

South Oxfordshire District Council

Arts development action plan and terms of reference 2014-17

Mission statement

South Oxfordshire District Council's arts development programme makes high-quality arts experiences accessible to all residents of South Oxfordshire.

Why the arts?

The arts can

- extend and increase the vision, skill, creativity and potential of individuals
 - contribute to the national, regional and local economy
 - offer people a chance to participate in a leisure activity regardless of age, ability or social background
 - increase people's confidence and self worth
 - reduce isolation and build social networks
 - improve wellbeing and quality of life
 - be used as an education tool, promoting specific issues, topics and themes
 - bring generations closer together
 - improve, enhance and sustain mental and physical health
 - give marginalised groups a voice and greater visibility in the community
 - enhance local identity, pride and sense of belonging
 - be used as a tool for community consultation and development
 - physically enhance and improve the natural and built environment
 - can bring delight and enjoyment to the whole community.
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Values

These are the core values underpinning the work of the arts development officer.

- partnership

Working with many partners across a range of areas to maximise the reach and range of arts activities on offer and take-up of opportunities.

Partner organisations can include arts, voluntary, charitable, parish, educational or schools, health sector, statutory services, care and residential homes, housing organisations, other public sector cultural provision, amongst many others.

Strong and sustainable partnerships require a significant amount of officer input to establish, nurture and sustain. Successful ongoing partnerships can result in increasingly effective

outcomes for a relatively minor investment, and can support the outputs of other organisations operating within the district.

- sustainability

By their nature, arts based projects are often time-limited or fall under a pattern of project by project. It is important to think about the sustainability of project work, whether that is by building on past work, or by transferring a piloted model into different settings.

Developing good working relationships with high-quality, experienced artists to lead and develop work is essential in building sustainability into all project planning, as is the strength of partnerships as outlined above.

- participation

Participation means that any individual is given the opportunity to engage in a meaningful way with arts opportunities, and that they are given all possible means of access to these opportunities. Participation can come in many forms, whether it is a young person performing to a high standard in a finished piece of work, or passerby participating in an interactive outdoor event for a short span of time. Both of these examples can be high-quality participatory experiences.

- communities and cohesiveness

Arts activities are able to help transgress boundaries and barriers within the community, contribute to community cohesion and address issues such as disengagement, isolation, and lack of confidence or trust. This includes addressing intergenerational cohesiveness and geographic cohesiveness as well as social cohesion.

- accessibility and equality

All opportunities on offer are inclusive and promote accessibility and equality of opportunity. This does not mean that everything will be the same, rather that opportunities provided are tailored to target groups in the way that most promotes accessibility of those target groups, and that as wide a range of groups as possible is targeted. This is an active rather than a passive role, in order to overcome hidden barriers to accessing the arts such as lack of knowledge or experience of the arts.

Focus and working ethos

The focus for provision of arts experiences will be on:

- older people, especially isolated and frail and elderly
- people with learning disabilities

- young people, especially to provide positive activities to young people who may lack such opportunities, and to support entry into the arts profession
- low-income families or families with low likelihood of attending arts events

The arts development officer

- is responsive to opportunities coming from outside sources
- creates, develops and fosters partnerships and networks in the community
- creates, develops, manages, and delivers projects, in collaboration with partners
- supports existing programmes or activity led by other organisations which are in alignment with the arts development programme
- supports the development of artists within and around the locality to help them provide high-quality arts activity accessible to everyone
- collaborates with internal colleagues in the council to share resources and support delivery of all council objectives (see section below for details).

Local picture

The principal cultural investment of South Oxfordshire District Council is in Cornerstone arts centre in Didcot which provides a unique opportunity for presenting high quality arts experiences to South Oxfordshire residents. Experiences on offer at Cornerstone include audience opportunities for theatre, music, comedy, and visual arts and participation opportunities across the artforms for children and adults. The council has invested a significant amount in Cornerstone in order to ensure that it provides these opportunities at the highest level.

Cornerstone is located in Didcot, and has contributed to the wider regeneration plans for Didcot town, preparing it for a projected population growth. Didcot is accessible not only locally but, with its good transport connections, also attracts audiences from further afield, beyond the county.

