

# **West Wiltshire District Council**

## **Arts Development Plan 2005 – 8**

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## Foreword

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that the arts make to many aspects of life in the District. The area has a wide range of arts groups, artists and arts facilities within the district, all of which positively contribute to the lives of individuals and communities

The arts are important to individuals - providing much pleasure, a sense of well-being and opportunities for self-expression, increasing self-esteem and confidence. They also provide social opportunities, bringing people together to share experiences and contributing to a sense of community pride, identity and celebration.

They provide a vehicle for addressing issues such as social inclusion, community safety and crime reduction. In addition, they provide local employment and tourism opportunities and add to the cultural profile of the area.

The Council is therefore pleased to be playing a part in the promotion and development of the arts in the District along with its partners in the business, private, voluntary and other public sectors. This Arts Plan identifies the areas that the Council's arts development service will focus on over the next three years.

Councillor Ernie Clark  
Leisure, Community Issues and Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder

## Introduction and Purpose of the Plan

The arts cover a wide range of creative opportunities, including visual arts and crafts, media arts, performing arts and literature. The value of the arts is recognised on a national level as having a positive impact on many individuals and to both the social and economic well being of an area.

West Wiltshire District Council (WWDC) recognises that whilst it has a role to play in the development of the arts in West Wiltshire, it needs to set priorities and work in partnership with others to ensure arts opportunities are made possible. This work must be carried out within the Council's own corporate priorities, particularly:-

- **Access to recreation** – development and renewal of facilities and creation of opportunities for local people to participate

The District Council's Draft Corporate Plan identifies the need to increase the range of opportunities to participate in the arts, particularly for young people, and to improve access to arts opportunities. This need is based on the evidence from a number of consultation processes, which are listed in the Draft Corporate Plan's Audit Trail. This evidence especially highlights:-

- the need for more, improved and a wider range of arts, social and cultural facilities, activities and outlets particularly for young people after school;
- addressing the communities' desire for a cinema within the district;
- supporting the Cultural Strategy Action Plan;
- increasing local people's access to and participation in Wiltshire's cultural activities and opportunities
- identifying barriers to access and participation with particular regard to cultural activities in rural areas

This arts development plan identifies the vision, aims and priorities for the arts development service over the next three years within the above framework.

## **Context and background**

A policy project group was set up in May 2004 to look at the current arts development service and to develop the Council's long term priorities and focus for arts development over the next three years.

Consultation about the current arts development service and its future potential was undertaken. This included a review of the consultation that had taken place over the last few years including People's Voice, BVPI general satisfaction survey results 2003 and the additional consultation undertaken for the community strategy June 2004.

These concluded that people generally wanted to do more things locally, through having more facilities (including cultural/cinema) and participatory activities, particularly for and by young people. The recent consultation undertaken for the community strategy highlighted the need to reach those 13 years and over.

In addition a questionnaire was sent to a wide range of people including local and regional arts organisations, artists, arts professionals, educational establishments, umbrella organisations within the voluntary sector and Town and Parish Councils. WWDC's Members were invited to be part of this process through the Council's Members Information Sheet.

The outcome of the consultation revealed that the current service is valued. It also identified that its support to the arts infrastructure, development and project delivery is as important as the advice and information element of the service.

The current areas of work were considered high priority particularly the work of the Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership (WYAP), support to key arts organisations and local groups and opportunities to participate.

The consultation also revealed that youth development, rural isolation and cultural diversity should be high priority areas for the arts development service to address in the future. Other areas considered as priorities for the arts were community safety, tourism and economic development, health, disability equality and the physical environment.

Therefore, the key themes emerging appear to focus on young people, rural areas and generally more activities through supporting key arts organisations, local groups and participatory projects. Comparisons with neighbouring authorities reveal that similar priorities have been identified in these authorities.

Given the authority's historical low level spend, its lack of annual inflationary increases to the budget and the budgetary cut to the arts development service for the financial year 2003/4, the PPG felt it prudent to look at the level of resources available to arts development and compare it with other local authorities.

It was concluded that not only does West Wiltshire District Council have an historical low level spend on the arts, but generally spends less per head of population than most neighbouring authorities. There is also a trend in most local authorities towards supporting partnerships and service agreements with key organisations to deliver arts activity, something which West Wiltshire District Council has been piloting for over a year.

## **Vision**

To enable and encourage all sectors of the community to have equal access to a range of high quality arts opportunities.

## **Mission**

To provide, support and work in partnership with others to ensure high quality arts opportunities are made possible in a sustained and targeted way which reflect the needs of the local community.

## **Principles and beliefs**

- Creating a well planned, financially sound and focused programme based on need
- Commitment to accessibility in all communities, but with a particular focus on rural areas and young people
- Providing creative and learning opportunities that are inspiring, enjoyable and stimulating
- Working in partnership with others to enhance provision and increase resources
- Ensuring equality of opportunity for all
- Providing a consistent quality of activities and experience
- Commitment to sustainable activities and continuous improvement

## **Aims**

- To support the arts infrastructure, facilities and providers in the district and provide the strategic framework in which they can flourish
- To involve and provide young people with arts opportunities, particularly to help address anti-social behaviour, crime and drug abuse
- To provide arts activities to address rural isolation
- To provide arts activities to address cultural diversity
- To raise the profile of the arts service and its activities integrating the arts in the delivery of other services within the district council
- To seek further funding and achieve optimum value for money from the district council's investment in the arts

## Priorities

### **1. To support the arts infrastructure, facilities and providers in the district and provide the strategic framework in which they can flourish**

- Providing adequate level of funding to and establishing sustainable service agreements with key arts organisations that enables them to deliver arts opportunities for all
- Providing information and advice
- Providing a directory of artists, arts groups and arts facilities
- Supporting the training and development of the local community including artists to deliver arts projects
- Contributing to the improvement and provision of cultural facilities such as a cinema and other complementary arts space

### **2. To involve and provide young people with arts opportunities, particularly to help address anti-social behaviour, crime and drug abuse**

- Supporting Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership's work with identified groups/individuals (focussing on 13-21 year olds) which help young people develop and address issues that are relevant to their lives and allow self expression.

