th July, 2012, and that the Cultural Services Manager was working closely with Audit/Estates to implement an exit strategy.
- The Group were informed of the position in relation to the staff at the Arts Centre, the majority of whom would be in redundancy situation, and a small number redeployed and the Cultural Services Manager paid tribute to the professionalism of all staff involved during this difficult time.
- In relation to the relocation of Theatre Hullabaloo, it was envisaged that this would be relocated to the Friends Meeting House in Skinnergate and that the Bondgate Players were currently looking at alternative venues and negotiations were in place.
- Darlington Media Group has been involved with the relocation of Darlo Velo and the Chair suggested that it may be appropriate for Darlo Velo to link in with the Local Motion Transport team.
- A Member raised a question in relation to whether the Authority would be assisting organisations with the cost of moving their equipment and were informed that the Authority would continue to support organisations although details were still being developed.
- It was envisaged that, although resources were limited, the Rhythm and Blues Festival would continue in the future. Last year it was scaled down and was still very well attended. The Rhythm and Blues Club have relocated to Central Hall and will be performing every three weeks.

- With regard to Open Arts, the Group were advised that funding had been secured and it would be relocated to the Bridge where there would be good transport links and is within close proximity to the town centre.
- Following a question, the Group were advised that the Authority would no longer be delivering a wide programme of courses and that Arts Tutors would have the opportunity to deliver course in the future from the Bridge.
- The Cultural Services Manager informed the Group that there would be a showcase event at the Arts Centre on Thursday, 5th July, 2012 to celebrate the last 30 years and also advertise the future locations/venues of organisations.
- The Chair requested that a copy of the programme detailing the position in relation to the relocation of each Art Centre Organisation be circulated and uploaded to the website so residents were aware of the situation.
- Particular reference was made to the vacant possession of the Arts Centre and Members were informed that, once the site had closed in July, it would be handed to the Estates Section of the Council and that they were currently exploring security and the possibility of leasing the site short term. The Group requested that Richard Adamson, Estates Officer be invited to attend a future meeting to update them on the work that they have undertaken.
- The Group referred to the future of the Etching Press and where this could be relocated and it was suggested that it could be situated at the Railway Museum, which was an option that was being explored.
- Questions were raised in relation to the storage of the piano, the looms and weaves, lighting rigs and whether these could be used at the Civic Theatre and the future of the water sculpture 'Threshold'. The Cultural Manager responded to the questions raised and highlighted that appropriate storage had been identified for the piano and that some equipment could be used at the Civic Theatre, although he was working closely with Audit for advice. In relation to the sculpture, Members were advised that funding was involved and that he had written to Angela Connor who designed the sculpture informing her of the Authority's position and that no response had been received to date.
- Concerns were raised in relation to the current position of the cultural policy and what its aims and objectives were and the Group were advised that there was no overall Cultural Strategy. The Arts vision was now clearly articulated through the Creative Darlington process. The Chair stated that the Group should define how they feel and what they can do in relation to the policy.
- A Member referred to the vision for Creative Arts, which is the provision to facilitate Arts to help them to grow and flourish in Darlington.
- The Group were advised that £100,000 had been ring fenced for The Creative Darlington Board which included staffing costs and that Stephen Wiper had been appointed the Creative Darlington Manager to support the Board. It was highlighted that Darlington for Culture had one seat on the Creative Darlington Board, with the vision of it being the umbrella body for the organisations. The Chair endorsed the Creative Darlington Board approach and looked forward to the work of the Board.

- The Chair requested an update in relation to the position with the Arts Council for the mixed-use hub and it was highlighted that the Council were unsuccessful with their bid, however, there was continuous dialogue with the Arts Council and the Council had been advised to look at their business plan.
- The Group were also advised of the refurbishment of Crown Street Art Gallery and the grand opening on Saturday, 19th May, 2012.
- Following a question in relation to the Borough Art Collection, the Cultural Manager advised that all options were currently being considered and that it may be placed in the basement of Crown Street library and be displayed in the gallery, although no firm decision had been agreed. Members requested that all aspects in relation to flooding, storage, racking and security be considered before any decision was made.
- The Group were pleased to see that the Creative Darlington Board has agreed that the Chair of Place Scrutiny may attend meetings as an observer and that minutes of their meetings would be forwarded to Place Scrutiny.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That thanks be conveyed to Mike Crawshaw and Lynda Winstanley for the work/programme they have developed on the relocation of each Art Centre Organisation.

(b) That Richard Adamson update this Group on the work that Estates are undertaking on the possibility of short term leasing the Arts Centre.

(d) That the next meeting of this Group be arranged in consultation with the Chair.

CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

24th January 2013

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Grundy, Harman, Lawton, Lewis, Long (in the Chair) and E.A Richmond.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Cossins, L. Hughes and Wright.

OFFICERS – Mike Crawshaw, Cultural Services Manager, Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Wallis.