However, there are parts of South Oxfordshire district which are not close enough to Didcot to make a regular attendance and use of the Cornerstone facilities viable – especially the market towns and villages along the Eastern edge of the district, from Thame, through Chinnor, to Henley, and surrounding areas.

The arts development action plan recognises that some South Oxfordshire residents have not to date been able to benefit as much as others from the council's significant investment in

culture, through Cornerstone, and seeks to address this by ensuring that the high quality arts opportunities on offer at Cornerstone are made available to residents across the district. It also continues to support the growth and economic success of Cornerstone by ensuring that audiences for Cornerstone's programme are maintained, whether residents of South Oxfordshire or further afield.

The role of the arts development officer is to proactively ensure that this offer is available and accessible to all South Oxfordshire residents. Some people may be within reach of Cornerstone, but not be able to access it due to factors such as income and social background. Other residents may be within reach of Cornerstone but would need more specialised elements of the programme provided in order for Cornerstone to be fully accessible. Other residents may not be within easy reach of Cornerstone at all, due to distance and transport opportunities.

One experience of high-quality art that is not provided by Cornerstone is through public art. Public art projects led by developers or parish councils are overseen through advice and support by the arts development officer, where s106 money is levied through development contributions. Advice and support given will always adhere to the values of the arts development programme, encouraging high quality standards and opportunities for community engagement.

Outline of the nature of collaboration with partners within the council service areas

- youth development – expressed an ambition to use the arts in youth engagement work, summer diversionary projects and to assist including young people in larger council lead environmental improvement projects.
- equalities –adhere to all equalities policies in service delivery and employment of artists, but also the service can address issues of inequality by targeting groups and individuals in most need or with less access to the arts and council services.
- economic development – share knowledge on use of the arts in market towns development and economic initiatives.
- leisure/ participation – actions within participation action plan, explore public art opportunities within the sports facilities development programme.
- community safety – youth diversionary activities, assisting the visual look of damaged and graffitid areas.
- community-led planning – input into devising community questionnaires and assist in the delivery of the Community Plans actions
- planning – be proactive in promoting public art within the planning process (both S106 and CIL) and advising on the implementation of the projects with developers and new communities and parish councils.

Objectives

1. Enabling a diverse audience to access high-quality arts experiences at Cornerstone

1a access to existing Cornerstone programme

1b access via specific programme elements

1c access to Cornerstone via outreach

1d successful and high quality programme of classes and visual arts at Cornerstone to generate income for the arts centre

2. Enabling access to high-quality arts experiences across South Oxfordshire

2a opportunities related to Cornerstone programme made accessible to those least able to travel

2b support for community arts practitioners in / near to the district

2c audience opportunities around the district

2d research, develop and support longer-term and strategic arts development opportunities benefiting residents

2e quality public art projects related to new developments in the district.

Outcomes

- ongoing young people's programme at Cornerstone linking with local youth organisations and local schools to promote skills in the arts and deliver elements of Cornerstone programme
- evidence of broad population access to Cornerstone programme with a focus on those traditionally less able to access the arts (older people, low-income families, people with disabilities)
- income generated by participation and visual arts programme consistently achieving targets
- ongoing older people's programme of regular visits to and events at Cornerstone, linking up with local organisations
- ongoing programme of opportunities directed at people with learning disabilities
- strong links maintained with other local or community organisations, and local artists, leading to major projects involving high-quality arts activity
- regular participation and audience opportunities across the district, responding to the needs of the area and target audience to ensure attendance and accessibility
- high quality public art delivered, where possible with relevant community engagement
- regular Cornerstone programme outreach activities in place including schools workshops and visits, taster sessions in and out of the building, visual arts opportunities for schools and groups, with strong links to teachers.

Measuring success

The below objectives will be measured against two benchmarks, each of which will be measured in different ways, depending on the project and what suits it best.

Targets will be set according to projects and project phases, and will be bespoke depending on the type of project and the baseline level of engagement when beginning.

