



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**A virtual meeting of the STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP
will be held on MONDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2021 at 2.00 PM**

Contact: Sarah Handy - Council Business Unit, Democratic Services (01443 424099)

LIST OF ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest; and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they **must** notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group held on the 11th January 2021.

(Pages 3 - 6)

3. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2021-22

For Members of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group to consider the Work Programme for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

(Pages 7 - 10)

4. AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE MUNI

To receive a report in respect of the progress of the Muni and to receive a presentation from Awen Cultural Trust on the progress and strategy for the Muni Arts Centre and how it complements Pontypridd as a cultural destination.

(Pages 11 - 16)

5. AN UPDATE FROM THE ARTS AND HEALTH CO-ORDINATOR AT CWM TAF MORGANNWG UHB

To receive a presentation from the Arts and Health Co-ordinator at Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB in respect of its new strategy for the 2021-22 Municipal Year.

6. SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

To receive an update on the progress of the Arts in RCT during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

(Pages 17 - 28)

7. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances is of the opinion should be considered at the Meeting as a matter of urgency.



Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

Members of the Committee:

County Borough Councillors Councillor R Lewis (Chair), Councillor A Crimmings (Vice-Chair), Councillor J Brencher, Councillor S. Rees-Owen, Councillor J Rosser, Councillor G Hughes

Mr C Coppock – Independent Member

Ms M Dunning – Arts Council Wales

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Ms Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection & Community Services

Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

Mr A Williams, Theatre Operations and Development Manager

Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services

Ms A Hayes, Arts & Creative Industries Manager

Ms A Gould, Theatre Programme and Audience Development Manager



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP
Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group held on Monday, 11
January 2021 at 2.00 pm

County Borough Councillors - Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group Members in attendance:-

Councillor R Lewis (Chair)

Councillor A Crimmings Councillor J Brencher
Councillor S. Rees-Owen

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mr C Coppock
Ms M Dunning

Officers in attendance:-

Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager
Mr A Williams, Theatre Operations and Development Manager
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services
Ms A Hayes, Arts & Creative Industries Manager
Ms A Gould, Theatre Programme and Audience Development Manager

28 Apologies

An apology of absence was received from County Borough Councillors J Rosser and G Hughes.

29 Welcome

The Chair, County Borough Councillor R Lewis and Cabinet Member for Stronger Communities, Wellbeing and Cultural Services, extended a welcome to the members of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group. Councillor Lewis commented on the challenging past year and confirmed that the Arts Service staff had been re deployed to support priority services such as the Community Resilience Centres, supporting residents who were shielding, and later, Test, Track and Protect and Mass Testing (which had been reflected in the report to the Panel on the progress of the Arts in RCT during the COVID-19 pandemic).

The Chair thanked the staff for their efforts over the past 12 months and referred to the update later on in the meeting that would provide an overview of the online activities that have continued during the National Lockdown.

30 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interests were made pertaining to the agenda:-

County Borough Councillor S Rees-Owen – In relation to Agenda Item 4 'Serving Our Communities during the Covid-19 Pandemic – "I have been in receipt of the Culture Recovery Fund Freelancer Funding which was administered by the Arts Service on behalf of Welsh Government's Creative Wales department".

County Borough Councillor J Brencher - In relation to Agenda Item 4 'Serving Our Communities during the Covid-19 Pandemic – "I am Director of the YMCA"

31 Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of the 6th February 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

32 Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group Work Programme 2020/21

The purpose of the report was outlined to the Strategic Culture & Arts Steering Group with information on the key issues to be considered in the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Members considered the key themes on the forward work programme for the remaining 202/21 Municipal Year and the Chair referred members to the meeting scheduled for the 17th March 2021 at which it is intended to deliver an update on the progress of the Muni Awen Cultural Trust. Members of the Steering also noted the future topics to be considered to include the Eisteddfod and preparations for the Cultural Arts Programme and the link with the Education curriculum for 2021/22.

In response to a query about the possibility of bringing the key players together to engage in a wider discussions around the YMCA, Pontypridd Library, the Muni all within the arts quarter of Pontypridd, the Service Director Community Services confirmed that there was an appetite for bringing organisations together and an update would be relayed to the Steering Group in respect of maximising this opportunity for key stakeholders to meet.

