

AGENDA ITEM 14 (A)

AD HOC SCRUTINY PANEL CULTURAL PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

PUBLIC MEETING
WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH AT 4.30

DRAFT MINUTES

1. Procedural Business

A. Declaration of Substitutes

No Substitutes are permitted.

B. Declaration of interest

Councillor Melanie Davis, Councillor Rachel Fryer and Councillor Carol Theobald all declared an interest as members of the Arts Commission. Councillor Fryer also declared an interest as a music teacher.

C. Declaration of party whip

There was none.

D. Exclusion of press and public

The press and public were not excluded.

2. Chair's Communications

The Chair, Councillor Davis, welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was the first of four planned evidence sessions, including a round table session at the end. The Panel would produce a report with the conclusions at the end of the process. The Panel would be looking at the current deployment of resources, at identifying any gaps in provision, and to highlight areas of good practice.

3. Witnesses

James Dougan, Assistant Director, Children & Young People's Trust (CYPT), Julia Box, Youth Arts Development Worker, and Emma Fincham, Central Area Manager, CYPT.

Mr Dougan's team were responsible for arts development in the Youth Service in CYPT. The team were within the governance arrangements for the Youth and Connexions service. The area of cultural provision for children and young people was a very live issue but it made up a very small part of the whole service.

Ms Box outlined her work. She had been a Youth Arts Worker for 25 years and had delivered arts in youth clubs during this time. The Youth Arts Project

grew when the unitary authority was created. Since 2003 there had been more staff, all of whom were part-time Youth Arts Workers. All of these people had a background in the arts but worked directly with young people. The team tried to reach as many young people as possible who would not normally access the arts. The Brighton Youth Theatre had been running for 22-23 years and for the last 8 years had satellite groups across the city. They ran a range of projects themselves and also delivered arts projects with other organisations that did not normally use the arts. They encouraged the use of the arts as a way of building self esteem – it was an amazing tool for young people who could really benefit. They ran on-going (in house) workshops and also worked with a wide range of groups, some of whom they had approached, and others who came to them independently..For example, they had done a one-term project with The Foyer for young people who created an exhibition. They were also working with Rise Young Peoples Group (Domestic violence charity).

The Arts Award was a nationally accredited scheme that was five years old. They worked with arts clubs and youth theatre in-house, but they would also offer this to outside organisations if they had identified a specific person to put together a portfolio with. It was great for young people to gain a national accreditation for work done in their own time. Ms Box also spent a lot of time networking nationally, regionally and locally.

Achievements - the Youth Arts Festival had been going for 3 years and was very small when it started but now had many groups involved. It was a big festival to celebrate young people in the arts. The new launch was in two weeks time and there would be a one day workshop offering taster sessions. Most activities are primarily term time because of the funding but they do run a summer school to offer the Arts Award.

Strengths – expert and committed staff team who get excellent results with challenging young people.

Challenges – capacity. They had a waiting list. The theatre was free and issue-based and on issues relevant to the young people. It came from a young persons' perspective but there was no capacity or budget to run anymore sessions. They had to take people from a wide age range because there the resources were not available to run two sessions. It would be great to be able to buy into other networks (eg English National Youth Arts Network) and also to be able to bring great arts practioners into the city.

In response to a question, Ms Box explained that the funding has stayed the same over the past few years but other things cost more money. The 'Positive Futures' funding was £9,000 for 2 workers for 6 hours a week. This would be reduced next year although it was unknown by how much. If there was more money, they would increase people's hours (most are on 6 hours) or bring in experts. They did not have funding for venue hire and it would be good to be able to get some venues for free. The only earned income was that groups paid £50 to register but if they know a group can not afford this, it was waived.

Following a question on age ranges and numbers, Ms Box explained that the range was 11 to 25 with the main target as 13-19 year olds. The majority of people were between 14 and 17 years old.

In Falmer, the group included children from year 7 up to year 11 in one group. This worked but more year 11s would attend if there were less year 7s.

There were five youth theatre groups with 80 to 90 people across the groups. There were 2 regular in-house arts groups, one in Hollingdean and one in Whitehawk and given the needs of the group, the maximum was 10.

On communication, Ms Box noted that this area had improved through the festival. They had links with those that worked with young people, for example, RUOK?, CAMHS, and MIND. They did have contacts with Blatchington Mill School, Patcham and Falmer but not with other schools. It was difficult to get into a school and find the right people. However, all the work they did was outside of schools and school time.

