

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP

29TH OCTOBER 2019

UPDATE ON RCT THEATRES PROGRESS ON THE ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES DESIGNING PUBLIC VALUE WITH PURPOSE PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES, IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES, WELL-BEING AND CULTURAL SERVICES, CLLR. RHYS LEWIS

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members of the steering group on RCT Theatres engagement with the Arts Council of Wales Designing Public Value with Purpose programme, their findings and next steps.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report regarding the programme and RCT Theatres findings and next steps
- 2.2 Consider whether they would like any further information.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the members are updated on the programme and RCT Theatres next steps.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Designing Public Value with Purpose is a 7 month programme commissioned by Arts Council of Wales and developed and delivered by The Experience Business for three of its Arts Portfolio Wales performing arts venues.
- 4.2 Widening engagement is one of the ACW's three corporate priorities outlined within its new corporate plan, 'For the Benefit of All'.

- 4.3 In the context of venues, engagement is defined as having relevant, meaningful, positively impactful interactions between arts venues and the public that it serves, with an acknowledgment that it may not result in arts attendances.
- 4.4 Venues wanting to establish a more meaningful and valued role in their towns and communities through developing a public value offer, deepening engagement with the publics served and building the case for investment in engagement initiatives were asked to submit an expression of interest in March 2019.
- 4.5 Following submission of an expression of interest, RCT Theatres, Theatr Felinfach in Lampeter and Canolfan Ucheldre in Holyhead were the three venues chosen to participate in the programme.

5. RCT THEATRES EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

- 5.1 RCT Theatres consists of the Coliseum Theatre in Aberdare and the Park & Dare Theatre in Treorchy. The theatres serve their local communities and beyond, reaching audiences and participants from across the County Borough and the South Wales valleys.
- 5.2 Recent MOSAIC and Audience Finder research indicates that the Coliseum Theatre has a more engaged catchment within a 20 minute drive time, with almost a third within the area having a medium to high engagement level with the arts. In contrast, the Park and Dare Theatre's catchment area shows that 85% have a low level of arts engagement. Therefore, a different approach to arts engagement is required at the Park & Dare Theatre, particularly more hand-holding, taking part and targeted involvement early on.
- 5.3 The Park and Dare Theatre is ideally positioned within the town, opposite the library and a stone's throw from the railway station to fully contribute to the wellbeing of its local communities and enhance the resilience of the people living within them.
- 5.4 We are currently working on the development of a new Black Box studio space within the Park & Dare which will enable us to programme small scale work and enable our associate and resident artists to develop their practice and work in collaboration with our communities.
- 5.5 We have undertaken some desktop research into the households around the theatre using MOSAIC and Audience Finder. This has shown us that 80% of these households are categorised by five Mosaic types and that all five types are categorised as having a low engagement with the arts. We know that we will need to adopt a non-

traditional approach to audience engagement to make the new space successful.

- 5.6 With the development of Community Hubs across Rhondda Cynon Taf, RCT Theatres are advocating for the Park & Dare Theatre's location within the town centre and adjacent to Treorchy Library as an opportunity to explore its potential as a Cultural Community Hub. As each Community Hub will support a neighbourhood network with local residents, businesses and services where there is ongoing dialogue between the community and public services, it affords an opportunity for us to enhance community engagement which is central to the Community Hub approach. The approach's expected outcomes are to connect communities, enable people to fulfil their potential; maximise people's physical and mental well-being; provide better, joined-up, cost-effective and accessible public services; promote and protect communities culture and heritage.

6. WORKSHOP 1: RE-VISITING PUBLIC VALUE

- 6.1 During June 2019, stakeholders were invited to participate in a two-day workshop facilitated by The Experience Business. Stakeholders included:

- Service staff;
- Cabinet Member;
- Elected Member;
- Service Director;
- Treorchy Library staff;
- Regeneration Officer;
- Communities 4 Work staff;
- Youth Engagement and Participation Service staff;
- Third sector organisation representatives and artists.