A member of the Steering Group praised the RCT team for its hard work which had been recognised by the Arts Council for Wales but raised a query regarding the business plan for both enterprises and the importance of having both models in place.

The Chair advised that sustainability remains at the forefront of how the Council builds for the future and he added that the Cabinet is also mindful of the revenue support which will be also required.

The Group Director Community & Children's Services commented that it was positive to be discussing investment in the 'Arts Quarter' in Pontypridd and advised that although the work on the Muni had been delayed because of Covid 19, a consultation exercise is underway and the business plan has been

revisited in collaboration with Awen Cultural Trust. The Group Director stressed that the Council has committed fully to the initiative both from a financial and supporting role. He added that an update regarding the ongoing consultation exercise, tender process and building works would be provided to the Steering Group at its next meeting in March 2021.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft work programme subject to any changing priorities throughout the year.

33 Serving our Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Strategic Arts & Culture Manager presented the report of the Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services, which outlined the progress of the RCT Arts Services in serving its communities during the covid-19 pandemic 2020.

The Strategic Arts & Culture Manager provided an overview of how the service has operated since the closure of all the RCT theatres in March 2020 with live events having been cancelled or postponed. A number of services were transferred to an online platform and have been operating and reaching out to audiences of all ages since.

The Steering Group was advised that a number of Arts Service staff, Senior Management Team and wider management were re deployed to assist with the Test, Track and Protect Service with other staff supporting the Community Resilience Centres.

As an Arts Council of Wales Arts Portfolio Wales client, the Steering Group was advised of the comprehensive free programme of arts events and activities online from April to December 2020 which has resulted in the Coliseum Theatre and Park and Dare Theatre Facebook pages having exceeded 347,356 reaches combined. In addition, the Arts and Creative Industries team has also reached out to a number of children and young people via the Families First commissioned Youth Arts and SONIG Youth Music Industries programmes, Forte (funded by the Arts Council of Wales and the PRS Foundation), and Beacons (funded by Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government's Creative Wales).

The report provided a detailed account of the financial support provided to the Arts and Creative Industries such as the Culture Recovery Fund Freelancer Funding which had seen 181 eligible applicants who each received grants of £2,500.

In conclusion, the Strategic Arts & Culture Manager commented that for the Arts Services, 2021 would be a time of reflection, an opportunity for discussions to be held with staff, colleagues and the third sector and respond to the impact the pandemic has had on the Service and undertake a review of its processes and procedures. Information was also relayed with regards to the revenue funding strands such as the awards by the Arts Council of Wales.

The Steering Group was provided with the opportunity to raise questions and did so concerning the impact of the pandemic on children and young people and whether future plans for Arts and Culture to work collaboratively with education, particularly through the medium of Welsh. The Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

advised that the future programme of work does include bilingual activity and highlighted particular strands of work which would be forthcoming.

Discussions centred around whether libraries could play a more prominent role in encouraging storytelling, competitions, from residents of all ages and local communities as there had been an increased interest in local history during lockdown. In response, it was reported that a number of online projects have been ongoing, involving young people and a close relationship has been developed between the Library and Arts Services with the libraries hosting a number of writing competitions and collection of old photographs for the annual anthologies.

The Chair acknowledged the talent of local authors whose work had been published recently and how they could be celebrated and promoted through the local libraries.

Members of the Steering Group commented that, although online and digital services could not replace the live performance experience for audiences, the digital services had served the communities well during the lockdown, enabling many residents the opportunity to engage with the Arts service. Many hoped the Arts Council for Wales would re set the dial to include the valleys and not just the capital.

In response to a query regarding the return to live theatres and whether audiences will need to produce vaccine cards, the Group Director Community & Children's Services commented that it was still too early to anticipate how the return of theatres, travel will be undertaken and scientific evidence would inform the future return to live performances in theatres.

The Arts Services staff present provided an account of their experiences having been redeployed to the Test, Track and Protect Service and they stressed the importance of the work and connection with the local communities.

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services reflected on the staff experiences and praised all council staff for their contributions to the Test, Track and Protect Service which had been established quickly and effectively. He attributed the success of the programme to the talent of the staff from the Arts Service and from across the whole of the Council and commented that the experience would change the way the Council engages with its communities.

