

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF LEISURE TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY PANEL  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2007  
IN WALTHAM ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE, BROOMSTICKHALL ROAD, WALTHAM  
ABBAY, EN9 1LF  
AT 7.30 - 9.12 PM**

**Members Present:** Mrs H Harding (Chairman), , S Murray, Mrs P K Rush, Ms J Hedges, P House, G Pritchard, H Ulkun and J M Whitehouse

**Other members present:** M Cohen

**Apologies for Absence:** Mrs P Brooks, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs A Haigh and B Rolfe

**Officers Present** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), L MacNeill (Assistant Head of Leisure Services), J Chandler (Community and Cultural Services Manager), F Hall (Arts Officer), B Ovens (General Manager Waltham Abbey Sports Centre) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

**19. SUBSITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

The Panel noted that Councillor Jon Whitehouse would be substituting for Councillor Mrs A Haigh.

**20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Panel noted that there were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Conduct.

**21. MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of 9 August 2007 were noted and agreed as a correct record, subject to the addition of Councillor M Cohen's apologies for absence.

**22. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel noted the Terms of Reference and Work Programme, which they considered still to be relevant and would not require any amendment.

**23. TOUR OF WALTHAM ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE**

The Panel members were taken on a tour of the Sports Centre by the Centre's General Manager, Bill Ovens. He offered an insight into the facilities available and answered questions from the members.

After the tour the Assistant Head of Leisure Services informed the Panel that there was to be consultation with King Harold's Secondary School regarding a list of issues on the joint use agreement. The draft contract would then be finalised and would be presented at the following Panel meeting for their agreement.

**24. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS IN EPPING FOREST**

The Panel reviewed the proposed key objectives for the review of Arts development and requested that an extra point be added to reflect the Council's wider objectives that include such things as crime and disorder and health issues, this was added as the first objective. The Panel agreed the following:

- i) That the Arts Service make a contribution to wider Council objectives, including crime and disorder and health improvement.
- ii) To continue to promote and deliver the Council's adopted Arts Policy.
- iii) To increase access to and participation in the Arts, for people of all ages and abilities.
- iv) To ensure that the current strong and effective network of partnership working is retained.
- v) To ensure that equality of access to the Arts is maintained and that targeted work is continued with groups at risk of social exclusion.
- vi) To ensure that the Arts Service is delivered by the most cost effective means possible and that Value For Money is optimised whilst maintaining a creative and forward thinking arts programme.
- vii) To ensure that the District continues to benefit from investment in the Arts through the maximisation of External Funding opportunities.

The Arts Officer and the Community and Cultural Services Manager introduced a presentation on the future development of the arts in Epping Forest. The presentation is attached.

The officers outlined the national picture for Local Authority Arts Delivery, that 312 Local Authorities (out of 414 authorities) in England and Wales have an in-house service. Only 1 of the 414 have outsourced their arts service solely. 2 sets of councils share their arts provision, where this consists of arts facility management and a sole Arts Officer. The 5 options for Epping Forest Arts Delivery were then considered:

1. Outsource service to an external existing Arts organisation who may be either a Voluntary Sector or Commercial entity.
2. Transfer of Service to a new body specifically established to deliver arts development, which may take the form of a charitable entity, re Trust or Company Limited by Guarantee.
3. Explore the possibility of a "Shared Services" approach with another Neighbouring Authority or the County Council.
4. Reduce the level of direct delivery and enter into either a Service Level Agreement, or grant-assisting arrangement with another external Arts Organisation, whilst retaining a Strategic/Co-ordinating role.
5. With the likelihood of Community and Cultural Services (to include Arts) transferring under Top Management Review, to a more corporate position under the Deputy Chief Executive, investigate how the Arts Service

could be re-focused across the wider work of the Authority in pursuit of Community/Council/BVPP Key Objectives.

A quick resume of the two most significant arts organisations in the district was given; Buckhurst Hill Community Association and Theatre Resource (Ongar) and the work of the commercial arts training organisations in the area such as E15, Stage One and Loughton Music Academy was outlined.

The officers then took each option in turn and ran through the benefits and issues that were connected with them and then summed up each by summarising their findings.