- 6.2 Public value was defined by The Experience Business as: “enriching and contributing to quality of life by addressing the identified needs, concerns, opportunities and aspiration of the people and communities you serve”.

- 6.3 The exercises during the workshop enabled us to explore:

- Trends, strategies and agendas in our operating context and their impact on the people and community of Treorchy;
- Explore public values informed by these;
- Consider the impacts of these values;
- Identify potential partners / stakeholders whose values and goals align with ours.

6.4 Following this, a series of assignments were set for consolidating the outputs from the workshop and to be shared at a Peer Learning day in September 2019.

7. **LEARNING TO DATE**

7.1 Through the desktop research undertaken, we have a better understanding of our operating context within Treorchy. This includes demographic, social, economic, cultural and political influences.

7.2 Unexpectedly, research highlighted that Treorchy's population is evenly spread in terms of age group.

7.3 98.3% of people living in Treorchy are White British, with 91% born in Wales, resulting in an area of monoculture.

7.4 MOSAIC data highlighted that of the six main mosaic groups residing in Treorchy, all have low incomes.

7.5 The Community Insights data highlighted that although there is a high satisfaction with the local area as a place to live, there is a low sense of belonging to the local area and a low strength of local social relationships.

7.6 The social and human impact of these many factors is a community that is:

- Entrepreneurial in spirit, with a high-street positioned as one of the top three in Wales, yet a community that is careful and safe in their choices;
- An affordable place to live and attractive to commuters;
- Home to close social groups and strong familial networks, yet limited in their connections to the community as a whole;
- Incomers and young people don't have a connection to Treorchy's history or established community groups;

7.7 In response, our values have been defined as:

- **Creativity** – meaning that we nurture, inspire, discover and challenge each other;
- **Rootedness** – meaning that we celebrate, listen, share and develop with our community;
- **Calon** – meaning we are non-judgemental, accessible, welcoming and hospitable to all;
- **Connectedness** – meaning that we are a Change Maker, a Civic Agent, sharing our networks, involving and connecting with our community;

- **Joy** – meaning that we entertain, offer escapism, joy and celebration.

7.8 We uniquely bring the following to Treorchy:

- Artistic knowledge and expertise;
- Connections and networks;
- Creative spaces in the heart of Treorchy;
- Creative opportunities;
- Joy and entertainment;
- Champions of Treorchy.

8. WORKSHOP 2: DESIGNING PUBLIC VALUE WITH PURPOSE

8.1 In preparation for the next workshop we are developing a Theory of Change, considering the context for change, the desired results of the change, how the change will be effected and what assumptions are made to support the change.

8.2 The workshop will focus on developing new public engagement initiatives based on the Theory of Change and identifying key prototypes to develop into a Theory of Action.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

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

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 Understanding our public value enables us to contribute more effectively to the Council's corporate priorities by acknowledging our

operating context and recognising the identified needs, concerns, opportunities and aspiration of the people and communities we serve.

13.2 The outcomes of the programme 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 programme and our involvement 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 enables us to gain support for a long-term and sustainable arts and creative industries provision within the County Borough;
- Prevention – by understanding our community's needs, concerns, opportunities and aspiration we can provide engagement and participation opportunities that address the early intervention and prevention agenda;
- Integrated – understanding our public value 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 will enable us to identify stakeholders (locally, regionally and nationally), whose values align with ours and with whom we can work in partnership to achieve our goals.
- Involvement – exploring our public value through consultation, feedback, advisory groups and professional networks.

14. CONCLUSION

14.1 This report updates members of the steering group on RCT Theatres engagement with the Arts Council of Wales Designing Public Value with Purpose programme, their findings and next steps.

14.2 Participation in the programme has enabled us to understand our operating context within Treorchy and determine five core values for RCT Theatre's Park & Dare Theatre:

- Creativity;
- Rootedness;
- Calon;
- Connectedness;
- Joy.

14.3 The next steps are to determine the Theory of Change and develop public engagement initiatives into a Theory of Action.