Purpose of the Meeting – To consider the current position on the provision of culture for the Borough of Darlington and to comment on the Draft Creative Darlington Business Plan.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that the discussion would focus on the Draft Creative Darlington Business Plan. However, prior to that discussion the Chair welcomed comments following the announcement on Tuesday that the Arts Council had rejected a bid for funding from Project Vane. Although Project Vane was not dependent on the funding it was considered that the Arts Council support was an important catalyst to get investors on board. Mike Crawshaw advised the Group that it was disappointing news and that he felt that there were inconsistencies with the thought process of the Arts Council. Discussions were currently being held with the Arts Council and a further round of funding opportunities were available however at this stage it was undecided whether to re-submit the application or offer an alternative submission.
- Councillor Wallis stated that there had been vibes as to how well the Project Vane concept fitted in with private sector finance to fund the arts; there had been very little funding awarded to the north east as opposed to other areas of the UK; and the scheme would have got national recognition if funding had been awarded.
- Members questioned why the north east had received no funding when London and the south east had received a total of 39 per cent of the funding allocation – it was felt that funding had been awarded to existing facilities and not new opportunities as was the case with Project Vane. The Review Group was advised that the next round of funding was expected to be 2013/14 although this had not yet been announced.

Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager then gave the Group an overview of the Draft Creative Darlington Business Plan (previously circulated) and the following points were discussed and considered :-

- Creative Darlington has a board consisting of 21 people with a wide variety of expertise however the average attendance of meetings was 8 to 10, it was therefore agreed to form working groups to focus on areas such as income generation, programming and communications and for the groups to report back to the board. It was also stated that there were 40 to 50 applications to sit on the Board; every person added value to the Arts; and outside organisations had the potential to gain fresh funding for Darlington.
- Following a question Stephen Wiper explained that he regularly met with organisations that wanted match-funding, gave advice on how to process their applications, frequently engaged with the Board and businesses and reiterated the need to retain that flexibility.
- A Member questioned the remit of the Board, its responsibility to Darlington Borough Council (DBC) and the conflict of interest of some members who did not live in the Borough.
- It was stated that DBC was strategic and that Creative Darlington would liaise with DBC's external funding advisors to minimise the likelihood of competing applications from Darlington based individuals and organisations to funders of arts activity. Mike Crawshaw also advised the Group that Darlington For Culture (DFC) would oversee the whole network and this had been clearly set out from the outset. DFC had done a very good job recently and their role was fully supported within the Creative Darlington process. There was a need to focus on driving strategic relationships forward.
- A Member had concerns that Creative Darlington considered itself independent with its own set of guidelines and aspirations, there was a need for DBC to retain democratic accountability as it was responsible to provide culture.
- Councillor Wallis stated that the Board was a practical response to raise funds and bring expertise for the Arts. He understood the concerns around accountability but DBC needed to support and encourage the Board.
- It was also confirmed that it was critical that Creative Darlington remain accountable to Darlington rather than policy be driven by national arts organisations based on Tyneside or elsewhere in the north east and Officers would ensure it was driven that way, the Paymasters are DBC.
- The chair advised the Group that regional museums got funding through Regional Renaissance, the Sage Gateshead got funding which was fed down to Darlington and there was a need to ensure that Darlington kept sight of that.
- Mike Crawshaw confirmed that the Arts Council now demanded more accountability and it was imperative to have the relevant people on the Darlington Creative Board.
- It was suggested that more should be made of the voluntary groups around the Borough such as the Rotary Club which hosted various events included Young Musician, Young Sportsman and Young Chef of the Year. These groups could

have much to offer at little costs to DBC.

- It was suggested that in the Creative Darlington Business Plan the scope of creativity supported through Creative Darlington was not defined and that clearer definition of the Creative Darlington remit would be useful, the Executive Summary should outline what was in the report; and that the Action Plan should include a measurement or indicator with possible feedback from the Group most affected by a particular Action Point.
- The Group were advised that all relocated Arts Groups were being contacted in order to gain their feedback on the process and a satisfaction survey would be formulated.
- Concerns were raised that the Arts were being 'put in a box' and did not tie in with the cultural life of the country.
- The Chair suggested that Darlington for Culture be invited to attend the next meeting of the Group to answer any questions Members might have.
- The Group were informed that Creative Darlington was working across different partners to access funding in order to make arts more accessible to the people, it was part of education, health and leisure and there was a need to make all groups feel included.
- Following concerns expressed as to the relationship of the Civic Theatre with the business plan the Group were advised that an opportunity existed to make the role of the Theatre more explicit. The Civic Theatre will be involved in hosting five productions from 2013 to 2015 supported by the Arts Council Strategic Touring programme and is engaging with amateur and voluntary organisations and businesses based in Darlington.
- The chair was keen to get as many groups as possible, including industrial regeneration, under the brand of Creative Darlington and was pleased to hear that work was on-going on this.
- The Group was also advised that all community groups would be made aware that they could access Creative Darlington to submit funds and gain support for the process for bids.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That thanks be extended to Stephen Wiper and Mike Crawshaw for their continuing work around provision of culture for Darlington.

