

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STRATEGIC CULTURE AND ARTS STEERING GROUP**

**16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2023**

**REPORT ON THE EXTERNAL FUNDING ACCESSED BY THE ARTS SERVICE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES, COUNCILLOR BOB HARRIS**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group on external funding accessed by the Arts Service during 23/24 and for future years in respect of the Arts Council Wales and Levelling Up funding.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- 2.1 Consider the contents of the report and comment on the information provided.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 This report provides an opportunity for the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group to comment on the external funding accessed by the Arts Service.

**4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 RCT Arts Service manages RCT Theatres, comprising of the Park & Dare Theatre, Treorchy and the Coliseum, Aberdare; Gartholwg Lifelong Learning Centre, ensuring that investment in the arts inspires and connects our communities; unlocks, nurtures, and celebrates latent creative talent; ignites pride in and a sense of belonging to Rhondda Cynon Taf for now and future generations.
- 4.2 The service's Youth Arts & SONIG Youth Music Industry team develop targeted arts interventions with young people, supporting them to

improve their personal resilience and make positive lifestyle choices through engaging in arts projects.

- 4.3 The service also hosts the Beacons project that works across Wales establishing, nurturing, and maintaining a vibrant and inclusive music sector through creating transformative opportunities for every young person, irrespective of their backgrounds.
- 4.4 The service is working in partnership with University of South Wales to pilot the development of a Creative Industries Cluster Hub that aims to support creative freelancers and companies to develop their business skills, network with others in the sector, and take advantage of opportunities within the Cardiff Capital City Region.
- 4.5 The Arts Service has been successful in accessing external funds from a range of sources including Arts Council of Wales, Levelling Up, Families First, Creative Wales and Cardiff University, to support the delivery of projects across the range of its activities.

## **5. SOURCES OF EXTERNAL FUNDING**

### **5.1 Arts Council of Wales**

- 5.1.1 The Arts Council of Wales is the country's official public body for funding and developing the arts.
- 5.1.2 The Arts Council undertook an investment review this calendar year and announced the outcomes of the review in September, offering multi-year funding agreements to 81 organisations across Wales a total of £29.6 million.
- 5.1.3 RCT Arts Service, which incorporates RCT Theatres, has received a conditional offer of £153,065 per year (for the next 3 years) subject to the conclusion of the Arts Council Wales' investment review appeals process and confirmation of their own Welsh Government funding. The new funding agreement will be in place by the end of March for funding to commence April 2024.
- 5.1.4 Applications for the Investment Review were assessed against six principles, closely aligned with the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and designed to reflect aspects of the sector that need positive action:

- Creativity
- Widening Engagement
- Welsh Language
- Climate Justice
- Nurturing Talent
- Transformation

They were also assessed across five balancing factors that aimed to take a Wales-wide view of the sector and the issues and gaps in arts funding that require addressing:

- Serving communities across Wales
- A wide range of artforms and creative opportunities
- Underfunded and unheard voices
- Public Value
- The size and shape of applicant organisations

5.1.5 Commenting on the service's application to the investment review, the Arts Council of Wales indicate that RCT Theatres have presented a good case for multi-year funding and in terms of balancing factors, particularly serving communities, they are a priority for support. However, there is more development needed particularly in widening engagement and in their work with ethnically and culturally diverse communities. The Arts Council of Wales would like to see clear plans developed that will support a clear fair pay policy, and support for staff and freelancers to access Welsh Language learning opportunities.

5.1.6 The Arts Service and Arts Council Wales will draw up a funding agreement before April 2024 to jointly agree key priority areas for development and actions required.

## **5.2 Levelling Up**

5.2.1 The service has been awarded at total of £666,300 from the UK Government Levelling Up Fund for improving facilities at the Coliseum and Park & Dare theatres and increasing the quantity of day-time events at the Park & Dare theatre.

5.2.2 At the Coliseum theatre £156,300 to replace the seats and carpet in the auditorium, improving customer comfort and accessibility.

5.2.3 At the Park & Dare there are plans to use £440,000 to redesign the Dyfodwg Street entrance, the foyer and box office, and the entrance to Stiwdio 1. The works are scheduled to take place between January and March 2024.

5.2.4 The Park & Dare theatre has £70k of revenue funding over the two financial years, 2023 & 2024 to develop a day-time activity programme and increase the number of events held at the Park & Dare theatre.

5.2.5 The service continues to develop capital projects so that it can take advantage of additional funding opportunities as and when they become available.

