

ARTRIX OUTREACH WORK PROVISION TASK GROUP



March 2014



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MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP

Councillor Sean Shannon (Chairman)
Councillor Richard Deeming
Councillor Stuart Dudley
Councillor Peter McDonald
Councillor Luke Mallett
Councillor Chris Scurrall
Councillor Elaine Shannon
Councillor Peter Whittaker

SUPPORTING OFFICER DETAILS

Amanda Scarce – Democratic Services Officer
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Foreword from the Chairman

The Artrix Centre has, over a relatively short time become a real success story. No longer just a Bromsgrove - North Worcestershire centre for the arts and entertainment, the Artrix now has a national presence hosting prestigious exhibitions, international musicians and the very best from the UK comedy circuit.

Using a theatrical turn of phrase "behind the scenes" another much lesser known success has been developing. Our Task Group Members have been surprised at the volume of outreach provision at Artrix and offsite across North Worcestershire. The professionalism of Artrix staff delivering quality and a great diversity of outreach projects has impressed Task Group Members.

Production of this report has resulted from a comprehensive examination of the outreach projects provided at Artrix. The Task Group have conducted interviews and discussions with Trustees, Chair, Artistic Director, Outreach and Education Co-ordinator from Artrix, together with the Council's Arts and Events Manager, Arts Developments and Officer and The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services.

**Councillor Sean Shannon
Chairman of the Artrix Outreach Provision Task Group**

Summary of Recommendations

After consideration of the evidence available and interviewing witnesses the Task Group have proposed the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1
(a) The inclusion of a set of clear performance indicators in respect of outreach work be included within the new Service Level Agreement; and (b) A proportion of the funding provided by the Council to be ring fenced for Outreach work.
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.
Resource Implications: There would be a small amount of Officer time needed to carry out the work on the Service Level Agreement.

Recommendation 2
That the Bromsgrove District Council logo be more prominent in Artrix promotional literature.
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.
Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.

Recommendation 3
<p>(a) In order to compliment the formal reporting of performance indicators to Officers that the Council receives a quarterly informal (narrative and image based) report from the Artrix detailing the events that have taken place together with the number of those attending.</p> <p>(b) Those Member representatives on the Operating Trust report back regularly to full Council.</p>
<p>Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>
<p>Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>

Recommendation 4
<p>The Artrix Centre to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) liaise with Members in respect of specific activities within their ward; and b) explore ways in which it could raise awareness of its activities in all areas within the District. (For example through Parish Council, school and other notice boards throughout the District.)
<p>Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>
<p>Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>

Recommendation 5
<p>The Artrix Centre to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) ensure that there is a defined profile for the target participants/audience that the Outreach Provision is provided for; (b) ensure that participation in such activities is not prohibitive due to cost (for example, seek funding for bursaries where possible); and (c) make activities available through out the main school holidays, particularly during the Easter and summer breaks.
<p>Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>
<p>Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>

Recommendation 6
<p>An insert, prepared by the Artrix, to be included within Together Bromsgrove detailing outreach activities at the Artrix.</p>
<p>Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>
<p>Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>

Recommendation 7
<p>The main programme brochure which is produced by the Artrix to be used to promote its outreach work.</p>
<p>Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>
<p>Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.</p>

Recommendation 8
That the Artrix promote all the facilities available to those with a disability.
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.
Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.

Recommendation 9
That the Artrix consider contacting Worcestershire County Council with a view to improving the signage within the Railway Station and Town Centre areas.
Financial Implications: There are no financial implications for Bromsgrove District Council.
Resource Implications: There are no resource implications for Bromsgrove District Council.

Background Information

A topic proposal completed by Councillor Peter McDonald was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 15th July 2013.

Councillor McDonald's proposal was keen to ensure that the Outreach Provision was successful and marketed in such a way as it reached those in the community that needed it most and may be excluded. It was also important to ensure that as the Council made a considerable contribution to the funding of the Artrix that it received value for money.

Following discussion it was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board that a Task Group would be established to scrutinise the Artrix Outreach Provision and that Councillor Sean Shannon would be appointed Chairman.