The Chair re-enforced the message of thanks to all staff and commented that the council has been held in high regard following its response to the pandemic and the interaction of its staff with residents. He thanked Officers and members of the Steering Group for their comments and engagement at the meeting and confirmed the next meeting would be held on the 17th March 2021 when it was hoped

This meeting closed at 3.05 pm

**CLLR R LEWIS
CHAIR.**

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CULTURE & ARTS STEERING GROUP

June 2021

WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

Author: Sarah Handy, Council Business Unit - 07385401942

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Strategic Culture & Arts Steering Group with information on the key issues to be considered in the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Members of the Steering Group provide comment as appropriate on the draft work programme (which is attached as Appendix 1 to the report)
- 2.2 Subject to any amendments, the Steering Group approve the draft work programme as a basis, which can be amended to reflect any changing priorities throughout the year.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need to ensure that the areas identified as 'Going Forward' are considered by the Steering Group.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In September, 2018, the Strategic Culture & Arts Steering Group held its inaugural meeting, whereby it was agreed to the production of a work programme to provide Members with the opportunity to raise any matters that they would like to consider during the year. It was noted that the work programme would be a fluid document to be amended with changing priorities.

- 4.2 At the meeting, the Steering Group agreed that the topics at future meetings would be established on a thematic basis which would allow for more focussed discussions.

5. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

- 5.1 The themes identified for consideration over the 2021 – 2022 Municipal Year are:-

5.1.1 Serving our Communities / Heritage and Culture

- Visibility & Perception
- National Lottery Project
- Eisteddfod Update
- Museums in RCT

5.1.2 ACW Investment Review

- Arts and Health
- Arts and Regeneration

5.1.3 Arts and Health

- Cwm Taf Arts & Health Strategy
- Awen Cultural Trust – Muni Update

5.1.4 Arts and Regeneration

- Libraries in RCT
- 'Connect and Flourish' in RCT

- 5.2 It is proposed that each of the themes is put forward against a scheduled Strategic Culture and Arts meeting date, although depending on changing priorities the dates and themes of this reporting may be subject to change.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The proposed draft work programme is a fluid document, allowing the programme to be amended with changing priorities. The programme is based on factors highlighted within the meetings of the Strategic Culture & Arts Steering Group or other items officers deem appropriate to bring forward for discussion.

**STARTEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22**

THEME	DATE OF MEETING	TOPICS	VENUE
Arts and Regeneration and an update on the Arts in RCT (serving our communities – Arts and Health)	21 June 2021, 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forward Work Programme 2021-22 • An update on the progress of the Muni Arts Centre Awen Cultural Trust invited to discuss the progress and strategy for the Muni Arts Centre and how it complements Pontypridd as a cultural destination. • Arts & Health Co-ordinator at Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB invited to discuss the development of its new strategy for 2022 and beyond • A Service update on the Arts in RCT 	Virtual

Heritage and Culture / Serving our Communities	27th September 2021, 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Heritage Lottery Fund Projects Update including an invitation to the Eisteddfod to discuss their NHLF community engagement project in RCT 	Virtual
ACW Investment Review / Arts and Regeneration in RCT	6th December 2021, 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update on the progress of the Muni - Awen Cultural Trust invited to discuss the progress to date. To consider the Arts Council Wales investment application Artis Community Cymuned invited to discuss their provision across the borough and the YMCA development. 	Virtual
Heritage and Culture in RCT	14th February 2022, 2pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update on libraries and collections in RCT An update on the Arts Council of Wales' Connect & Flourish projects across RCT An update from Heritage Service and its programme An update on the strategic creative partnership working within Pontypridd, with an invite to Pontypridd Town Council to update on Pontypridd Museum developments. 	Virtual

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP

21st JUNE 2021

AN UPDATE ON THE RCT TOGETHER COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF THE MUNI ARTS CENTRE TO AWEN CULTURAL TRUST

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES, WELLBEING AND CULTURAL SERVICES COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

Author(s): Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members of the steering group on the community asset transfer of the Muni Arts Centre to Awen Cultural Trust (Registered Charity and Private Limited Company by guarantee without share capital).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the update within the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the members are updated on the progress of the community asset transfer of the Muni Arts Centre to Awen Cultural Trust and for Awen Cultural Trust to share their strategy.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On 18th June 2019, Members of the Cabinet determined to take forward a tenancy with Awen Cultural Trust following consideration of the summary and assessment of the business plans received in respect of the asset transfer of the Muni Arts Centre.
- 4.2 Detailed negotiations have since been held between the Council and Awen Cultural Trust to develop a capital scheme of works, agree terms of the lease and the necessary financial support required to secure a sustainable future for the Muni Arts Centre.