(b) That the Board Membership be circulated to this Review Group.

(c) That the Business Plan be amended to include a preamble to explain what Creative Darlington was, the Executive Summary be amended to outline the content of the report and the Action Plan include a measurement or indicator.

(d) That the Group applaud the work done on branding and suggest that this should be applied to any art in the Borough.

(e) That the Civic Theatre be included within the Creative Darlington Business Plan.

(f) That the Group endorses the approach to co-ordinate funding opportunities to ensure there are no duplications.

CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

14 March 2013

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Cossins, Harman, Lawton, Long (in the Chair) and E.A Richmond.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin and Grundy.

OFFICERS –Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager, Steve Petch, Head of Strategy and Commissioning and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – John Dean, Chair, Darlington for Culture.

Purpose of the Meeting – To consider the democratic input to cultural provision and arts services following budget cuts and the establishment of an Arts Forum by Darlington For Culture.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in doing so introduced Mr. John Dean, Chair, Darlington for Culture. Mr. Dean detailed the work of Darlington for Culture and answered any questions from the Group.
- Mr. Dean stated that Darlington for Culture (DfC) had been born following the demise of the Arts Centre, was a not for profit organisation and believed it had a job to do as people were attending other arts venues. There were currently 70-80 volunteers working with arts organisations with DfC being at the heart of the Arts Network receiving many queries on a daily basis.
- The Arts Festival, due to be held in May, now had a total of 70 events which brought together the Community and encompassed roles for DfC, the Council (DBC) and volunteers. Mr. Dean acknowledged that the key was to find a way forward in spite of the huge budget cuts. DBC supported DfC and vice versa, especially in relation to the Showcase event and the provision of an Arts Brochure.
- Stephen Wiper confirmed that it was very productive to work with DfC and that DBC and DfC had an understanding of each other's remit – DBC's was strategic development of the Arts and many events could not have been staged without the input from DfC.
- DfC was Darlington focused whereas DBC had a wider remit and Mr. Dean was confident that DfC was on the right track. There was currently 150 members and this was slowly increasing, they produced a weekly newsletter and used social media to promote Arts events.
- DfC did not have a Five Year Plan or an end product it was focused on provision of the Arts not provision of an Arts Centre, DfC was a volunteer organisation and wanted to support the arts in any way it could.

- It was acknowledged that the arts were surviving without an Arts Centre and DfC were doing a marvellous job however it was still felt that there was a wider audience to attract and that the way forward was to have a strong network to listen, inform and made good use of the resources available.~
- The Chair felt that high quality drama, comedians and music had been lost as Darlington was no longer on the touring circuit and there was no money to support the Arts Agenda, although the Civic Theatre was doing well but all UK Theatres required subsidy.
- Following a suggestion that Carmel Academy could be used as a venue, Stephen Wiper advised that venue capacity would need to be addressed in order to programme events, the market would drive the programme and Darlington was fortunate to have the skills and commitment of groups however this was not necessarily an equivalent to the diversity of the professional Arts programme that used to be produced by the Arts Centre as there was no longer a small scale venue available or a budget.
- The Group were also advised that a popular artist would have a high fee and promotional costs and that the Arts Programme used to be produced by a dedicated Officer of the Council.
- The Chair reminded the Group that if Project Vane failed, the Arts Centre would be sold and the proceeds ring-fenced for the Arts however nothing could be certain until the outcome of Project Vane was known.
- Stephen Wiper referred to an Arts Transition Survey (previously circulated) which indicated that 60 per cent of respondents agreed that the Council had supported the transition to new premises and there had been some useful comments/suggestions which would be achievable at low cost.
- The Chair stated that DfC were doing a lot for the arts and questioned what DBC were doing in support of the arts. Stephen Wiper advised that the Tees Valleys were working together and that it was hoped to expand the Creating Darlington Brand in order to bring more to Darlington via support and investors. DfC is a good networking organisation and has a role in getting large organisations into Darlington and it would seem silly to duplicate its efforts. It was important to get business networks i.e. Teesside University together so that concerns could be voiced and finance for the arts could be sought via grant applications. There was a need to promote and programme events using the resources at hand. The Sage and Baltic plans were seeded during the mid-80's recession.
- Councillor Harman presented a paper he had prepared entitled 'Darlington's Cultural Life : Four Ways to Go?' The paper stated that although DBC had an Officer to give professional support on the Creative Darlington Board it was not subject to scrutiny by elected Members and was answerable to Darlington Partnership. The paper outlined four possible options for Cultural Provision in Darlington and reasoned why a Cultural Policy was required for the Borough.
- The Review Group were advised that Creative Darlington Board was an Officer Group that supported Seth Pearson and the Darlington Partnership by bringing

together community groups. There were no definitive Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and a meeting was due to be held to determine and develop a budget plan as there were too many priorities and there was a need to focus.