At the Board meeting held on 16th September 2013 members agreed both the Membership of the Task Group and its Terms of Reference and set a timescale for completion of the work of within 6 months of the date of its first meeting.

Due to workload and annual leave (both Members and Officers) there was a delay in the commencement of the investigation and the first meeting did not take place until 13th November 2013 when the terms of reference and work planning were discussed. Since that date the Task Group has held a further 8 meetings where it has considered evidence from a number of internal and external witnesses. The Task Group has also considered written evidence from a number of sources and was provided with detailed information from the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator at the Artrix Centre.

Chapter 1

Funding from Bromsgrove District Council

At one of the first meetings of the Task Group Members were provided with a copy of the current service level agreement between the Council and the Artrix Centre, together with background information to support this and the role which both the Council and NEW College played in the setting up of the Artrix Centre. Members were keen that the Council's support of and joint working with the Artrix Centre be acknowledged and promoted within the community as much as possible.

During discussions with officers the Task Group were informed that the current agreement with the Artrix Centre was due to expire in April 2015. This had been a 10 year agreement and stipulated that the Council should inform the Artrix Centre at year 8 of any changes to the funding the Council wished to make from April 2015. This original funding stream had been £120k per annum. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services informed Members that, following discussions with the Artrix and due to budget pressures the Council had decided to reduce this to £60k from April 2015. As one of the main areas which had been included within the original topic proposal form completed by Councillor McDonald was to ensure that the Council was receiving value for money from the funding which it provided to the Artrix Centre the Task Group was keen to ensure that the new service level agreement, which would be for 3 years, ensured that the outreach work was carried on and given the importance it deserved. It was however acknowledged that currently the funding was not allocated to specific areas of work, but was merely a contribution to the overall running and programme of the Artrix Centre. It was suggested that less than 0.1% actually filtered down to the role of the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator and would merely be a contribution towards her salary.

At a very early stage of its investigation the Task Group had been keen to receive information which covered current and previous years and which provided them with the number of activities which had taken place, the number of people attending together with any charge that was made and feedback from those attending, to ensure that the activities had been worthwhile. The Task Group were provided with data covering the Artrix activities and events from 2010 and including Outreach work from 2012 when the post of Education and Outreach Co-ordinator was created, together with information on the activities covered by the current Service Level Agreement between the Council and the Artrix. This included actual and target data. The Education and Outreach Co-ordinator also provided information on how each activity was evaluated.

Members were informed that the relationship between the Council and the Artrix was managed on a day to day level by the Arts Manager, who met regularly with the Arts Director at the Artrix and with the Head of Service meeting with the Operating Trust approximately 6 monthly. It was stressed to

Members that this was very much an “arms length” role which the Council played to only ensuring that the services detailed in the current SLA were met wherever possible. Members anticipated that this would continue with the new service level agreement, which would be in place from April 2015.

From the information which the Task Group received it was agreed that the outreach provision was an important service provided by the Artrix Centre and one which not only needed to be maintained, but monitored to ensure that those residents which needed the service were able to access it. It was therefore pertinent that such work should be included within any service level agreement set up between the Council and the Artrix Centre in respect of the revised funding stream going forward.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 1

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) The inclusion of a set of clear performance indicators in respect of outreach work be included within the new Service Level Agreement; and(b) A proportion of the funding provided by the Council be ring fenced for Outreach work. |
|--|

Recommendation 2

That the Bromsgrove District Council logo be more prominent in Artrix promotional literature.

Chapter 2

Raising Awareness of Outreach Work with Councillors

From the initial interviews with both officers and the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator at the Artrix Centre it was apparent to Councillors that the work of the Artrix Centre and the data provided under the service level agreement was not made readily available to Councillors or considered at any formal meeting. As the investigation progressed it was clear to Members that there were some excellent activities, which were well attended taking place throughout the District.