5. UPDATE

5.1 Phase 1: Pre-Interim Works

5.1.1 A grant of up to £250,000 has been secured from the Welsh Government's 'Targeted Regeneration Investment' Fund. Alongside an agreed contribution from Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC of up to £250,000, this will enable essential refurbishment works to be carried out which will enable the building to become operationally fit for purpose as a Cultural Arts Venue.

5.1.2 A Delegated Decision report made on December 22nd 2020 (approving a leasehold transfer of the Muni Arts Centre to Awen Cultural Trust by way of a 30 year lease) was amended and accepted on February 19th 2021, with a revision to the repair and maintenance obligations under the lease.

5.1.3 An 'Agreement to Lease' was signed on 16th April 2021 as a pre-requisite to demonstrate their partnership commitment, alongside Heads of Terms and a Partnership Agreement.

5.1.4 In addition, the Council will provide capital match funding of circa £250,000 towards the Welsh Government 'Targeted Regional Investment' fund application.

5.1.5 Contractors have commenced on site and will complete the works shortly.

5.1.6 The Council and Awen Cultural Trust have undertaken consultation with stakeholders, previous users and the wider public. The outcomes of this consultation will be shared by Awen.

5.2 Phase 2: Post-Interim Works

5.2.1 When the refurbishment work is completed satisfactorily, then approval for a 30 year leasehold transfer of the Muni Arts Centre to Awen Cultural Trust will be granted along with an accompanying Partnership Agreement laying out joint obligations for both parties to deliver on agreed objectives and priorities for the sustainable operation of the venue.

5.2.2 On completion of the lease, Awen Cultural Trust will be expected to recommence service delivery and programming commitments at its earliest convenience and in line with WG Covid 19 Advice and Guidance.

5.2.3 The Council will retain responsibility for internal repairs over £8k per item and full responsibility for external repairs and maintenance for the

building demonstrates a strengthened collaborative approach in view of the prevailing economic conditions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and further discussions with Awen.

5.2.4 The Council will provide an annual revenue funding contribution during the first 5 years of the re-development of the building to enable Awen Cultural Trust to re-build audience levels and confidence, develop a balanced commercial and community programme of events and activities. This will enable Awen to mitigate against the unknown future impact of Covid 19 on potential audience levels. To be reviewed before end of Year 5.

5.3 Phase 3 – Post Major Renovation Works

5.3.1 The opportunity has arisen for the Council to apply to the UK's Levelling Up Fund for the major renovation works outlined in the RIBA I Feasibility and Options Appraisal Report. Approval will be sought by Cabinet to submit the application and an outcome expected during Autumn 2021.

5.3.2 If Levelling Up Funding is not secured, the long-term lease will enable Awen Cultural Trust to apply for significant levels of capital funding to achieve their ambitious and innovative proposals for the full re-development of the building. The re-development aims to expose the original Gothic architecture, improve the buildings environmental sustainability and eliminate the heritage deficit and make it an easier building to maintain and strengthen its viability and sustainability.

6. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

6.1 No consultation exercise has been required.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to the recommendations in this report.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 There are no legal implications aligned to the recommendations in this report.

11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

11.1 Pontypridd is already benefiting from significant investment including the redevelopment of the former Taff Vale site and the YMCA; the ongoing development and restoration of Ynysangharad War Memorial Park; and Pontypridd Town Council's plans in developing the Museum. The Muni Arts Centre is identified as a strategically important project in the Pontypridd Masterplan and the redevelopment of the Centre will complement the existing and planned cultural provision within the town.