### **5.3 Families First**

5.3.1 The Youth Arts & SONIG Youth Music Industry team have been commissioned and awarded £94,350 of Families First funding this year by the Resilient Families Service, to work with children and young people aged up to 25 residing in RCT who are vulnerable, disengaged or at risk of disengaging, who have an interest in the arts and creative industries.

5.3.2 The specific objectives of the commission are to:

- Support children and young people to improve their emotional well-being and build their resilience through participation in arts, and creative activities.
- Empower children and young people to raise their aspirations and support them to flourish and realise their full potential.
- Support children and young people to make healthy, informed decisions and reduce negative behaviours.
- Contribute towards the outcomes of the new Families First Performance Framework, and the key priorities of the Resilient Families Programme (RFP).

5.3.3 The Youth Arts & SONIG Youth Music Industry team engage with young people through a number of projects including Wildlife Photography, Fortitude through Music, Project Prosper and Hot Jam Rock School.

5.3.4 The service is hopeful of maintaining Families First funding next year so that it can continue to support vulnerable young people aged between 8 and 25 to make positive lifestyle choices and develop their personal resilience through the arts.

### **5.4 Creative Wales**

5.4.1 The service's Beacons project team has this year drawn down £116,119 in revenue funding from Creative Wales, a Welsh Government Agency set up to support the Creative Industries, to work across Wales establishing, nurturing, and maintaining a vibrant and inclusive music sector.

5.4.2 The Beacons project team has also drawn down £130,000 in project funding from Creative Wales to deliver a range of interventions such as 'Resonant' which empowers people (18+) of marginalised genders to work behind the scenes in the Welsh music industry, and Amlen which is a Research & Development project aiming to break down barriers for

young Welsh-Language speakers (18-25) pursuing careers in the music industry.

- 5.4.3 A successful application to the Arts Council of Wales for a total of £90,000, and to the Performing Rights Society Foundation for £20,000, has also been received for the delivery of the Forte project which annually delivers a ground-breaking talent development model that supports and celebrates 10 young music creators aged between 16 and 28 in Wales.
- 5.4.4 Beacons project workers have recently been working in partnership with the Future Generations Commissioner's office to establish priorities for the Future Generations Commissioner's office team in terms of areas of focus for the second Commissioner's term,
- 5.4.5 The Beacons team is working towards the development of a Community Interest Company and is in discussion with Creative Wales in relation to a multi-year funding agreement.

## **5.5 Cardiff University**

- 5.5.1 This year, the service has been taking part in a pilot Creative Industries Cluster Hub project in partnership with University of South Wales and a successful grant application to Cardiff University for £50,000 was made.
- 5.5.2 Cardiff University was the lead applicant to Arts and Humanities Research Council ("**Funder**") for a research project called "Clwstwr Creadigol: Research and Development for a high performing creative cluster in Wales". The Funder, in partnership with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport granted additional funding to the University to carry out the 'Creative Industries Culture Hubs' pilot project, which aims to extend the benefits and impact of the Clwstwr project more equitably across the Cardiff Capital City Region.
- 5.5.3 The key objectives of the pilot project are to build resilience and social capital for creative businesses and individuals by facilitating collaboration, partnership working and resource sharing, and to extend the legacy of Cardiff University's Creative Economy Unit's current and previous work by driving further creative industries growth across the region.
- 5.5.4 The pilot project is due to end in December 2023, although some activities will continue in the period January to March 2024 whilst Cardiff University seek additional funding to support the Creative Industries across the Cardiff Capital City Region.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 No consultation exercise has been required.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

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

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

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

## **10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

10.1 As the projects are funded by Arts Council Wales, UK Government and Welsh Government we contribute to the delivery of Welsh Government priorities and the Council's corporate priorities, 'Economy', 'People' and 'Place'.

10.2 The Arts Service contributes 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.

10.3 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 – enabling us to co-create work, engage with our communities and build partnerships that seek to achieve a more resilient 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, participation and performance opportunities that address the early intervention and prevention agenda;
- Integrated – through community engagement work with key partners and contributing more effectively to a range of local, regional and national strategic priorities in an integrated and coherent way;

- Collaboration – through creating and working with our communities in collaboration with key artists and arts organisations whose values align with ours and with whom we can work in partnership to achieve our goals;
- Involvement – developing our creativity and community engagement through consultation, feedback, advisory groups and professional networks.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 This report informs members of the Strategic Culture and Arts Steering Group of the external funding in excess of £1.28M accessed by the Arts Service during the 2023/2024 financial year, and the ways in which it supports the delivery of national, local and service objectives.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

#### **AS AMENDED BY**

### **THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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**Report on External Funding Accessed by the Arts Service**

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