Whilst interviewing the Chairman of the Operating Trust Members discussed this and she herself said she was grateful to be given an opportunity to talk about and promote the work which was being carried out. She also readily admitted that the Artrix Centre did not work as closely with Councillors as they would like and was happy to provide them with regular updates if the opportunity arose and would be grateful for the opportunity to build upon the relationship that was already in place with officers and the Members who had places on both the Operating and Holding Trusts. The Chairman was keen to promote the excellent work which was carried out as were the Councillors keen to ensure that the contribution made by the Council through its funding was acknowledged.

Whilst interviewing the Chairman of the Operating Trust Members highlighted areas within the Artrix Annual Report and Accounts, where it was felt improvement could be made. Whilst it was acknowledged that this document was a legal requirement and did include a small amount of data, the Chairman acknowledged that this could be used as an opportunity to review the format of the document for future years in order to make it both more user friendly and provide both the statutory requirements and further useful information.

From the data which had been provided in respect of attendance and activities it was clear to Members of the Task Group that there were activities carried out within their own Wards and which they were not aware of. The Task Group agreed that it would be useful for all Members to have the data on a regular basis and also for them to be informed, wherever possible of activities which were taking place within their Ward. It was acknowledged that this may be difficult, but it was also argued that not only may Councillors be aware of families within their area who would benefit from the activities and they could raise awareness of these with them, but also where there was perhaps an issue with cost, Councillors may be able to assist with finding suitable funding or be in a better position to negotiate on behalf of a family with the Artrix Centre.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 3

- (a) In order to compliment the formal reporting of performance indicators to Officers that the Council receives a quarterly informal (narrative and image based) report from the Artrix detailing the events that have taken place together with the number of those attending.
- (b) Those Member representatives on the Operating Trust report back regularly to full Council.

Recommendation 4

The Artrix to:

- a) liaise with Members in respect of specific activities within their ward;
and
- b) explore ways in which it could raise awareness of its activities in all areas within the District. (For example through Parish Council , school and other notice boards throughout the District.)

Chapter 3

Provision of Outreach Activities

The original topic proposal completed by Councillor McDonald was clear in its key outcomes “to ensure that Outreach Provision is successful and marketed in such a way it reaches those in the community that may be excluded and plays its part in tackling anti-social behaviour”. At the initial meeting when the terms of reference and work planning were discussed, Members asked for clarification as to what exactly was covered by “outreach provision”. This was defined as activities which were arts related for groups who would not necessarily access the Artrix Centre and which were provided outside of the Centre’s core service. Members were keen to ensure that consideration was given to social inclusion and that participation in such activities was not prohibitive due to cost.

The information provided to Members covered a variety of activities, some of which were one off sessions and others which were held regularly and based at the Artrix Centre itself. These included workshops and youth theatre sessions and covered such areas as communication skills and confidence building. There was also a drama group for young people with disabilities and special needs.

During the interview with the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator it was explained her role to Members; this was as a facilitator rather than provider. She explained that all “trainers” were interviewed and visits made to see the work that those trainers carried out to ensure that it was fit for purpose; the majority were people who had already been known to the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator. Activities were assessed and feedback requested from those attending at every opportunity, if the activity provided was proved to be unsuitable or the feedback negative then the activity would be changed or not repeated. Whilst welcoming the variety of activities, Members were concerned at the cost of these and agreed that in some cases that cost would be prohibitive to those families who would actually benefit the most from them.

Members were informed by the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator that she had in the past allocated some funding of projects to a bursary scheme in order to support those who would not be able to afford some of the activities available. It was highlighted however, that this was a difficult subject to both raise with the families and promote. Members were keen for bursaries to continue to be made available and for the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator to continue to source funding wherever possible.

Members raised concern as to how the activities were funded and in particular those which had in previous years been funded through the County Councillor divisional funds. It was explained that these had been one off events and would not have taken place without those funds, so if they were withdrawn in future then there would be no overall effect on the programme of events which usually took place.