11.2 The Community Asset Transfer of the Muni Arts Centre supports the Council's Corporate Plan, 'Making A Difference' (2020-2024), priorities of:

- **Enabling Prosperity** – the Muni will be a vibrant presence in the heart of Pontypridd, providing a boost to the daytime and evening economy and supporting local businesses;
- **Ensuring People are independent, healthy and successful** – the Muni will offer a range of opportunities for people to enjoy performances, to participate and volunteer;
- **Creating places where people are proud to live, work and play** – the Muni will become again a symbol of the creativity and resilience of Pontypridd, a venue where people join together to celebrate a unique cultural heritage.

11.3 Along with 44 public bodies across Wales, the Council is subject to the statutory requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which sets a common vision for the long-term well-being of people and communities through seven national well-being goals and provides a framework for public services to work differently through five sustainable development principles. The principles include thinking about the long-term impact of our actions, seeking to prevent issues from occurring in the first place or from worsening, involving people and communities in decisions made that affect them, working together with other organisations and integrating our work to understand the knock-on effects of what we do.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 This report updates members of the steering group on the Community Asset Transfer of the Muni Arts Centre to Awen Cultural Trust (Registered Charity and Private Limited Company by guarantee without share capital).
- 12.2 An 'Agreement to Lease' has been signed and a successful application to the Welsh Government 'Targeted Regional Investment' fund to secure capital funding for the Phase 1 works.
- 12.3 Interim works have commenced at the Muni Arts Centre and will be completed shortly.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP

21st JUNE 2021

REPORT OF DIRECTOR – PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES, WELLBEING AND CULTURAL SERVICES, COUNCILLOR RHYS LEWIS

AN UPDATE ON THE RCT TOGETHER COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER OF THE MUNI ARTS CENTRE TO AWEN CULTURAL TRUST

Background Papers - None

Officer to contact: Caroline O'Neill – Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP

21st JUNE 2021

AN UPDATE ON THE RCT ARTS SERVICE'S WORK PROGRAMME (JANUARY – JUNE 2021)

REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES, WELLBEING AND CULTURAL SERVICES, COUNCILLOR, RHYS LEWIS

Author(s): Caroline O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members of the Steering Group on the RCT Arts Service's work programme undertaken from January 2021 to date.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group:

- 2.1 Note the update within the report.
- 2.2 Consider whether they would like any further information.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the members are updated on the RCT Arts Service's work programme undertaken from January 2021 to date.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A report was provided to members of the Steering Group at the meeting on 11th January 2021 updating on the progress of the Arts Service in serving our communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

7. RCT ARTS SERVICE

7.1 RCT THEATRES

- 7.1.1 The Coliseum Theatre and the Park and Dare Theatre remain closed to the public. Staff work at the theatres on a rota basis and the service is exploring how it can safely enable creative practice to take place within the theatres moving forward.

- 7.1.2 During April 2021 both theatres were used as community mass testing sites 7 days a week.

- 7.1.3 The programme of live events at RCT Theatres has been rescheduled or cancelled, with the first live event now scheduled for 11th August 2021 at the Park and Dare Theatre – Francis Rossi: I Talk Too Much and at the Coliseum Theatre on 10th September 2021 – The 80s Live.

- 7.1.4 The service is exploring re-opening within the government guidelines to provide a cinema offer during Summer 2021.

- 7.1.5 Capital works planned for each theatre include refurbishment of the men's toilets on the ground floor auditorium level at the Coliseum Theatre and the reconfiguration of the foyer area at the Park and Dare Theatre. Investment is secured for these improvements and the service is working with Corporate Estates to confirm the timescale of the works.

- 7.1.6 The service is working with ICT to secure its digital infrastructure for customers going forward, with the instalment of a new till system and an upgrade to the ProVenue box office system.

7.2 CREATIVE PROVISION – RCT THEATRES

- 7.2.1 RCT Theatres continues to offer creative opportunities that encourage residents of all ages to be creatively active, thus supporting their positive health and wellbeing at such a difficult and challenging time for many.

- 7.2.2 With the uncertainty remaining, a paper was taken to Cabinet on 29th April 2021 to approve the proposal to produce a digital Christmas offer of 'Aladdin' to share online during December 2021 and an additional budget of £30,000 to deliver the production.