After the presentation the Panel went on to consider the option for future delivery of the arts in the district. Councillor Cohen requested a further explanation of what exactly a move to a more corporate position would entail. The Deputy Chief Executive replied that Community and Cultural Services now have a wider agenda which will include youth and health, this can be brought into a central service heading under one service head. It can then be pushed centrally and not split under various service directors.

Councillor Murray commented that for the money we spend we get very good value and are highly regarded. What we do, we do well and he saw no reason to change how we deliver these services. This would lead him more to endorsing Option 5. He had not seen any other external service that provides a better service for the money.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse was not convinced that a real problem had been identified. They should, as a matter of course, look for better value for money for the services provided, but he had not seen anything to say that wholesale outsourcing was needed. It may be that we may need to work in partnership with more outside bodies and he thought that would fit naturally in with Option 5 and maybe partly into Option 4 as well.

The Chairman agreed that we should keep our channels open with outside organisations. The Arts Officer agreed and also emphasised that there was also a lot more collaboration within the Council's services – doing more of what a Council would want a Council Arts department to do.

Councillor Mrs Rush was worried about future funding and that it may dry up. The Cultural Services Manager said that the funding problems would affect all the organisations not just the Council and if we joined up with outside organisations we would be affected by their funding problems. It was thought that the arts sector in general will have a bad few years. Councillor Rush said she would still like to be able work with other outside bodies.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Panel agreed the seven key objectives for the review of arts development.
- 2) That the Panel endorsed Option 5 of the report that stated: “with the likelihood of Community and Cultural Services (to include Arts) transferring under Top Management Review to a more corporate position under the Deputy Chief Executive, to investigate how the Arts Service could be re-focused across the wider work of the authority in pursuit of Community/Council/BVPP Key objectives. This approach would not exclude

the opportunities of working on joint projects with external agencies and the sourcing of external funding.”

3) The Deputy Chief Executive will produce a report to this effect to go to Overview and Scrutiny and then on to Cabinet.

## 25. 2012 OLYMPIC LEGACY ACTION PLAN

The Deputy Chief Executive updated the Panel on the latest developments in the Legacy Action Plan.

**Brentwood**: the Mountain Bike Competition is to be held at the Weald Country Park. This was to be held in Epping Forest, but the Corporation of London did not want it for ecological reasons.

The competition will take place during the last weekend of the games. It would include 80 of the top male competitors and about 50 of the top female competitors. Brentwood is very keen on this and will construct a special 5km course, which will stay as a legacy for the area. They are also developing a cycle network in the area in conjunction with the Olympic course to promote cycling generally. To enable public participation they have also set up a consultation forum.

**Broxbourne**: White Water Canoe facility. The proposed venue is to be ready for the 2010 World Championships, although they have yet to receive planning permission for the site. The site is contaminated and Thames Water does not want water used on the site to enter the natural water channel of the River Lea, so a self-contained system is being proposed.

There are also major concerns about excessive traffic, and the Olympic Delivery Agency is to encourage the spectators to travel to the site by rail. The Council will continue to liaise closely with Broxbourne.

The course will be left as a permanent legacy for the region for Whitewater sports.

### Generally:

- Cultural Olympiad: there will be about £42 million to be spent to celebrate the games, but this will be steered towards national events and the opening and closing ceremony and the money is unlikely to trickle down to district level.
- North Weald Airfield has not yet been included as a proposed Park and Ride facility in the Olympic Transport latest plan, although it featured in the original bid.
- There is a Business Breakfast event (on 17<sup>th</sup> October) coming up to discuss key topics; details will be put in the Members Bulletin.
- An Officer Group will also be set up to co-ordinate EFDC's reaction to the Olympic plans.

## 26. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

## 27. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The following were agreed:  
31 October 2007 and

27 November 2007.

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# Future Management of Epping Forest Arts Service

Julie Chandler – Community & Cultural Services Manager

Felicity Hall – Arts Officer

18<sup>th</sup> September 2007

# The National Picture of Local Authority Arts Delivery.....

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The range of local authority arts provision varies widely throughout the Country, with 312 LA's in England and Wales out of 414 authorities providing an Arts Development service 'in house', with from 1 to 7 members of staff.

