

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CABINET

15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER

### THE WORKS OF ARTSCONNECT

#### REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CABINET & PUBLIC RELATIONS IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR A. CRIMMINGS

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#### 1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the works of Arts Connect.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report regarding the works of ArtsConnect.

#### 3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Members are updated on the works of ArtsConnect, a key partnership between local authority arts services in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly, and Vale of Glamorgan and recently established trusts managing arts services in the boroughs of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil and Cardiff.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 ArtsConnect is the collaboration between the arts services run by Arts Active, Cardiff; Bridgend County Borough Council through the Awen Trust; Caerphilly County Borough Council; Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust; Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and The Vale of Glamorgan Council, and is supported by the Welsh Local Government Association, Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales (ACW).
- 4.2 ArtsConnect was established in 2011 with the Arts Services in the Council's of Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, and the Vale of Glamorgan. Arts Active (Cardiff) and Caerphilly County Borough Council joined in 2014. During 2014/15 the Arts Services within Bridgend and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's were outsourced to trusts.

- 4.3 The vision of ArtsConnect is that residents and visitors to the ArtsConnect region will be creatively active and enjoy high quality and cost-effective arts and creative industry experiences.
- 4.4 The ArtsConnect partners each contribute upto £2,500 per annum towards the collaboration and sign up to a memorandum of understanding.
- 4.5 The current Memorandum of Understanding between partners runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.
- 4.6 ArtsConnect has achieved increased financial and human resource for the arts, benefitting RCT through:
- A commission worth around £2 million from Arts Council of Wales to lead on the South East and Central South Regional Arts and Education Networks, resulting in two officer posts contracted by Caerphilly CBC.
  - Reduced financial contribution rates in terms of grant applications
  - A successful second grant application to the Arts Council of Wales and first to the Performing Rights Society totalling £74k for the delivery of the Forte project (led by RCT), resulting in a number of freelance opportunities contracted by RCTCBC.
- 4.7 ArtsConnect allows for the sharing and developing of officer expertise and knowledge, benefitting RCT through the:
- Extension of the It's My Shout 'Made in Wales' project into RCT, creating opportunities for residents to participate in short films for television and screen, for a wide variety of partners from BBC Cymru Wales, S4C, UK Film Council and the Arts Council of Wales.
  - Continued professional development of officer providing advice and guidance to partners, in particular Merthyr Tydfil Leisure Trust, in its programming of cultural venues.
- 4.8 ArtsConnect partners have responded collaboratively (led by RCT) to Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government policy consultations, most recently the consultation on the proposals for National Well-being Indicators to measure the seven well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, establishing itself as a collaboration to drive forward the arts and creative industries provision in the region, providing one voice in conversation with WG, WLGA and ACW, and raising the quality and opportunity of arts and creative industries provision across the area.

## **5. DELIVERY AND SUCCESSES**

### **5.1 Forté Project**

- 5.1.1 The Forté Project, is an exciting new music development scheme hoping to uncover and support the next bright young things in music emerging from South Wales.

5.1.2 During this, its first year, The Forté Project has taken ten emerging artists from across the ArtsConnect region and enabled them to work alongside assigned industry mentors to develop their careers within the music industry.

5.1.3 The artists have benefitted from song-writing workshops, industry related seminars, sign-posted opportunities, access to rehearsal space, recording sessions, and bespoke audience development support. The artists have also had the opportunity to perform at a range of unique live opportunities throughout the year such as:

- Supporting Madness at Cyfartha Castle
- Playing at the opening of the Royal Mint
- Performing at a variety of showcase events including the Festival of Voice
- High-profile festivals such as Greenman and Swn

5.1.4 The Forté model is unlike anything else in the UK, and has now been acclaimed as a pioneering scheme dramatically affecting the music ecology in Wales. This was highlighted by Charlie Francis, esteemed record producer and master-class tutor: "I feel that the Forté Project is offering young talented people a variety of experiences and access to professional expertise and opinion that they would find very hard to come by otherwise."

## **5.2 It's My Shout**

5.2.1 The main ethos of It's My Shout is to engage people of all ages, but in particular young people, in a creative activity that can inspire and grow confidence as well as help them develop skills relevant to the film industry.

5.2.2 Now in its 14th year, It's My Shout Productions Ltd specialises in producing short films for television and screen. Every year short films are produced for its 'Made in Wales' scheme, for a wide variety of partners from BBC Cymru Wales, S4C, UK Film Council and the Arts Council of Wales, to name a few.

5.2.3 Young people are able to benefit from working alongside industry professionals to develop both hard skills such as camera, sound, animation, composing, acting, chaperoning, editing, hair & makeup, costume, set design, and soft skills which can be transferable in every aspect of their lives.

5.2.4 The films produced have been shown all over the world on: BBC Cymru Wales, ITV Wales, S4C, Channel 4, The Euro Channel (Broadcast all over the world), on BBC 'Big Screens' (across all the major U.K. Cities), at Glastonbury Festival (as part of a specialist short film screening), and at Film Festivals around Europe including;- The Celtic Film Festival and The Berlin Film Festival. The films produced have also won several BAFTA Cymru Awards.

### **5.3 Regional Arts and Education Networks**

5.3.1 The regional Arts and Education Networks are at the heart of *Creative Learning through the Arts*, the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales' five year arts and education action plan, and aim to deliver one of the major strands, 'The All-Arts and Education Offer'.

5.3.2 ArtsConnect Arts Officers co-ordinated an approach to determine a national framework for the Arts and Education Networks through liaising with Arts Officers in North and West Wales, identifying national and regional partners, linking with the Further and Higher Education sector, and involving the wider arts sector to develop the applications for the competitive tender.

5.3.3 The Regional Arts and Education Networks are drawn on the same boundaries as the existing Regional Education Consortia and work with schools, the Regional Education Consortia, local authorities and stakeholders in the education, arts, creative, cultural and heritage sectors.

5.3.4 The networks aim to increase and improve arts experiences and opportunities in schools by forging links between:

- teachers, educationalists and partners from the education sector
- arts practitioners, arts organisations and venues
- cultural and heritage organisations and venues such as museums, libraries and archives
- local authority arts providers, including music services
- higher education arts and cultural partners
- the creative industries sector

5.3.5 Director of Participation and Engagement at ACW Diane Hebb said: "We need to do as much as we can to support creative and cultural education through initiatives such as this. Better partnership working and a more strategic approach is key and we look forward to seeing the results of this vital new addition to the scheme."

## **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**

7.1 No consultation exercise has been required.

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

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

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

9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP / FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

10.1 A Creatively Active Rhondda Cynon Taf links directly to the Health and Prosperity priorities in the Corporate Plan and the Single Integrated Plan (SIP), as well as contributing to the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals of:

- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
- A prosperous Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

10.2 The purpose of ArtConnect is to support the sustainability of arts services in the region. ArtsConnect strengthens the voice of these arts services, and increases opportunities to participate in and engage with the arts, in order to encourage people to be creatively active, essential to achieving physical and mental wellbeing, skills for education, employment and training, a cultural identity, and supporting communities to come together.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

11.1 ArtsConnect enables people across the region to be creatively active by supporting arts services to collaborate in terms of participation and programming opportunities. This has increased provision available within ArtsConnect, supporting positive physical and mental wellbeing and sector skills development. ArtsConnect has created a stronger voice for conversation with WLGA, WG and ACW. Continuing to collaborate as ArtsConnect is key to demonstrating the value of the arts locally, regionally and nationally.

### **Other Information:-**

#### ***Relevant Scrutiny Committee***

Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

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