7.2.3 RCT Theatres' 2020 digital Christmas offer 'Once Upon a Panto' – a series of 5 stories performed by traditional pantomime characters, was once again, accessible to all via our RCT Theatres YouTube channel during Easter 2021.

7.2.4 The Take pART programme's dance and drama provision, delivered by Dimensions, continues to be delivered within our communities on a weekly basis.

7.3 CREATIVE PROVISION – ARTS AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES TEAM

7.3.1 The Arts and Creative Industries Team continue to offer opportunities for children and young people via the Families First commissioned Youth Arts and SONIG Youth Music Industries programmes, Forte (funded by the Arts Council of Wales and the PRS Foundation), and Beacons (funded by Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government's Creative Wales).

7.3.2 Provision continues to be provided online with plans being made to offer some face-to-face activity safely and within the guidelines.

7.3.3 The 'Search for a Rainbow' project culminates in an exhibition of the young people's work at The Worker's Gallery in Ynyshir from 10th to 26th June 2021. This project saw local high-profile artists Tea2Sugars challenge young artists to create their own 'rainbow' in the midst of the pandemic – through the medium of graffiti.

7.3.4 The team collaborated with Sports RCT to deliver the 'Capture the Spring in Your Step' Smartphone Photography challenge in celebration of Walking Month during May 2021. The project aimed to encourage our communities to go outdoors and walk, capture the sights on their smartphone camera and submit online with a chance of having the photograph published.

7.3.5 Arts will be the focus of enrichment activity as part of the Council's School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) to be delivered at school settings across RCT during the summer holidays for key worker children and those identified as vulnerable within our communities.

7.3.6 The Engaging Libraries Fake News project, in collaboration with Liverpool University and funded by Carnegie UK, is being delivered by the Library and Arts Services' Teams. Artist/researcher and filmmaker duo Mud and Thunder are engaging with our communities to capture their experiences of fake news.

7.4 STAFF

- 7.4.1 All staff who were either redeployed to Test, Track and Protect and to the Mass Testing provision have returned to their substantive posts within the service.
- 7.4.2 We welcomed our Weston Jerwood Creative Bursary Fellow in the role of Assistant Creative Producer to the team on 1st June 2021. This year-long post will support the individual to develop knowledge and skills in working within the Arts Service and the communities it serves. As part of the Fellowship, the individual will also be participating in the Weston Jerwood Learning Programme and be assigned a mentor by the organisation.
- 7.4.3 We have been successful in establishing a post as part of the Council's Graduate Scheme and will be interviewing for a Graduate Community Engagement Officer to join the team in early July. This post will focus on Treorchy and engaging with the community in the development of a community hub focused on arts and culture between ourselves and the Library Service.

7.5 FUNDING

- 7.5.1 RCT Theatres continue to be an Arts Portfolio Wales client and will receive £152,000 revenue funding as a contribution towards its activity during 2021/22.
- 7.5.2 The Arts & Creative Industries Team have once again been commissioned by Families First to deliver its Youth Arts and SONIG Youth Music Industry programme for 2021/22 and will receive £94,000 revenue funding.
- 7.5.3 The Welsh Government's Freelancer Fund reopened in May 2021 enabling freelancers to apply for a further £2,500 of grant support. Administered by the Arts Service and supported by ICT and Finance colleagues, RCT have received 81 applications which are currently being assessed.

8. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS

8.1 ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES: CONNECT AND FLOURISH

- 8.1.1 RCT Arts Service are partnered with a number of organisations in the delivery of successful Arts Council of Wales Connect & Flourish applications:
- 'Torri'r Ffinniau | Breaking the Box' – led by Taking Flight this project will build a network of inclusive, accessible venues in Wales that are

confident & supported in welcoming diverse artists, backstage crew & administrators as well as audiences. There will be training & support for the emerging deaf & disabled theatre workforce & in building future roles for deaf & disabled creatives at Wales' venues.

