
ARTS TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP

**Responsible Cabinet Member –
Councillor Stephen Harker, Health and Leisure Portfolio**

**Responsible Directors – Cliff Brown, Director of Community Services
Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services**

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report the findings and recommendations of the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee's Arts Task and Finish Review Group, established to give consideration to the provision of cultural services. However it was decided to focus on the provision of Arts as cultural services was considered too large a remit.

Summary

2. At a meeting of Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 5th November, 2009 it was agreed to establish the Arts Task and Finish Review Group. Terms of Reference were established and membership agreed. A wide number of issues were discussed and considered at the meetings and are referred to in the Final Report (**Appendix 1**).
3. At its meeting held on 7th October, 2010, the Review Group agreed the following recommendations for submission to Cabinet.

Recommendation

4. Cabinet be requested to :-
 - (a) Endorse the following recommendations of the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee :-
 - (i) As a contribution to Cabinet considerations the Review Group suggests the following courses of action in relation to the Arts Centre :-
 - a) Further exploration of a dual use model with Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and more effective use of the building;

- b) Review of all activity within the Arts Centre to determine suitability for partnership working;
 - c) Ongoing liaison with Darlington Media Group and Theatre Hullabaloo;
 - d) A review of alternative models of governance;
 - e) An assessment be made of the likelihood of private and/or commercial funding;
 - f) An assessment be made of community voluntary work capacity; and
 - g) A review of education and outreach provision and capacity for the arts in Darlington alongside third sector organisations.
- (ii) The actions of Cabinet in aiding the Forum and Humantics to continue to operate be applauded and welcomed;
 - (iii) The budget constraints of 25 to 30 per cent over the next four years on the Arts Council of Great Britain and resultant consequence to Darlington Borough Council be acknowledged and the implications be explored;
 - (iv) Efforts to increase income at the Head of Steam, by providing open access to the café and greater use of the Conference facility, be explored;
 - (v) Consideration be given to a system of public subscription for arts services;
 - (vi) An assessment be made of the potential use of volunteers in the arts services and Head of Steam;
 - (vii) Darlington has a unique Industrial and Railway Heritage which needs to be actively promoted to encourage tourism to Darlington;
 - (viii) Last year's Winter Closure of Head of Steam should not be repeated and therefore should be limited to two days per week (to ensure visitors have greater accessibility) and exhibits and Heritage Lottery Funding be secured;
 - (ix) Officers examine the implications of pursuing a potential bid, lead by the National Railway Museum, for World Heritage Status of the Darlington to Stockton rail line and report their findings to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee;
 - (x) As the National Framework for Performance Indicators has been replaced by outcome-based accountability consideration be given to developing local PI's performance indicators to aid the process and it is suggested that the Consumer Survey Panel may have a role to play; and
 - (xi) That the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee monitor the recommendations arising out of this review.

- (b) Note the comments of the Director of Community Services, particularly in relation to the severe financial constraints that the Council is currently facing.

Reason

5. The recommendations are supported to enable positive contributions to Arts provision in the Borough of Darlington to be continued.

Cliff Brown
Director of Community Services

Paul Wildsmith
Director of Corporate Services

Background Papers

Notes of the meetings of the Arts Task and Finish Review Group

Karen Graves : Extension 2291

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	This report has no implications for the Health and Well Being for the residents of Darlington.
Sustainability	There are no issues relating to Sustainability which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to Diversity which this report needs to address.
Wards Affected	This report does not impact on a particular Ward.
Groups Affected	There are no specific Group affected as the Arts are accessed by all.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's Budget or Policy Framework.
Key Decision	This is not a Key Decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an Urgent Decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This links to the theme 'Healthy Darlington' – ensuring that everyone across the Borough has easy, affordable access to health and leisure facilities.
Efficiency	This report does not identify specific efficiency savings.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

6. The Arts Task and Finish Review Group was established by the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee in order to give consideration to the provision of Cultural Services across the Borough of Darlington.

Review Group

7. A wide number of issues have been considered and discussed at the meetings and this report describes the outcome of the Review Group, summarises the work undertaken, the findings from the processes and the subsequent recommendations.
8. The Arts Task and Finish Review Group met on several occasions and the Final Report of the Group is attached (Appendix 1).
9. The Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee agreed to accept and endorse the following recommendations and to forward to Cabinet for consideration :-
 - (i) As a contribution to Cabinet considerations the Review Group suggests the following courses of action in relation to the Arts Centre :-
 - a) Further exploration of a dual use model with Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College and more effective use of the building;
 - b) Review of all activity within the Arts Centre to determine suitability for partnership working;
 - c) Ongoing liaison with Darlington Media Group and Theatre Hullabaloo;
 - d) A review of alternative models of governance;
 - e) An assessment be made of the likelihood of private and/or commercial funding;
 - f) An assessment be made of community voluntary work capacity; and
 - g) A review of education and outreach provision and capacity for the arts in Darlington alongside third sector organisations.
 - (ii) The actions of Cabinet in aiding the Forum and Humantics to continue to operate be applauded and welcomed;
 - (iii) The budget constraints of 25 to 30 per cent over the next four years on the Arts Council of Great Britain and resultant consequence to Darlington Borough Council be acknowledged and the implications be explored;

- (iv) Efforts to increase income at the Head of Steam, by providing open access to the café and greater use of the Conference facility, be explored;
- (v) Consideration be given to a system of public subscription for arts services;
- (vi) An assessment be made of the potential use of volunteers in the arts services and Head of Steam;
- (vii) Darlington has a unique Industrial and Railway Heritage which needs to be actively promoted to encourage tourism to Darlington;
- (viii) Last year's Winter Closure of Head of Steam should not be repeated and therefore should be limited to two days per week (to ensure visitors have greater accessibility) and exhibits and Heritage Lottery Funding be secured;
- (ix) Officers examine the implications of pursuing a potential bid, lead by the National Railway Museum, for World Heritage Status of the Darlington to Stockton rail line and report their findings to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee;
- (x) As the National Framework for Performance Indicators has been replaced by outcome-based accountability consideration be given to developing local PI's performance indicators to aid the process and it is suggested that the Consumer Survey Panel may have a role to play; and
- (xi) That the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee monitor the recommendations arising out of this review.

Director of Community Services Comments

10. The overall financial situation within which Cultural Services operate will be impacted by the Council's overall MTFP and the need to find significant efficiencies and savings. As such many of the recommendations involving partnership working for the future are worthy of further work and are welcomed in the context of seeking solutions where new and innovative forms of delivery are found that eliminate the need for subsidy from the Council.