- Following a comment that Creative Darlington was too narrowly focused the Group were advised that there was an argument that other cultural issues were mainstreamed i.e. architecture and the Museum, with heritage work currently being done around North Road and the River.
- The Group focused on the four possible options outlined in the paper and debated the merits of them all.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That thanks of this Group be extended to John Dean, Chair, Darlington for Culture for his attendance and input at this meeting.

(b) That this Review Group prefers option 4 within the report as detailed below :-

'Keep responsibility for culture as a core function and make it a key policy with continued Officer support, raising funds wherever and whenever available , in partnership with voluntary organisations (eg DfC, Railway Museum, Forum) and private bodies (eg Project Vane)'

CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

12th July 2013 2013

PRESENT – Councillors Cossins, Harman, Lawton, Long (in the Chair) and Wright.

OFFICERS – Richard Alty, Director of Place, Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE –

Purpose of the Meeting – To obtain a briefing following the announcement of the end of Project Vane.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- Richard Alty advised the Group that Cabinet had recently agreed to sell the Arts Centre building following the announcement that Project Vane was unable to obtain the required finance for the redevelopment of the former Arts Centre. The failure of the Project Vane proposal to secure Arts Council England capital funding had disappointed Project Vane and the Council.
- Any capital receipts would be put back into the provision of the arts. Consultations with local people and the arts community are being undertaken by the Council working with Darlington for Culture to determine how this money should be spent. A community survey with options agreed by the Council and Darlington for Culture would be promoted by Darlington for Culture and sent to the Council's Citizens Panel.
- One option was that a proportion of the money could be used as match funding to support an application for Arts Council England Capital funding to develop provision in Darlington. The third round of the current Capital programme for large grants, and the second round for small grants, will open to applicants in October 2013. Arts Council England has advised that from 2015 there will be a fourth round of the Capital investment programme. The application deadlines for the third round of the current Capital programme for large grants have not been provided yet. It was noted the application process is very competitive and that the Council needed to be ready.
- It was stated that Arts Council England's Capital investment programmes are currently focused on developing the sustainability of their National Portfolio Organisations. Theatre Hullabaloo, a pioneering theatre company creating quality work for young audiences, is the only National Portfolio Organisation based in Darlington. Any application for significant Capital investment from Arts Council England would require Theatre Hullabaloo involvement.
- An evaluation of Darlington's current art facilities indicate that the loss of the two small-scale theatre spaces located within the Arts Centre has left a gap in current provision.

- Some years prior to its closure Arts Council England gave a grant of around £0.5 million to the Vane Terrace Arts Centre to improve facilities for performing arts for Children and Young People. Ensuring a studio theatre-type space is provided and that children and young people's performing arts offer is retained in Darlington will reduce the risk that this grant has to be repaid.
- In addition to a community survey on options agreed by the Council and Darlington for Culture, Creative Darlington has co-ordinated two seminars to be held on 29th July 2013 to sense check options for how money should be utilised and to discuss what the next steps should be. Both the Council and Darlington for Culture would present at these sessions.
- Stephen Wiper advised that the Community Survey responses and a note of the seminars would give an indication of how the proceeds of the sale of the Arts Centre were to be spent in addition to information gathered through the recent Arts Enquiry process. The results of the survey and a note of the seminars would be available early August 2013.
- Following a question the group were advised that the current programme of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding ended in 2013 and a new programme was currently being put together, however, at this stage it was uncertain what the criteria would be and this information would not be available for a few months and funding would not be available until around mid-2014. ERDF was primarily focused on employment and economy outputs.
- A Member stated that he felt that it was wrong to fund just one form of the Arts and that a suitable studio-theatre type space should aim to benefit both children and young people and other users. A flexible space was needed. He also requested that other forms of funding be explored such as the Big Lottery and sponsorship deals.
- Members agreed that it was unfair for the whole of the capital receipts to be focused on developing the arts offer for children and young people and noted that any application for Arts Council England Capital support would be strengthened by match funding secured from other sources.
- A member stated that rehearsal space was a must for any theatre company and that if that space could be provided a rent could be charged. He made reference to a Swedish model, the Stockholm Studio Theatre and requested that any new building be modelled on that Theatre.
- Finally it was stated that Councillor Wallis, portfolio holder for Leisure and the Environment, relevant Officers and representative from Darlington for Culture be invited to the next meeting of this Review Group when it was hoped that the results of the consultations would be known.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That the current position with regard to cultural provision in the Borough be noted.

(b) That the next meeting of the Review Group be held once the results of the consultation are known.

CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

24 October 2013

PRESENT – Councillors Carson, Harman, Lawton, Long (in the Chair) and EA Richmond.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Cossins and L Hughes.

OFFICERS – Steve Petch, Lead Officer, Place Scrutiny Committee, Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager, Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture and Abbie Metcalfe, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – John Deane, Darlington for Culture and Alice Maynard, A Level Politics Student.

Declarations of Interest – Councillor Long declared an interest in that she was a member of Darlington for Culture and a Director of Theatre Hullabaloo, Councillors Lawton and Harman each declared an interest in that they are members of Darlington for Culture.

Purpose of the Meeting – To receive feedback following the consultation by Darlington for Culture on how the money received from the sale of the Arts Centre should be spent.

Points Discussed and Considered -

- Following a question by a member the Review Group were advised that proceeds from the Art Centre sale were based on the 2011 process during Summer and Autumn. However these figures of £800k to £1.2/£1.3m varied depending on whether the building was cleared or retained with furniture.

(Note- The Chair of the Review Group advised that as a Planning Applications Committee member and a near neighbour of the Arts Centre she would declare an interest and not take part in any discussion or voting on this issue when considered by that Committee).

- Concerns were raised at the varying values from the same developer and the comment was made that it was believed that the building was worth substantially less than the site itself.
- The Group were advised that it was hoped to raise more as these figures were determined by the 2011 market and Officers were unsure whether the situation had changed.
- John Dean of Darlington for Culture (DfC) addressed the Group and advised that the consultation exercise had been undertaken in July via a short questionnaire, which was also available on the DfC website, and one consultation meeting.
- Out of five available options two were dismissed quickly – to cover Darlington Borough Council cuts and to provide a small theatre and children's theatre. A

third option of giving 45 per cent to help running costs with local Arts was also dismissed.

- The remaining options were to spread the money around various arts facilities in Darlington which was favoured by 79.9 per cent of respondents to the DfC consultation and 68 per cent of respondents to the Darlington Citizen Panel (DCP) and to provide a small theatre for children and young people, with the proviso of community use, which was favoured by 49.6 per cent of DfC respondents and 46 per cent of DCP respondents.
- Mr Dean advised that both options were possible and that with Option 2 it was envisaged that Theatre Hullabaloo would take the lead, however there were concerns as to whether sustainable running costs would be an issue. There was also a strong belief that some of the money should be used to provide and sustain arts in other venues such as schools, public houses and forums.
- The Group were advised that discussions were taking place between the Council, DfC, Creative Darlington Board and the relevant Cabinet member to reinforce the two options. With regards to the provision of a small theatre the venue was of concern as it needed to be robust and would need capital. It had been suggested that the old fire station next to the Civic Theatre could be a suitable venue and that Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding linked to the Civic Theatre refurbishment could be utilised. It was also highlighted that the venue needed to be available to the broader Arts community.
- With regards to Art Council funding this would need to be applied for by Theatre Hullabaloo as they have the relevant permission to do so.
- Following a question details were given of the Darlington Citizens Panel and their role in the consultation exercise. A member stated that market surveys were only satisfactory if the options were liked and/or preferred however there should always be an option for comments and further information as there was a better take up of cultural experiences when they were made available to everyone rather than the few. He also stated that he would prefer the Council to retain funding of the arts to ensure access for all residents.
- It was reiterated that the Council was working in partnership with Creative Darlington and that a proportion of money was to be used to ensure access to the arts for all in the long term. The location of Option 2 (a children and young people's theatre) next to the Civic Theatre was a good possibility, with opportunities for audience development of the arts in that area of Town.
- Members reiterated that in the current economic climate it was difficult to find a robust financial model and that must be taken into account, it was also stated that the use of schools could be extended possibly with a small hire charge.
- Discussion ensued on ways of capitalising the revenue budget and possible renting of buildings as rental monies would be put back into the revenue budget. It was also stated that revenue funding and sustainability would need to be included in any Arts Council funding applications. There was an urgent need to find ways of sustainability for the future provision of arts and it was stated that

the Civic Theatre was beginning to show signs of breaking even.