- 'Where We Begin | Dechrau'r Daith' – led by Flossy and Boo, this is a collaboration with RCT Arts Service and Awen Cultural Trust to connect young people, venues and family audiences with freelance artists, exploring the barriers that families and young people face in experiencing the arts. Partners include Chapter Arts Centre, Grange Pavilion and Elan Isaacs. This is an important initiative with the aim of engaging targeted audiences more widely and reach those who are currently disengaged for a variety of reasons, and is set across 2 years.
- 'Together We Create/Creu Gyda'n Gilydd' – led by National Dance Company Wales, this is an artist led project based in Penrhys, with much of the groundwork in place being led by artist Matteo Marfoggia. Co-creation is central to the activity, with a strong mix of agencies operating at cultural and social levels, including Creative Lives (formally Voluntary Arts Wales), Sparc: Valleys Kids, Trivallis Housing Association, Tempo Time Credits and Digital Communities Wales.
- Make it! – led by emerging artists in RCT and hosted by Valleys Kids. This two-year proposal looks to create an emerging artist network and ecology where RCT is a place to sustain an arts career and work. The shared objectives are strong, built on extensive collaborative partnerships responding to evidence of need of younger emerging artists in RCT aged 18-30, at the early stage of their career. Five development stages are set to encourage innovation, continuous learning and development for both the emerging artists and all partners involved.

8.2 CREATIVE PONTYPRIDD

8.2.1 It is an exciting time for Pontypridd. Alongside significant investment dedicated to its transport infrastructure and town centre regeneration, there are major building developments including:

- The redevelopment of the YMCA into a community facility run by Artis Community on behalf of Pontypridd YMCA;
- The transfer of the Muni Arts Centre to Awen Cultural Trust and investment planned for its refurbishment;
- Ambitious plans for the future of Clwb y Bont;
- Establishment of the library/leisure hub at Llys Cadwyn;
- Investment in Ynysangharad War Memorial Park;

- Redevelopment of Pontypridd Museum being undertaken by Pontypridd Town Council.

8.2.2 Pontypridd is highlighted as a significant town within the Capital City Region. We have a unique opportunity to harness these assets alongside well established facilities to develop a cultural quarter that will not only serve the local community but the wider communities across RCT and SE Wales.

8.2.3 An inaugural meeting of Creative Pontypridd took place on 29th March 2021 with representation from cultural organisations in Pontypridd. This inaugural meeting discussed the draft Terms of Reference and a further meeting will be held in late June to agree a way forward for the group.

8.3 NATIONAL HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

8.3.1 RCT has been identified as a priority area within the National Heritage Lottery's Strategic Funding Framework 2019–2024.

8.3.2 The successful application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund has secured £1.4 million to restore and enhance Ynysangharad War Memorial Park Pontypridd (YWMP) and connect local people, communities and visitors with its heritage. The Bandstand, Sunken Garden, Mock Rock Outcrop and toilet block will be restored and improvements made to the surrounding woodland, shrubbery and pathways. A Training Centre – Canolfan Calon Taf - will provide educational and recreational activities for the local community led by the Council's Adult Education Service. A Centre Co-ordinator post will be advertised shortly – the post will also be responsible for developing with partners the programme of activities at the Bandstand.

8.4 THE NATIONAL EISTEDDFOD

8.4.1 The National Eisteddfod will be hosted by Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2024 following the postponement of its 2020 and 2021 Eisteddfod in Ceredigion.

8.4.2 The National Eisteddfod have successfully applied to the National Heritage Lottery Fund to support its community engagement work in RCT, working with its team to develop a series of activities and pilot events, co-create a strategy with local people, and create a Community Forum in RCT to advise on their plans and help them identify local opportunities to target resources and work.

9. TAKING THE PULSE

9.1 ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES

9.1.1 During Autumn 2021, the Arts Council of Wales will commence its Investment Review of its Arts Portfolio Wales clients. To be considered as a Portfolio member from April 2023 onwards RCT Arts Service will be required to apply.

9.1.2 The Arts Council of Wales have appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, Sian Tomos, who is currently the Director of Arts Development at the Arts Council of Wales. Sian will commence in post September.

9.2 WELSH GOVERNMENT

9.2.1 The Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales are developing a 'Cultural Contract' which is designed to encourage organisations to transform the future reach and impact of their activities, improve the diversity of their boards and workforce, provide new opportunities for freelance artists, commit to fair rates of pay, and improve the environmental impact of what they do. The cultural contract is designed to ensure that, as organisations adapt to new ways of working, public investment is deployed with a cultural and social purpose.