Out of 414 Local Authorities, 4 have outsourced their arts service within wider leisure or cultural organisations and only 1 has outsourced their arts service solely

2 sets of 2 councils share their arts provision:  
Chesterfield/North East Derbyshire Borough Councils  
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council/Blaby DC



# Local Authority Comparators

## Outsourced Leisure Services

### East Northamptonshire Cultural Trust\*

One of the first not for profit charitable trusts appointed to operate a local authority's portfolio of leisure and cultural facilities.

Responsible for:

- three leisure centres
- arts and heritage development
- community development and cultural services.
- Grant support for community events and activities
- Heritage building used for arts and heritage exhibitions, and events.

# Local Authority Comparators

Hounslow – Culture and Community Services Ltd CIP\*

Responsible for:

- Strategic Planning for culture, libraries and parks
- Library services
- Leisure centres and swimming pools and sports development
- Culture, arts, events and community halls
- Ecology and landscape services, parks and allotments
- Museums and heritage
- E-government
- Tourism

# Local Authority Comparators

## Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust\*

Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (WLCT) was formed in 2003. The organisation is a charitable trust working on behalf of Wigan Council to manage and support Leisure and Cultural facilities, initiatives and events for over 300,000 residents across the Wigan Borough.

Responsible for: Leisure inc parks and venues

Biodiversity, Grounds Maintenance and Playing fields

Cemeteries and crematoria

Culture (Local History services, archives, young people's services, play section)

Tourism inc events, festivals, tourist information

Sport inc sports development, sports centres, active life services

Arts inc festivals, gallery, arts development

Libraries

# Local Authority Comparators

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Link4Life – Rochdale

Responsible for: Arts and Heritage, Entertainment

Fitness and Health, Sport and Leisure

New Trust Created 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007, 15 year Partnership with Rochdale City Council with contract charge for the delivery of services in line with an agreed standard of performance.

Chelmsford Council

CC had planned to put whole of leisure dept, including 2 Theatres, Arts Development, 4 sports centres and sports development out in 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 to a new Trust.

However this has now been put on hold to enable CC to prioritise a new sports facility in the town.

# Local Authority Comparators

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## Cultural Services Outsourced

### Braintree Cultural Services

Braintree explored the possibility of putting Cultural Services out to Trust by sourcing staff to run the trust. To include Arts Development post and Tourism.. Heritage Services has been in Trust since 1992. Decision was taken not to follow this avenue because of implications of transferring responsibility for Grade II listed Town Hall Centre to Trust. It was also felt that it is illogical to outsource on their own, and the Leisure Centres had already been outsourced. BDC are now developed Tourism within the Cultural Services BDC do not provide Community Arts.

# Local Authority Comparators

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## Arts Services Outsourced

ADEC, Arts Development in East Cambridgeshire

An existing arts organisation (Ely Arts Association) was developed to become ADEC 14 years ago. ECDC did not have an arts service at the time. It is a Registered charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. It has a 3 year contract with ECDC, which is reviewed annually

Responsible for: Babylon Arts Gallery

music, poetry, dance and theatre events

Ely Cinema

ACT arts in Cams on tour programme

Financial support and advice to other art groups in district

What's on guide including arts events taking place in district

# Options for Epping Forest Arts Delivery

1. Outsource service to an external existing Arts Organisation who may be either a Voluntary Sector or Commercial entity
2. Transfer service to a new body specifically established to deliver arts development, which may take the form of a charitable entity, Trust or Company Limited by Guarantee
3. Explore the possibility of a 'shared services' approach with another neighbouring authority or the County Council
4. Reduce the level of direct delivery and enter into either a Service Level Agreement, or grant-assisting arrangement with an external Arts Organisation, whilst retaining a strategic/coordinating role
5. With the likelihood of Community & Cultural Services transferring to a more corporate position under the Top Management Review, investigate how the arts service could be refocused across the wider work of the authority in pursuit of Community/council/BVPP Key Objectives

## Existing Arts Organisations in the area

There are only a few organisations within the voluntary, charitable and commercial sectors of the district that currently provide arts development opportunities for the wider community. In addition to these, there are a wide range of much smaller organisations that include music societies, flower arranging clubs, choirs etc. The two most significant organisations are as follows;

Buckhurst Hill Community Association Established in 1950, BHCA has provided opportunities for recreational pursuits to the local community of Buckhurst Hill over the last 50 years. The Association owns a large community facility, that was converted from a residential property, which is used to provide arts and leisure opportunities for children and adults of all ages. The Association employs tutors to deliver an extensive range of classes and these include embroidery, calligraphy, painting & drawing, book crafts and musical tuition, along with yoga and various fitness classes. BHCA is an independent organisation and registered charity and relies on income from participant fees to fund its core activities.