Finding a venue can be an issue. They had to find (and pay for) young people-friendly places. The ambiance of a venue was important – for example a venue should have changing rooms and feel like a theatre. The comment was made that some children may not be put off by using schools as venues. Ms Box noted that it depended on the young person. Young people in youth theatres should have the opportunity to perform in the same venues as professional actors

Following a question on the difference between what the Arts Youth Workers team were offering and what was offered by schools, it was generally very different. School productions were more likely to be musicals. The visual arts may have some similarities, but they were working with young people for whom the provision of arts in schools was not successful. The youth work was about empowerment and equality of opportunity but was not restricted by the formal curriculum. Mr Dougan noted that in school-based activities, children were mindful of what they wanted to share and would learn to protect themselves from emotions. In Ms Box's groups, the children were in the same space. For some people in the youth arts projects, the Arts Award may be their only qualification. Of the 4 young people who recently passed their silver arts award, (equivalent of grade A GCSE) it was the only qualification gained by 2 of the young people (aged 16-18). It was a very positive achievement.

A question was asked about any barriers to access. Ms Box replied that all the projects were free so cost was not a barrier. Accessible venues was a barrier. There was no centrally based youth space in Brighton so young people needed to go to Whitehawk. Those not in education, employment or training (NEET) would go first with a key worker and then on their own. This was very positive because some of them would not have been to that youth club before.

Mr Dougan noted that some venues were prejudiced against young people and had a pre-conceived idea that they were a threat. Ms Stone commented that for the young people-only music events, it was also difficult because venues would not make any money on the bar.

The issue of commercial sponsorship was raised but this was very difficult as mainstream companies would find it difficult. Also young people were very brand sensitive so this approach would not work.

Lucy Stone, Project Director, Rhythmix.

Rhythmix started 12 years ago as an initiative by the Heads of the Music Services in Brighton & Hove, Surrey, East Sussex and Kent to think about young people who were not accessing programmes (perhaps because they were out of school or between schools) and to develop work in genres not covered at that time by Music Services. This was a very new idea then and within a year they were approached by Youth Music and they still got the largest pot of money to deliver the Youth Music Action Zone which they still deliver to this day.

Rhythmix had been an independent charity since 2008 with the Head of Services sitting on the Board. So they worked closely with BHMAS looking at holes in provision and making sure they were not overlapping. They also worked in partnership to deliver MusicLeader South East to provide training, information, advice and guidance and online resources for people who worked in the music education sector. They did not run any open access activities in Brighton & Hove and did not advertise in youth clubs in the city (although they did in Surrey and East Sussex). In Brighton & Hove they worked with ACE (Primary, Queensdown and PRU), Youth Offending Team, Falmer High, and three Childrens' Centres across the city. They delivered Soundmakers in the special schools (BHMAS delivered this in 98% of primary schools).

Rhythmix provided intense sessions with small numbers. It was focussed on self expression, it was about what was going on in young peoples lives and talking to an adult who was not part of the social services. Very powerful work was produced.

They worked closely with partners in Brighton & Hove and had identified key people as door openers and gatekeepers. Julia Box was brilliant as was the Youth Offending Team, Children's Disability Service and Fostering Team. If there was one person in every service who could open doors, that would be incredibly helpful.

All projects were free to young people. Partners contributed time, venues and money. Often social workers needed to be present with a young person and it can be difficult for them to find the time.

Successful projects happened when there were strong partnerships. Also when young people said what *they* wanted to do.

The biggest challenge was finding partners. Sometimes attendance was an issue. Of 4 young people who started a music mentoring project with Rhythmix and the Youth Offending with some sessions delivered at the Crew Club, one dropped out early, one was in prison (for an earlier un-related offence), 1 dropped out later and the remaining 1 young person was currently releasing an album.

The core funding from Youth Music enabled Rhythmix to lever in other funding. This was currently agreed until April 2011. This funding had been there every year for the last ten years but it was currently half the level it had been in year 1. Any subsequent drop would mean they were unable to deliver programmes. Youth Music were lobbying the Arts Council and the Government on the issue. There was no European funding.

On the subject of communication, Rhythmix would benefit from more arts workers across the city in different services. The 'Express' strategy needs reconsidering. The idea of a database and central networking would ease communication and avoid duplication. Duplication did still happen but it had improved over the past 3 years. 'Express' was a great strategy but it needed more resources. A centralised person to go to would help and an 'Express' stamp on everything would be useful.

In response to a question on Soundmakers, Ms Stone explained that this was the Brighton & Hove response to the Government programme 'Wider Opportunities' for Key Stage 2 (KS2) children. It started 4 years ago in partnership with Brighton & Hove Music Arts and Study Support. Multiple instruments were supplied to children in KS2 so they were able play in ensembles in addition to individual instruments.