9.2.2 The Welsh Government are developing a Public Sector Freelancer Pledge and recognise that the Culture Recovery Fund (CRF), while specifically designed to support the culture and creative sectors through the COVID-19 pandemic, also provided an opportunity to design a new approach to the way in which the public sector works with the freelance community.

9.2.3 The Public Sector Freelancer Pledge Working Group has representation from the freelance sector, trade unions, Arts Council of Wales, Office of the Future Generations and local authority.

9.2.4 The Public Sector Freelancer Pledge aims to seek commitment from and opportunity for public sector bodies and the freelance sector to match project and programme opportunities delivered by the public sector with the required skillsets within the freelance community.

9.3 RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

9.3.1 The Council have published its new Corporate Plan 'Making A Difference 2020-2024' focusing on the following three priorities:

- Ensuring People: are independent, healthy and successful;
- Creating Places: where people are proud to live, work and play;
- Enabling Prosperity: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

9.4 RCT ARTS SERVICE

- 9.4.1 As a public arts service we need to consider the new context in which we are working in and the impact of Covid on our staff, communities and the creative sector. As such, it was noted in our report given to members in January that 2021 will be a year in which we pause to review what and how we do things and ensure that the service meets identified needs.
- 9.4.2 We continue our journey of organisational development as a host within the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursary programme and led by 'People make it work' which has provided us with the opportunity to reflect, learn and share knowledge with other hosts across the UK.
- 9.4.3 Following on from our participation in the Arts Council of Wales funded 'Designing Public Value with Purpose' programme, we will shortly be working again with Lisa Baxter of The Experience Business to consider our next steps in relation to service priorities and delivery, and to support us in 'resetting the dial'.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 10.1 No consultation exercise has been required.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 11.1 There are no financial implications aligned to the recommendations in this report.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 12.1 There are no legal implications aligned to the recommendations in this report.

13. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 13.1 The Arts Service's offer continues to support the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities.
- 13.2 Our focus going forward will enable us to more effectively contribute to the seven national wellbeing goals, particularly:
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language;
 - A prosperous Wales;
 - A healthier Wales;
 - A Wales of cohesive communities.

13.3 The service provision and way of working is consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – understanding our public value and relevance enables us to gain support for a long-term and sustainable arts and creative industries provision within the County Borough.
- Prevention – by understanding our operating context, communities' needs, concerns, opportunities, and aspiration we can provide engagement and participation opportunities that address needs identified.
- Integrated – understanding our public value and relevance will enable us to contribute more effectively to a range of local, regional, and national strategic priorities, in an integrated and coherent way.
- Collaboration – understanding our public value and relevance will enable us to identify stakeholders (locally, regionally, and nationally), whose values align with ours and with whom we can work in partnership to meet our communities' needs.
- Involvement – exploring the communities' needs and exploring how the service can support through creative conversations, co-creation, collaboration, and professional networks.

14. CONCLUSION

14.1 This report updates members of the Steering Group on the RCT Arts Service's work programme undertaken from January 2021 to date.

14.2 RCT Theatres remain closed to the public with capital and ICT improvement plans in process.

14.3 The Take pART participatory offer continues to be provided at venues within the community.

14.4 The Arts and Creative Industries Team have continued to support children and young people through online provision across a variety of art forms.

14.5 The Arts Service are partnering with Taking Flight, Flossy and Boo, Valleys Kids and National Dance Company Wales in the delivery of four Connect and Flourish projects within RCT.

14.6 The Arts Service will be considering its priorities going forward and understanding its operating context within the Council and the Arts and Cultural Sector within Wales.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP

21st JUNE 2021

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER
FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES, WELLBEING AND CULTURAL
SERVICES, COUNCILLOR, RHYS LEWIS**

**AN UPDATE ON THE RCT ARTS SERVICE'S WORK PROGRAMME
(JANUARY – JUNE 2021)**

Background Papers - None

Officer to contact: Caroline O'Neill – Strategic Arts & Culture Manager

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