### **3. To provide arts activities to address rural isolation**

- Providing arts performances and workshops through Rural Arts Wiltshire
- Providing arts projects through the Participatory Arts Workshop Scheme
- Providing youth arts activities through the Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership
- Supporting projects/activities that impact on local people in rural areas of the district
- Encouraging the development of creative enterprises, particularly in regeneration and rural areas

### **4. To provide arts activities to address cultural diversity**

- Providing funding and service agreements to key arts organisations that enables the organisations to provide arts opportunities for all

### **5. To develop arts activities that address social exclusion**

- Providing arts projects that create a positive identity and raise self esteem for disadvantaged areas or groups
- Delivering the Community Arts Training programme

### **6. To raise the profile of the arts service and its activities integrating the arts in the delivery of other services within the district council**

- Working with other council services in addressing cross cutting issues, such as crime and community safety, community initiatives, economic development and planning policy

### **7. To seek further funding and achieve optimum value for money from the district council's investment in the arts**

- Providing resources within the district arts development budget to effectively manage and deliver the arts plan

- Using the arts development resources in partnership with others to lever in contributions from other sources

### **Delivering the arts service priorities**

The Council's Arts Development Officer will manage the Arts Development Plan and its priorities through agreed annual action plans. The level of budget allocated to the arts development service and this plan will determine the nature of the service provided. The Arts Development Plan is intended to give a dynamic framework for the arts, remaining flexible and responsive to changing needs and aspirations.

The service will provide arts opportunities by:

- Working in partnership with others within the Council
- Supporting and working in partnership with arts organisations and venues in the District
- Providing a programme of initiatives to develop access to the arts
- Providing advice, advocacy and information to promote choice and opportunities
- Having a strategic view and providing a framework in which the arts can thrive

To deliver this plan, the arts development budget will need to be increased in 2005/6 and remain within the arts development budget for future years to support the Arts Development Plan 2005-8. In year 1, an increase of £18,000 is required to support the following:-

- An increase in the level of funding of £10,000 to local key arts organisations i.e. Wiltshire Music Centre and the Arc Theatre, has been identified, so that sustainable service agreements can be further developed and that both organisations have opportunities to lever in their collective target of £90,000 core income from other sources of funding (supporting priority 1 and 4). Funding for projects would be in addition to this.
- Further funding of WYAP in the region of £1,000 to £2,000, will sustain the increased youth arts activity seen over the last two years and contribute to the increased core costs of the partnership. It would also contribute towards some project funding for the development of 2-3 new projects, which may well be aimed at diversionary activity – approximately £3,000 of WYAP's overall budget has contributed to the leverage of over £100,000 of project funding from other sources of funding. (supporting priorities 2, 3,4 and 5).
- Supporting new projects that have an impact in rural areas by an allocation of £1,000. This would e.g. support an emerging open studios event in the northern part of the District similar to the Wylde Valley Art Trail, which supports in the region of 100 West Wiltshire artists and attracted in the region of £10,000 external funding in its first year (supporting priorities 3 and 6).
- Work with the Council's economic development team to identify ways of supporting creative industries (supporting priorities 1, 3 and 6) – evidence, particularly for the South West region, indicates that creative industries have a positive impact to local communities, both in terms of local audiences and visitor markets. Further research led by Arts Council South West, in collaboration with



the Wiltshire authorities, is being undertaken in Wiltshire and will help inform the development of future projects and an allocation of £2,000 is made for this purpose. Early indications suggest that developing schemes to encourage the promotion and purchase of locally based arts and investigate the potential to develop studio/workspaces are possibilities.

- Support more participatory projects, particularly those that deliver the message and address other Council Corporate Priorities such as recycling (supporting priorities 2, 3 and 5) – an additional £3000-4000 would enable 10 to 13 new participatory projects, which would engage in the region of 400 additional participants.

In addition to maintaining the work identified above, in years 2 and 3, the following priorities have been considered:

- Sustaining agreements and existing partnerships
- Developing new projects that have been identified in year 1
- Developing a greater relationship with planning to seek contributions from developers towards improving the built environment through the arts

In order to sustain the work of the arts development service and meet the aims of the Arts Development Plan in years 2 and 3, inflationary increases to the arts development budget will be required, particularly to the service agreement and partnership arrangements with partners. This is in line with the recommendations of the Grants PPG.

In addition, through the partnership agreement between the Arts Council England South West and the County and District Councils of Wiltshire, a forward planning process is being undertaken of its current relationship and future arrangements in Wiltshire. The Arts Council will assess its current investment to the arts in Wiltshire and the impact of developing strategic initiatives in order to meet the needs of the current and future levels of activity. The outcome of this work will contribute to the direction of the arts development service.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Arts Development Plan 2005-8 will direct the work of the Council's arts development service through the annual arts development service plan, which will outline the tasks and outcomes set for each of the priority areas. Progress will be regularly monitored and the arts development plan will be reviewed on an annual basis.