## Existing Arts Organisations in the area cont/...

Theatre Resource (Ongar) Theatre Resource is the largest arts in education organisation in the district. The key focus of the organisation's work is providing services for people with physical, sensory and learning difficulties, and disadvantaged children and young people in Social Care. Based at Great Stony Arts Centre in Ongar, Theatre Resource has a performance space and 3 classrooms and works in conjunction with community education groups to provide a range of courses from arts & crafts and leader training, to meditation and drop in sessions for people with mental health problems.

Outreach work is mainly delivered across Essex and the eastern region and a variety of disability leader and trainer courses are delivered on a national basis. The organisation is currently in the process of fundraising for a £5m capital development on its current site, that will provide residential accommodation for people with disabilities, and learning and support facilities.

Many staff that are employed by Theatre Resource are registered disabled and the organisation actively promotes employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This has resulted in some very innovative practises at Great Stony, including establishment of an 'in house' catering service.

At present, Theatre Resource works on a very limited outreach basis in Epping Forest District

## Theatre Resource cont...

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**Theatre Active (Harlow)** Although based in Harlow, Theatre Active provides a range of school based Theatre Education work in Epping Forest District. The organisation which has charitable status has a small team of staff, who work with children and young people in a curriculum and after –school setting to deliver targeted education work on issues such as diversity and social inclusion across Essex.

**Landscape+Arts Network Services (LANS)** works with Lee Valley Regional Park to deliver the arts programme for Gunpowder Park. They work with a variety of practitioners including artists, designers, landscape architects, environmentalists, scientists and academic institutions to deliver an innovative programme of arts and environment activities, ranging from research and development, new commissions, creative workshops, exhibitions, to special events and publishing.

# Commercial Arts Organisations.....

The district is also the base for several commercial arts training organisations the most notable of which are:

**E15 (East 15 Acting School)** The primary role of E15 is to provide qualifications for people wishing to join the acting and directing profession. The organisation draws in students from a very wide catchment across Essex, Hertfordshire and London, who undertake part and full - time qualifications at the school including: BA in Acting, Cert HE in Theatre Arts; Film, TV and Radio; Contemporary Theatre and Theatre Technical Studies. E15 works with the University of Essex to deliver accredited qualifications and is currently building a second £2m educational facility in Southend.

## **Stage One**

Well respected, and well connected commercial musical theatre and dance school based in Chigwell which runs various courses in the district and neighbouring areas. It also has a commercial theatrical agency for young performers. Former students have gone onto to work professionally in the performance sector.

## **Loughton Music Academy**

Established commercial music school in Loughton providing lessons for variety of musical instruments for all age groups. It also runs a commercial instrument shop.

# Option 1

Outsource to an external existing Arts organisation who may be either a voluntary Sector or Commercial entity.

## Benefits:

- 1) Potential reduction in support service costs
- 2) Opportunities to access wider external funding?
- 3) Potential to retain level of current arts provision across district

## Issues:

- 1) Lack of existing organisations in the district that have the infrastructure, experience and capacity to deliver the current level and variety of Arts provision delivered through EFDC.

- 2) Potential reduction in customer satisfaction
- 3) Reduced level of arts development provision for specific target groups
- 4) Commercial entity's requirement to focus on a financial return
- 5) Time and resources cost in relation to preparation of tender specification and process
- 6) Need to have a funding agreement that fulfils the Council's objectives, and addresses the Key Objectives of the 2007 Leisure Task and Finish panel
- 7) Requirements under TUPE and liability for redundancy and pension costs

# Option 2

Transfer service to a new body specifically established to deliver arts development, which may take the form of a charitable entity, Trust or Company Limited by Guarantee

## Benefits:

- 1) Reduction in support service costs
- 2) Wider opportunities to access external funding
- 3) Opportunity to retain EFA personnel to ensure continuity and quality of service provision
- 4) Opportunity to attract new partners to the Trust Board and therefore gain new support
- 5) Continued alignment with Council Services in terms of meeting Council objectives, and Key Objectives of Task and Finish

