

Future Management of Epping Forest Arts Service

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

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

Link4Life – Rochdale

Responsible for: Arts and Heritage, Entertainment
Fitness and Health, Sport and Leisure

New Trust Created 1st 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 1st 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

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

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 Cambs 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...

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
- 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

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.

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

Issues:

- 1) Time and resources cost in relation to preparation of tender specification and process
- 2) Compatibility of policies and procedures
- 7) Requirements under TUPE and liability for redundancy and pension costs
- 8) Would require service provider to be financially sustainable on own terms.

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

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/...

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 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