Following a question on targeting, in Brighton & Hove Rhythmix initially provided a lot of open access events with a big impact: go in and out again. It was now targeted and they worked with those in challenging circumstances (for example, asylum seekers, travellers, in early years settings) In East Sussex and Surry it was different: the Police may come and ask for projects at certain youth clubs, but there were a lot more open access activities.

Around 70 workers across the region provide up to 14 workshops a week in Brighton & Hove. In terms of numbers of girls and boys, Ms Stone informed the Panel that it was probably half and half. More girls did singing but more boys did the DJ and Music Tech workshops whilst for Rock & Pop there was an even split. Ms Box said it was probably 65/35 girls to boys. There were more girls when they provided dance but they stopped doing dance sessions when Street Dance started sessions. More boys did graffiti classes and it was about 60/40 in theatre. Traditionally more boys than girls attended youth clubs so it was a good way for young women to come into a venue often seen as a male venue. Ms Stone went on to explain that in Falmer, all except one of those doing a BTech in music were boys. At ACE the older units have far less girls.

Rhythmix were funded to work with 0-19yr olds and up to 25yrs for those with special needs. They were also about to launch MusicLeader South East to support and train adults who teach music.

There was a real issue with young people stepping into the music industry because lots of them had drug or alcohol issues so it could be very difficult. The young man who was producing an album was being supported. There could be a gap here.

It was up to partners how the programmes were altered. Particularly in early years settings, practitioners could be trained to deliver their own sessions.

Following a question on number of children and young people attending sessions, it was noted that bigger groups would be too difficult as many of the young people had attention issues or may have special needs. For some projects, 4 was the maximum number that could be sustained. Mr Dougan made the point that even if young people drop out, there was a successful outcome for all 4 as they had all engaged in different things. There were also low re-offending rates. Ms Box commented that even if young people do not make it to the end of a project, they had still got a huge amount out of experience.

Peter Chivers, Head of Brighton & Hove Music Advisory and Support Service (BHMAS).

Mr Chivers provided some background to BHMAS. At the time of the unification of Brighton and Hove into one local authority, it was realised that there was a need for a City music service. This has strategically developed over time to include the performing arts and now included study support. BHMAS is a part of the CYPT. The Brighton & Hove Music Trust operates it's own annual work programme and also acted as an informal advisory body to BHMAS. BHMAS offered a wider range of quality and inclusive services to all children up to the age of 19yrs old, with over 5000 children accessing the service per week across the year

Soundmakers had been a great success. 2,500 children per year were involved and 100% of mainstream schools at KS2. The project was free to the children and nationally funded. The retention figure was 57% (compared to the 2011 target of 50%).

A development officer worked 2 days a week on dance: this was a much smaller department within BHMAS due to funding. As well as providing dance activities we aim to reflect the needs of CYP and schools. For example over the last 10 years the provision of GCSE Dance has greatly developed with most secondary schools now offering GCSE dance. There was a gap in contemporary dance so they were running a Centre of Advanced Training for gifted and talented dancers in partnership with The Place, the London Contemporary School of Dance

Partnership working was key. For example, they had been offered free of rooms in the Theatre Royal for Sing Up (which was nationally funded).

Mr Chivers suggested that the main challenge was a refresh of the 'Express' strategy. It was still relevant but needed updating. For example, could the network meetings now be web-based? The strategy took a long time to develop and included various funding bids. Some of these, such as the Find your Talent, were not successful. A web-based portal for young people would be a good idea and help with signposting opportunities for CYP. Presently a new bid to the Arts Council is being developed.

Following a question on fees, parents were charged at around £70 a term for instrumental/vocal lessons and this equated to 46% of BHMAS's income. There was a subsidised scheme where parents only paid 20%. 22% of people were receiving this subsidy compared with only 3% in other areas. Individual lessons were twice as expensive.

Mr Dougan noted that there was a balance between fees and access which was very important in terms of sustainability. There was a fine balance between income and sustainability. There were other issues in the curriculum that were addressed in addition to music such as confidence and resilience in children.

On funding applications, Ms Stone confirmed that they do not tailor projects to a funding source but decided what they wanted to do and then find the funding. Mr Dougan commented that there was an issue around national funding as often funding was aimed at 'new' projects therefore there was pressure to make existing projects become 'new'. This made sustainability very difficult. There were currently 6 funding schemes underway. Ms Stone noted that often funding now has to be delivered by young people.

The Chair, Councillor Melanie Davis thanked everyone for a most interesting and instructive session.