The Education and Outreach Co-ordinator informed Members that specific funding had also been received from West Mercia Police and this had also been used to fund specific projects. Members were given the opportunity to view a number of films which had been made by young people from this funding, these were part of a North Worcestershire wide project the overarching aims were to divert young people from anti-social behaviour, tackle drug and alcohol misuse and offer useful skills-based creative projects together with promoting community cohesion within areas facing challenges. Members were particularly impressed with a film called A Prisoners Journey, which was a film-making project with inmates at HMP Hewell reflecting on their own experiences, which would be used for youngsters at risk of offending as a deterrent. It was hard hitting, well put together and would have the impact needed to influence those it was aimed at in a positive manner. It was agreed by the Task Group that wherever possible, such projects should be encouraged and supported and the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator continue to seek funding from whatever sources were available.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 5
<p>The Artrix Centre to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) ensure that there is a defined profile for the target participants/audience that the Outreach Provision is provided for;b) ensure that participation in such activities is not prohibitive due to cost (for example, seek funding for bursaries where possible.); and(c) make activities available through out the main school holidays, particularly during the Easter and summer breaks.

Chapter 4

Raising Awareness of Outreach Work with Residents

Members quickly became aware that there was an abundance of activities provided by the Artrix which came under the scope of outreach work. These varied from a simple one off craft based activity or an activity within a school to the in depth pieces of work which culminated in the films which Members had been allowed to watch being produced. Some of these activities were provided free of charge and for others there was a fee. The Education and Outreach Co-ordinator had highlighted during her interview with Members that she had to ensure that the cost of the activity was covered wherever possible, unless the activity had been specifically set up and funded for example those by the West Mercia Police funding.

Members were keen that, particularly where the activities took place out in the community that every opportunity was taken to both promote the activity and ensure that those families in most need were able to both afford and access them. The Education and Outreach Co-ordinator had provided Members with details of how she promoted this work, through contacts with the schools and various other means such as a newsletter. As the audience that the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator was trying to reach was of a younger age range, social media was also used in order to reach as wide an audience as possible. Although there was limited information on the Artrix website it was acknowledged that not everyone may be able to access this and therefore Members wished to find alternative ways in which the activities could be promoted out in the community.

During the interview with the Education and Outreach Co-ordinator Members questioned the inclusion of those with a disability and it was confirmed that whilst there was activities available, it was an area where there was room for improvement and further work needed to be carried out. Currently there was a specific drama group, which had originally been funded by West Mercia Police, but had recently become self funded, which had proved difficult and had led to limited take up.

At the penultimate meeting of the Task Group it was noted that the Artrix Centre website had now created a separate webpage dedicated to Outreach which highlighted the work carried out with many groups within the local community. It was hoped that this would be expanded upon and would in future provide information in respect of up and coming events in order to encourage the community to take advantage of the activities which were available.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 6

An insert, prepared by the Artrix, to be included within Together Bromsgrove detailing outreach activities at the Artrix.

Recommendation 7

The main programme brochure which is produced by the Artrix to be used to promote its outreach work.
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NB – Recommendation 4(a) would also link in with raising awareness with Residents.

Chapter 5

General

At one of the earliest meetings of the Task Group, Members were keen to get the views of residents and arranged for a press release to be issued. This explained that the Task Group had been set up to look at how the venue was made accessible to sections of the population that might not otherwise access it, and encouraged residents to express their view or participate in the work being carried out.

Two responses were received and although these were not directly related to the terms of reference of the Task Group Members considered the views put forward and agreed that the areas raised were of sufficient concern that they should be investigated. Those areas were:

- *The difficulty of sitting comfortably in the main theatre for those who while not disabled enough to require a wheelchair space, were considerably incapacitated by arthritic or other similar conditions, particularly where there was restricted leg room. The resident went on to give details of the stepped seating being close together and the kickboard which were problematic.*
- *Whilst praising the fact that Bromsgrove had such a good venue a resident went on to say that a lot of people missed out on which was on offer because people were not aware of where it was and the lack of public transport to the venue. The resident went on to say that she felt there was a lack of signage particularly from the bus and railway station and that she was sure people would pay if there was some sort of minibus transport for those who lived further afield.*

The point in respect of the seating was raised during the interview with the Chairman of the Artrix Operating Trust. Members were informed that there was a facility whereby if a person contacted the Artrix prior to a performance a limited number of freestanding seats could be made available in specific areas of the auditorium. Members were also informed that the Artrix had received an award through the Council's Disabled Access Awards scheme. The Task Group agreed that it was important that the availability of such facilities be promoted.