- 6) Potential to retain level of current arts provision across district

## Issues:

- 1) Time and resources cost in relation to planning and establishment of Trust
- 2) Council needs to be confident of charities ability to be properly resourced
- 3) Would require planned clarity around funding agreement terms and conditions

# Option 3

Explore the possibility of a 'shared services' approach with another neighbouring authority or the County Council

## Benefits:

- 1) Potential reduction in support service costs
- 2) Potential alignment with 2012, cultural developments and tourism
- 3) Potential to retain level of current arts provision across district
- 4) Potential to combine with Option 2 to create a new trust in partnership with partner authority

## Issues:

- 1) Need to clarify benefits for Local Authority partner?
- 2) Conflicting agendas – political and service specific
- 3) Potential confusion over identity of service provider
- 4) Increased hidden costs of travel
- 5) The need to ensure effective communication and partnership working, which may be difficult when applied to a relatively small service in isolation.

# Option 4

1. Reduce the level of direct delivery and enter into either a Service Level Agreement, or grant-assisting arrangement with an external Arts Organisation, whilst retaining a strategic/coordinating role

## Benefits:

- 1) Potential reduction in support service costs
- 2) Opportunities to access wider external funding
- 3) Potential to retain level of current arts provision across district

- 3) Conflicting agendas
- 4) Need to maintain Arts Officer level direction of work
- 5) Limited choice of appropriate organisations within the district
- 6) Need to have a funding agreement that fulfils the Council's objectives
- 7) Requirements under TUPE and liability for redundancy and pension costs
- 8) Would require service provider to be financially sustainable on own terms.

## Issues:

- 1) Time and resources cost in relation to preparation of tender specification and process
- 2) Compatibility of policies and procedures

# Option 5

With the likelihood of Community & Cultural Services transferring to a more corporate position under the Top Management Review, investigate how the arts service could be refocused across the wider work of the authority in pursuit of Community/council/BVPP Key

## Objectives

### Benefits:

- 1) Added value through consolidation and expansion of existing work with internal services (Crime & Reduction, Country Care etc)
- 2) Opportunities to access wider external funding through cross service applications
- 3) Retain level and diversity of current arts provision across district
- 4) Opportunities to increase profile of Council through joint working

- 5) Could be established quickly in order to ensure continuous provision
- 6) Address all 6 of the 2007 Task and Finish Key Objectives
- 7) No costs in setting up

### Issues:

- Potential for Council to take decision to reduce level of service in future



# Officer findings

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## **Option 1**

Issues outweigh benefits

## **Option 2**

Benefits outweigh issues

Costs of setting up a small trust would be offset against savings of support services  
Council could be assured that the new organisation would have management capacity to deliver  
Council objectives

## **Option 3**

This would be a lengthy process, and would be subject to changing political climate in terms of  
district majorities within councils.

## **Option 4**

Limited number of organisations locally: LANS, Buckhurst Hill Community Association and  
Theatre Resource

## Officer findings cont/...

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### Option 4 cont/ ...

LANS – there would be a query over their artistic direction and EFA's work being able to combine to meet EFDC objectives, and the Key Objectives of 2007 Task and Finish. There may be potential for discussion with Lea Valley Regional Park Authority for partnership working thereby combining Options 3 and 4

Buckhurst Hill Community Association – as a community charity organisation they are potentially lacking in management capacity in terms of community arts development. Additionally, as a charity it is not known whether their constitution would align with EFDC objectives, and the Key Objectives of the 2007 Task and Finish

Theatre Resource are a specialist development organisation whose beneficiaries are specifically people with disabilities and learning difficulties, and children in social care. In the light of the current Comprehensive Spending Review of Arts Council England, and Theatre Resource's capital development, it is not clear whether they have either the managerial capacity or the financial sustainability to take on such a large and different area of work, and number of staff.

# Officer findings cont/...

## Option 5

Within the context of the Senior Management Review, and the relocation of Community and Culture within the Deputy Chief Executive's department there is increased potential for a range of added value initiatives. This could include sharing of support services and increased alignment with Council Objectives through increased cross service working. This option could be enabled quickly, and it would be possible to establish added value quickly once the new EFDC structure is in place. If this option proves not to add value under the new structure then the other options can be revisited

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