- Mr Dean stressed that it was very competitive to get Arts Council funding in the current economic climate and that Theatre Hullabaloo has to be strengthened by the application. It was highlighted that staff would still be required for Option 2 no matter what occurred.
- The Creative Darlington Manager stated that this was a one-off opportunity which was viewed as a good chance, Arts Council funding would not be used for maintaining organisations' running costs and it would be unlikely that this opportunity would arise again for decades. He highlighted the recent successes of the Festival of Thrift which had been well attended by the public and facilitated by local businesses, the voluntary sector and the Council and the Jabberwocky Markets which had encompassed the Town's assets. The Arts Council were applying pressure on organisations not to create a new building which would require further costs. The Group were advised that both Options needed to be covered so that if the Arts Council funding application was unsuccessful existing projects and organisations could be supported, although it was expressed that each organisation needed to be sustainable in the future as the Council could not support it. Part of the Arts Council funding needed to be reserved for match funding for the future.
- A member expressed the view that the subsidy for the Civic Theatre had been reducing and it was envisaged to be around £50k for the next year and that the subsidy could be shared between the Civic Theatre and Theatre Hullabaloo. Members reinforced their commitment to the Arts for the next 20 – 25 years and felt optimistic about the future.
- Mr Dean stated that a very small amount of money could achieve a lot and there was a need to push up the quality of the Arts, as it was felt that Darlington sometimes missed out on the 'excellence' of theatre and that the town needs to be able to attract the high quality performances.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) The Review Group accept that there is support for Option 2 with a Theatre Hullabaloo, Darlington Borough Council and Darlington for Culture joint approach.

(b) The Review Group accept that compromise is needed but understands why.

(c) The Council needs to be aware of non users of the Arts and the leadership role of the Council which needs an input.

(d) The Group are aware that this is a one-off opportunity for Arts Council funding and believe that the Council has a lot to offer.

(e) The Group recognises that there are many imponderables and consideration needed to be taken especially as the amount of money was uncertain.

(f) That imaginative ways of using capital receipts be monitored by Efficiency and Resources Security Committee.

(g) That, as support for other venues has already been established, consideration be given as to whether match funding opportunities' could be explored.

(h) That contributions to other national and regional Arts Organisations be explored to ensure Darlington remains in the pot for funding in the future.

(i) That the next meeting of the Review Group give consideration to the Creative Darlington Model and how priorities are to be considered.

CULTURAL PROVISION REVIEW GROUP

22 April 2014

PRESENT – Councillors Cossins, Harman, Lawton, Long (in the Chair), EA Richmond and Wright.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Carson and L Hughes.

OFFICERS – Steve Petch, Lead Officer, Place Scrutiny Committee, Stephen Wiper, Creative Darlington Manager, Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture and Karen Graves, Democratic Officer.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Wallis, Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio Holder.

Purpose of the Meeting – The Chair advised the Group that the current Quad of Aims had outgrown its purpose and an amended Quad of Aims was circulated in light of recent MTFP decisions. The Group were also advised that it would be beneficial to bring the Review to a close once the outcome of funding applications for Theatre Hullabaloo and the Civic Theatre were known.

Points Discussed and Considered -

Head of Steam

- Mike Crawshaw gave a position statement on the Head of Steam and advised the Group that John Anderson, Assistant Director, Economic Initiative was now the overall project lead which had a focus on regeneration around the Heritage Campus.
- It was stated that A1 Trust, who had recently announced it was building a replica of Steam Locomotion named P2, was a key partner of the Heritage Campus. The Trust had raised more money than expected and at road shows in Edinburgh, York and London had reiterated its commitment to build at £5m steam engine in Darlington by 2021.
- Particular reference was made to the Heritage Campus development including a bigger engine workshop and the desire to purchase land in the Whessoe Road area to ensure greater access for the servicing of engines which was considered a possible income stream. A similar arrangement took place at Barrow Hill and its preserved Roundhouse in Chesterfield and was run by Barrow Hill Engine Shed Society, a group of dedicated rail enthusiasts who rescued the place from dereliction in 1991 from British Rail, who had no further use for the buildings and nearby railway yards.
- The Group were also informed that no business model had been formulated as yet but negotiations were on-going with Heritage Rail, Darlington Railway Preservation Society (DRPS), the North Eastern Locomotion Preservation Group and model railway partners who had resurrected the Darlington Railway Museum

Trust

- The Friends of the Museum and DRPS had many ideas for the Museum Trust and the value of the Town's Railway Heritage had been awakened with focus on the 2025 Railway Celebrations and possible regeneration of the whole of the North Road area.
- Group were keen to include the buildings within the Town Centre Fringe and the link to Barclays Bank as part of the Heritage with possible links to Shildon and York. Group were pleased to learn that there were workshop availabilities for Creative Darlington.
- A Member expressed concerns that television documentaries on railway heritage concentrated on Liverpool and Manchester with little mention of Locomotion 1 and Darlington and Stockton railways. Darlington hadn't invested, promoted or celebrated its railway heritage and had a lot of catching up to do. The infrastructure of the railways was important and the Museum was good at outlining that.
- In order to give more publicity to Darlington's Railway Heritage a member suggested that a dining and sleeping car be hired, stationed in Head of Steam and overnight packages be offered for 'the experience of the railway'. It was also suggested that students could be employed to provide the catering although there was acceptance that Tourism Operators would be needed and feasibility studies undertaken
- Members were keen for Darlington Railway Station to promote the celebrations and advertise 'Darlington – Home of the Railways' and it was accepted that although there was some history boards they were not in plain view for all to see.
- The Cabinet Member with the Leisure and Local Environment Portfolio stated that there was no central budget that could be utilised for promotion purposes. He did, however, advise that discussions were on-going with Stockton on Durham in relation to the 2025 celebrations and it was important to include York and Shildon within the celebrations. The stressed that these were international celebrations and work was on-going on the basis that solutions would be found. There were some very ambitious ideas that needed to be promoted and Officers were investigating how this could be achieved. He accepted that, although there was a lot going on in the background, more could have been done in past years to promote Darlington's Railway Heritage. A1 Trust was integral to the ambition to have live steam in Darlington.
- A Member suggested that a step back be taken and the Town challenges be looked at. Nowhere was Railway Heritage written down and there was a lot to consider such as cost, contribution to the economy and aspirations. There was no vision for exploiting Darlington's history and heritage. If the vision was framed people would be more willing to buy in.
- Members discussed the formulation of a strategy and in doing so agreed that 2025 provided massive opportunities for Darlington but a decision has to be made on what was wanted for 2025. People on site and in the Town Hall were