Whilst discussing the facilities available for those with a disability it was noted that the Artrix showed approximately 8 English speaking films a year with subtitles for the benefit of those with hearing difficulties and there was also a hearing loop available. These facilities were mentioned in the main brochure for the Artrix but Members agreed that they could be promoted in a more prominent way to ensure that people were aware of what facilities were available.

In respect of the signage referred to by the second resident, following discussions Members agreed that, although there was signage nearer to the actual site, from conversations they had had with residents there were some who were unaware of where exactly the Artrix Centre was and had not seen signage to promote it. Members were also mindful that there would in the future be development of the Railway Station, which it was agreed, would provide a good opportunity to improve the signage, particularly as this would make Bromsgrove more accessible by train and could therefore be a form of transport which would become more readily available to potential new users of the Artrix Centre.

It was agreed that the comments received from the members of the public would be fed back to the Artrix and that a copy of the Task Group's final report would be provided for them in order for them to see that their comments had been taken on board.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 8

That the Artrix promote all the facilities available to those with a disability.
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Recommendation 9

That the Artrix consider contacting Worcestershire County Council with a view to improving the signage within the Railway Station and Town Centre areas.
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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST**



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This form is to assist Members to scope the overview and scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

- Topic: **Artrix Outreach Provision**

- Specific subject areas to be investigated:

- **The projects covered by the outreach work, including number of young people involved in each project.**

- Possible key outcomes:

(i.e. please state what Members hope to achieve through this investigation):

- **To ensure that the outreach provision is successful and reaches those within the community that may be otherwise excluded from such activities**
- **That the provision of outreach work contributes to the tackling of anti social behaviour within the District**
- **Value for money is achieved from the service**

- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence?

YES

- Which officers should be invited to give evidence?

(Please state name of officer and/or job title)

**Head of Leisure & Cultural Services
Arts Development and Events Officer**

- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence?

**Education & Outreach Worker, The Artrix Centre
Artistic Director, The Artrix Centre**

- What key documents/data/reports will be required?

Quarterly and annual performance reports

- Is it anticipated that any site visits will be required?

YES *

If so, where should members visit?

Possible visits to outreach projects.

- Should a period of public consultation form part of the exercise? **NO***

If so, on what should the public be consulted?

(Please Note: A separate press release requesting general comments/suggestions from the public may be issued in the normal way at the beginning of the investigation if deemed appropriate)

- Have other authorities carried out similar overview and scrutiny exercises?

NO*

If so, which authorities?

Not to the best of our knowledge.

- Will the investigation cross the District boundary?

YES/NO*

If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate? **NO***

If yes, please state which authorities:

Possibly as it is understood that Outreach work is carried out in both Redditch and Kidderminster – further investigation is required in respect of this.

- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group/Board whilst the Overview and Scrutiny exercise is being carried out?

NO*

If so, who and from which organisations?

- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the Overview and Scrutiny exercise?

Final report to be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Board meeting on 24th February 2014

Declarations of Interest

It was agreed by Members at the initial meeting of the Task Group that a general declaration would be included within the report advising that all Members attended performances as paying customers of the Artrix throughout the year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Task Group wishes to thank the Democratic Services Officer, Amanda Scarce for her support throughout the Task Group's investigations, together with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services and his team who attended numerous meetings.

WITNESSES

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

Internal Witnesses:

John Godwin – Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
Jonathan Cochrane – Arts and Events Manager
Huw Moseley – Arts and Events Officer

External Witnesses:

Andy Woods – Creative Director, Artrix
Dorothy Wilson – Chair of the Board of Trustees, Artrix
TC Peppercorn – Education and Outreach Co-ordinator, Artrix

Councillors:

Councillor Caroline Spencer – in her capacity as a Member Representative on the Board of Trustees, Artrix

KEY DOCUMENTS

Service Level Agreement with the Artrix
Artrix Programme Reporting Data for 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13
Artrix Outreach and Education Programme

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