Often these benchmarks will be measured by partners, either other organisations or tutors/artists delivering the work. Thus there will be different ways of recording the impact of the projects.

Benchmark	Measure	Method
Quality of opportunity	Feedback from participants	Questionnaires Verbal feedback Informal feedback
	Observation	Anecdotal Written observation forms Images
Uptake of opportunity	Number of people participating	Record by sight Record by dataloggers (e.g. at Cornerstone) Record by booking numbers
	Number of people registering interest	Anecdotal Record number of enquiries
	Number of organisations interested	Anecdotal Record number of enquiries

Resources

The arts development officer post is 0.4 FTE (4 days per week) and the total arts development spending budget is £9,851 (financial year 2014-15) (excluding salary costs). This is a limited resource both in terms of capacity and budget, so that partnership working and raising external grant funding either directly or via partners is an important part of the work of the arts development officer in order to deliver against the objectives. This means that much of the action plan is dependent on the cooperation of partnership organisations and sometimes dependent on the receipt of grant funding. This dependency can lead to changes or delays in project timings or scope so the action plan will shift accordingly through the year in order to keep on track as far as possible with targets.

Objective 1: Enabling access to high-quality arts experiences at Cornerstone (CS)

WHAT	HOW	WHO WITH	RESOURCES	YEAR 1 2014-15 ACTIONS*
<p>1a Access to existing Cornerstone (CS) programme</p>	<p>marketing for specific audience groups with historically lower engagement, e.g. lower income families, older people, young adults</p>	<p>CS marketing team</p>	<p>CS marketing budget</p>	<p>Try Something New campaign (led by CS marketing team)</p>
	<p>taster sessions and subsidies to encourage wider access to classes</p>	<p>CS operations</p>	<p>arts development (AD) budget</p>	<p>taster sessions offered at least three fairs or events</p>
	<p>free activities within the programme, especially in participation and visual arts programme</p>	<p>CS operations</p>	<p>CS operations</p>	<p>Drop in and Doodle activity held four times; continue collaborating with RAL Space to hold two free science days</p>
	<p>facilitate schools and groups access to visual arts and performance programme</p>	<p>CS operations CS marketing team CS programmer</p>	<p>AD budget</p>	<p>support new performing arts teachers network by hosting/attending two meetings; host Larkmead transitions project with 15 pupils accessing participatory art at CS</p>

1b Access via specific programme elements	events and opportunities for people with learning disabilities including craft days, theatre group, art course	CS Programmer Oxford Options group of services/charities working with PWLD arts practitioners	AD budget	deliver Access All Areas event with at least 50 attendees and five activities offer; offer and market one 'relaxed performance' of Christmas show with 100 attendees; host two craft days with at least eight attendees
	social arts-based events for older people	Age UK residential and nursing homes other older people organisations	AD budget	
	youth-led programme	Young People's Coordinator Didcot TRAIN Oxfordshire Play Association schools YCAT AAAG network group OYAP Oxfordshire Youth Soha housing, Sovereign housing	AD budget	organise and host youth activity day with at least 30 attendees between nine and 16 years; initiative young ambassadors programme with five young people regularly engaging with CS programme; link with Oxfordshire Youth ArtsXchange project

	support local organisations' activity provision for target groups	local organisations and arts practitioners	CS operations	react to opportunities led by other organisations which help achieve objectives
1c Access to Cornerstone via outreach	taster sessions / events linked to CS programme held at local organisations and schools, with follow-on opportunities in venue	local organisations and schools	AD budget	
	presence at fairs and community events to promote engagement with CS programme, with performance and participatory opportunities linked to CS programme	CS marketing team	AD budget	provide presence of support arts activity at two OPA playdays, presence at three events or fairs
	facilitate workshops given by visiting companies at schools or groups	CS marketing team CS programmer	AD budget generated income	organise and support involvement of two primary schools with Compagnie Animation drama workshop, with at least 50 pupils involved; organise and support involvement of two secondary schools with Not About Heroes drama workshop; organise further