involved and had to say what was desired prior to formulating a strategy, it was suggested that Cummins apprentices be asked to build a replica engine as Railway Heritage was essential for Darlington.

- It was stressed that by 2015 there would be zero subsidy for the Head of Steam and a solution had to be sought and that part of the conundrum was to have partners running Head of Steam with consideration also being given to the Heritage Campus. A1 Trust not only shared Darlington's vision and had similar sites, they had ideas and contacts they could share. Darlington had to look forward and understand the strategy for the site, question its identity and think of the message it wished to convey to tourists. There was a need to work in collaboration with Stockton and not compete with it.
- The Group agreed that a long-term vision had to be secured and an analysis done of what Darlington had to offer and where it sat in relation to its competitors. Members were also mindful of the economic climate and the value of volunteers.
- An Officer stated that Darlington had the product but it didn't support the brand, the week-to-week experience of the Head of Steam was for rail enthusiasts and event were family organisations enjoyed by all.
- It was suggested that 'walks' could be mapped to railway links around Darlington such as the £5 Bridge, Barclays Bank, West Brook Villas etc however Members were reminded that the focus was on the bigger picture.
- A further suggestion was to provide signage at various points on the railway lines and around Darlington highlighting the Town's Railway Heritage and points of interest.

The Bridge

- Stephen Wiper advised the Group that The Bridge provided a vibrant community-led venue to support artists and encourage visual arts involvement for Darlington with many artists who were at the Arts Centre now located at the Bridge. He advised that The Bridge had recently passed its first full financial year and volunteer and community groups had gained some funding. He advised the volunteers were passionate about the arts and not necessarily the building they were in.
- The Bridge had generated income of approximately £23k, some from Council funding and some from rent and fees and the garden space had recently been improved.
- It was stated that the Council had encouraged The Bridge to develop a sustainable approach and to use income from hires and events to offset services required to operate the venue and that the feeling was positive, although challenging.
- The Group were reminded of the passion of the many volunteer groups in Darlington for all cultural activities and that a need had to be demonstrated

before the service was asked for.

Cockerton Library

- The Cabinet Member advised the Group that a Task Group of Councillors, representing the immediate area, had been formed and several meetings with Officers had taken place. Best practice was being looked at and community groups, including Age Concern and eVolution, had been involved.
- It was also stated that Community run libraries were Council supported but Darlington was unable to do that. It was expected that a community group or business would run Cockerton Library and link to the Crown Street Library for professional support.
- The meetings had been positive and it was hoped that a solution would be found in Autumn. The Cabinet Member also advised that eVolution had contacted volunteer groups asking if they wished to be involved and what level of expertise they could provide.
- The Group were advised that a possible resolution could be established in the near future and a public consultation exercise would then follow.

IT WAS AGREED – (a) That Officers continue to investigate how to promote ideas for the 2025 Railway celebrations.

(b) That the Council continue to look forward and understand the strategy for the Head of Steam site and contemplate the message it wished to convey to tourists.

(c) That a long-term vision be secured and an analysis done of what Darlington had to offer and where it sat in relation to its competitors.

(d) That the provision of signage at various points on the railway lines and around Darlington highlighting the Town's Railway Heritage and points of interest be investigated.

(e) The Group note the success of the Bridge and look forward to its continuation.

(f) The Group look forward to receiving updates in relation to the Cockerton Library.

(g) That a meeting of this Group be held when the outcome of funding applications for Theatre Hullabaloo and the Civic Theatre are known.

Cultural Provision Task and Finish Review

14th July, 2014

PRESENT – Councillor Long (in the Chair); Councillors Carson, Cossins, Donoghue, Lawson and Wright.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Baldwin, Harman and L. Hughes

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Wallis

OFFICERS – Ian Thompson, Assistant Director, Community Services, Mike Crawshaw, Head of Culture and Steve Petch, Place Strategy Manager.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST – Councillor Long declared an interest in that she was a member of Darlington for Culture and a Director of Theatre Hullabaloo.

