

Cabinet – 25 July 2012

Response and Action Plan to the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel Report on The New Art Gallery

Portfolio: Councillor Anthony Harris – Leisure and Culture

Service: Neighbourhood Services

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

- 1.1 Cabinet will recall at its meeting 20 June 2012 receiving the report of the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel relating to The New Art Gallery (NAG). Cabinet will also recall agreeing a further report in response to the recommendations of the Panel be submitted to the next meeting.
- 1.2 This report is in response to the recommendations of the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel and includes an action plan for their implementation should Cabinet approve the recommendations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the full response to the recommendations made by the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel as set out in section 3.3 of this report.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 The Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel set up a working group to consider issues at The New Art Gallery at its meeting on 28 February 2012. The Working Group considered the following issues:
 - Community engagement role
 - Achievements and challenges
 - Finance and funding
- 3.2 The working group's final report and recommendations was presented to and approved by the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel at its meeting on 10 April 2012. At the meeting, the Panel was particularly supportive

of the idea in its working group report that the New Art Gallery bid to host the Turner Prize.

- 3.3 The final recommendations of the Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel were presented to Cabinet 27 July 2011. Those recommendations are set out below with Points for consideration and relevant actions also detailed.

1. *The New Art Gallery continues to strengthen its links with activities held within local communities*

The New Art Gallery will continue to work extensively with local communities to ensure that the audiences at the NAG reflect the diversity of the local population. Activities continue to be planned around school holidays and cultural festivals to attract a broad range of visitors across the age range spectrum and to target families. These include Diwali, Vaisakhi, Salaam, and Black History Month.

2. *Future events are considered by The New Art Gallery that have the potential to contribute both cultural and economically to Walsall*

A successful bid for The Turner Prize, 2015 would have significant cultural and economic benefits for the borough (see the response to recommendation 6 below).

Plans are being made for a large 'Heart of England' (A West Midlands Group of Museums and Galleries) programme to attract visitors to the region during the summer of 2013. This is part of our efforts to market the Gallery as a tourist destination.

Economic impact assessments reports that demonstrate the worth of cultural events to the local economy will be commissioned as necessary.

3. *That innovative use of social media continues to be used by The New Art Gallery, particularly in attracting and retaining young audiences*

Gallery staff are aware that Arts Council England West Midlands (ACEWM) see digital access as an important priority within the National Portfolio Organisation's revenue funding. A Digital Policy for The NAG will be drawn up by December 2012.

WiFi is to be positioned throughout the NAG, with a target date for completion of March 2013, and the social networking presence at the NAG will be more prominent to maximise audience participation in the programmes and collections at the NAG.

4. *The New Art Gallery continues its efforts to engage with local communities*

The future health and vitality of the NAG depends in no small part on its engagement with local communities. The Audience Development strategy, together with Walsall Council's arts and equality strategies, will help improve access to the arts and ensure equality of opportunities for all, regardless of wealth, education, race, gender, disability, religion, culture or sexuality.

5. The council considers supporting the re-opening of the New Art Gallery on Sundays

The NAG will reopen on Sundays from 30th September 2012, one week in advance of the Damien Hirst display opening to the public and approximately at the same time as the new Hotel opening on the waterfront development. This will be funded from the existing NAG budget.

It is planned to programme free family events on Sundays to attract the family audiences and build audiences for the future.

6. The Panel support the idea of the New Art Gallery bidding to host the Turner Prize, 2015

The Tate Gallery will soon release details of the competitive bidding process for the Turner Prize 2015. A decision will then need to be made as to whether to submit a bid. Whilst the economic and cultural benefits would be significant, this will need to be balanced against the costs of hosting the event. These costs and benefits are currently being assembled to inform this decision.

4. Council priorities

4.1 Communities and Neighbourhoods:

The New Art Gallery helps young people engage in positive activities and can promote aspiration. Its programmes help celebrate diversity and so promote community cohesion. Given the national reputation it has, the Gallery can promote pride in the local area amongst the borough's residents.

4.2 Health and well-being:

Art and culture can play an important role in promoting well being and so the Gallery can help contribute to the well being of the borough's residents.

4.3 Economy:

The Gallery's national profile ensures that it both draws visitors from across the country and positively influences perceptions of the borough amongst key decision-makers and stakeholders.

Engagement with the Gallery and its various activities can help promote self esteem amongst borough residents which is critical to employability.

4.4 Related Portfolios

This report does not relate to any other Portfolios.

5. Risk management

Perhaps the biggest risk to the Gallery is the possible loss of funding support from Arts Council England West Midlands. Many, if not all, of this report's recommendations will help safeguard against this possibility.

6. Financial implications

Turner Prize

If the Council were successful in hosting the Turner prize there would be additional cost, some of which could be met from existing budgets, sponsorship and grant.

Sunday Opening

The cost of Sunday opening for the period October 2012 to March 2013 is expected to be £15,000 which can be met from within existing NAG budgets.

7. Legal implications

None arising from this report

8. Property implications

None arising directly from this report.

9. Staffing implications

None directly associated with this report.

10. Equality implications

The New Art Gallery will continue to work extensively with local communities to ensure that the audiences at the NAG reflect the diversity of the local population. The recommendations in this report, if implemented, will support this approach.

In particular, the Audience Development strategy, together with Walsall Council's arts and equality strategies, will help improve access to the arts and ensure equality of opportunities for all, regardless of wealth, education, race, gender, disability, religion, culture or sexuality.

11. Consultation

This report emanates from consideration by the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel of the role of the NAG and the opportunities it presents. It has been prepared in consultation with Finance Services and Legal Services.

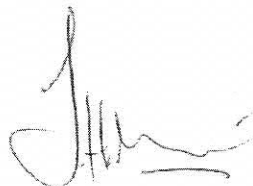
Background papers

Report of the Community Services Scrutiny and Performance Panel into The New Art Gallery as approved by the Panel on 10 April 2012.

Author

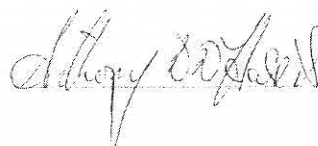
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13 July 2012

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Portfolio Holder



13 July 2012