				workshops opportunities involving the same four schools in spring
1d Successful and high quality programme of classes and visual arts at Cornerstone to generate income for the arts centre	programme and develop a mixture of regular classes and one-off workshops for children and adults, in a variety of art forms	CS marketing team CS programmer CS tutors	CS staff time	improve recording of sales figures and increase bookings towards class capacity
	maintain contract with Oxfordshire County Council for provision of adult classes, with income generated to support development of the participation programme	Oxfordshire County Council Skills and Learning Service	CS staff time	increase annual contract provision to £15,000
	programme a range of high quality selling and non-selling exhibitions in the gallery and visual arts spaces, and craft boxes, drawing commission from sales	CS visual arts assistant Oxfordshire Gallery Network	CS staff time	achieve income target on commissions of £3,500
Objective 2: Enabling access to high-quality arts experiences across South Oxfordshire				
WHAT	HOW	WHO WITH	RESOURCES	YEAR 1 2014-15 ACTIONS*
2a Opportunities related to CS programme made accessible to those least able to travel	Taking Part programme: taster sessions and courses held at groups and non-arts spaces in the district such as village halls, residential homes, children's centres	local organisations OCVA council colleagues OAP local community arts practitioners	AD budget	launch Taking Part menu in local communications; at least eight enquiries about Taking Part

				workshops from new community hosts
2b Support for community arts practitioners in / near to the district	brokering opportunities for community artists to develop high quality programmes in various locations/ settings around the district	local community artists; local organisations and other arts organisations	AD budget	support delivery of Berinsfield Dog Fight project with engagement of 30 Berinsfield residents. develop Henley Tea-time project to involve 20 older and younger people in and around Henley
2c Audience opportunities around the district	programme performances in non-traditional venues in the district as part of CS programme	CS programmer libraries, schools, community groups and fairs, town and parish councils	CS programme budget, earned income, visiting companies contribution	organise and support presentation of theatre at local libraries including <i>I believe in Unicorns</i> at Thame Library with workshop elements to engage 30 local audience member
2d Research, develop and support longer-term and strategic arts development opportunities benefiting residents	Attend/be member of relevant local, county, regional and national networks to identify potential broader opportunities and advocate existing arts development work to a wider audience	OAP, OYAN, OPA, AAAG, Aduk, Artwork	AD budget, travel expenses	

2e Quality public art projects related to new developments in the district	Provide advice and support to relevant developer and parish groups where S106 money has been obtained for public art. Ensure community engagement opportunities where possible and opportunities for local artists.	planning colleagues, developers, public art consultants	S106 or other developer contributions	Orchard Centre public art Chinnor - Old Kiln Lakes - support to parish council Great Western Park public art strategy delivery
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* Year 2 and 3 actions will be added to the plan on a yearly basis to ensure that the plan remains realistic. The other columns will remain the same.

Glossary of acronyms and organisations

AAAG	Area Action Activity Groups, meetings led by Oxfordshire County Council encompassing a number of organisations working with young people to provide positive activities
Aduk	arts development UK, national membership organisation for local government and other organisations working in arts development
Artswork	youth arts organisation, 'bridge' organisation for Arts Council England for the South East of England
CS	Cornerstone
Didcot TRAIN	youth organisation in Didcot
OAP	Oxfordshire Arts Partnership, a group of all the arts development staff at councils within Oxfordshire
OCVA	Oxford Community and Voluntary Action
OPA	Oxfordshire Play Association, county-wide charity providing positive play opportunities for young people
Oxford Options	informal group of organisations around the district providing services for PWLD including Style Acre, HFT and Oxfordshire County Council adult services
Oxfordshire Gallery Network	informal network of visual arts galleries across Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire Youth	formerly Oxfordshire Association of Young People, connects with youth groups and centres across the county and delivery youth activity programmes
OYAN	Oxfordshire Youth Arts Network, led by OYAP
OYAP	Oxfordshire Youth Arts Partnership
PWLD	people with learning disabilities
Soha Housing	local housing association providing housing within the district
Sovereign Housing	local housing association providing housing within the district
YCAT	youth branch of the Damascus group, running leadership activities for young people from villages around Abingdon and Didcot and further afield