Purpose of Meeting – The Group met to consider the findings of the work undertaken by the Cultural Provision Task and Finish Review and to consider the status of that Review Group.

The Chair reported on the current position in relation to each of the six aims of the Review Group's terms of reference which had been amended during the course of the review to include the future of the Darlington Head of Steam and Cockerton Library.

It was reported that during the time the Review Group had been meeting, the Council's application to the Arts Council for funding for Project Vane, which aimed to develop the former arts centre had been unsuccessful, however, the Council did support Theatre Hullabaloo's application to establish a small flagship theatre focussing on performing arts for children and young people, which had subsequently been successful, with £1.5 million of funding being received to enable it to build a specialist facility in the Town and that £660,000 of ring-fenced funding from the sale of the Arts Centre would also be allocated to Theatre Hullabaloo, making it a legacy of the Arts Centre.

The Chair also reported that the Group had also continued to follow and monitor the alternative delivery options for cultural services within the Town and, following the establishment of Creative Darlington in 2011, as a partnership to take responsibility for the vision for arts for the Town, Stephen Wiper, Creative Director, had regularly updated Members on its work and success in bringing a new dimension to arts and culture in Darlington. In relation to the governance model of Creative Darlington, it was highlighted that there was a continuing need to monitor the activities and the Governance model of Creative Darlington and the Chair reported that as she was a member of the Creative Darlington Board she would continue to attend meetings of that Board and make regular reports to Place Scrutiny Committee.

Discussion ensued on the successful provision of an arts culture in Darlington following

the announcement of the closure and sale of the former Arts Centre, and Members praised the work of Officers and all those organisations involved and made reference to the successful and strong partnerships which had been created as a result.

In relation to the future operation of the Head of Steam which it was initially envisaged that the Council could no longer subsidise after 2016, it was reported that events had subsequently overtaken that decision, and that Cabinet had agreed to support plans to continue with the subsidy and seek World Heritage Status for the site on North Road. It was suggested that Members of the Place Scrutiny continue to monitor progress as a separate issue following the conclusion of this Task and Finish Review.

In relation to the future of Cockerton library, which, again, the Council had previously indicated that it could no longer subsidise beyond 2016, the Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Leisure and Local Environment, reported that there were a number of potential volunteers and some ideas about the future of the library coming forward from the voluntary/charitable sector and that it would become clearer, after the summer about what the future of the library might look like. It was suggested that the Council may continue to provide some support to the library in terms of the provision of books, training and the ICT infrastructure, however, the service may be operated by a third party. Councillor Carson, one of the local Ward Councillors, stated that he was reasonably optimistic about the future of the library.

IT WAS AGREED – That the Place Scrutiny Committee be advised of the following final recommendations of this Task and Finish Review Group :-

(a) this Task and Finish Review Group did have value as a conduit for information and were kept informed on developments in relation to the future of the Arts provision in Darlington; and

(b) this Task and Finish Group notes that the strategic roles for arts within the Town has now passed to Creative Darlington and is within the remit of the Director of Economic Growth however, it is important that a close interest in Creative Darlington and its governance model be taken and it is recommended that this be done via regular reporting to the Place Scrutiny Committee.

Terms of Reference

Title: Cultural Provision Task and Finish
Scrutiny: Place

Start Date: March, 2012

End Date:

PURPOSE/AIM	RESOURCE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To track the progress of DBC's application to the Arts Council. 2. Investigate how cultural activity will be facilitated in the intervening period between the closure of the Arts Centre and the new Arts Hub. 3. Scrutinise any potential delivery options Cultural Services. 4. Scrutinise a range of governance models. 5. To ensure that the Head of Steam Museum remains crucial to Darlington's sense of Place in relation to culture, planning and economic regeneration. 6. To assist with on-going work in relation the service provided by Cockerton Library 	<p>Members Relevant Portfolio Holder COE (as and when required) Head of Service Democratic Services Arts Enquiry Group Darlington for Culture</p>
PROCESS	OUTCOME
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clarify the outcome being sought. 2. Receive reports/presentations from Officers at key stages of the process. 3. Consider the evidence base. 4. Identify benefits and constraints (specific Task and Finish sessions). 5. Identify current policy and practice to secure outcomes. 6. Identity implications on stakeholders and interested parties (Specific Task and Finish sessions) 7. Assess the viability/practicality of the outcomes being sought. 8. Address and scrutinise any areas of concern. 9. To speak with officers and relevant interested parties. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the issues around provision of culture for Darlington. 2. Identify potential solutions and make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet on appropriate governance models for the future of Cultural Services.

COUNCILLOR

CHAIR

(TO BE SIGNED BY MEMBER OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REQUESTING TOPIC)

(TO BE SIGNED BY CHAIR OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)