
Economic Wellbeing Pillar: Tourism, Arts & Culture

Thematic Working Group (TWG): Workshop 1, 29 July 2016

Attendees: Ann Donnelly, **Artist**, Brigid McGibbon, **Armagh Rhymers**, Charles Neville, **Ulster Scots Society**, Chris Bailey, **NIMC**, Geraldine Curran, **Armagh Rhymers**, Jackie Barker, **Millennium Court Arts Centre**, Joanne Wallace, **Wallace Consulting**, Katie Brown, **Amma Centre**, Lisa Finnegan, **Millennium Court Arts Centre**, Rosemary Kelly, **Banbridge Musical Society**, Sheila McCreesh, **Lislea Community Association**, Stephen Bill, **Tourism NI**.

ABC Council- Charles McCafferty, Christine Donnelly, Elaine Gillespie, Emma Drury, Emma Gribben, Jennifer Doak, Jill McEaney, Lisa Soye, Sara McGeary, Sean Barden, Vincent McCann, Councillor Marie Cairns.

Apologies: Anthony Soares, **Centre for Cross Border Studies**, Ciara Campbell, **Artist**, Eoin Magennis, **InterTrade Ireland**, Esther Baird, **Portadown 2000**, Linda Hyde, **Donaghcloney Rural Needs Development Group**, Ruth Taillon, **Centre for Cross Border Studies**, Trevor Woods, **Mount Ida Pottery**.

ABC Council- Jason Diamond, Leah Duncan, Michelle Markey, ABC, Niall Drew, ABC, Noreen O'Callaghan, Olga Murtagh, Riann Coulter, Sarah Millsop.

1. Welcome & Introduction

Elaine Gillespie, Head of Community Planning provided an overview of the Community Planning process. Stephen Bill, Tourism NI, was introduced as Chair of the Tourism, Arts & Culture Thematic Working Group. It was clarified that this particular session was to be focused on arts & culture with tourism being explored in Workshops 2 & 3.

2. Baseline Statistics

Jennifer Doak, NISRA presented key statistics relevant to the TWG. There was a detailed discussion on the fact that the Baseline statistics didn't fully reflect the extent of arts & culture activity being undertaken (e.g. much of amateur arts, outreach, community arts, events & festivals isn't collated & there isn't a combined overview). However, this was a wider issue with regards to data collection & evaluation. The following points were raised:

- There was a recognition that consistent approaches to data capture were important
- It was also felt that more qualitative data was required in addition to the quantitative data provided;
- Refine definition of users / customers / attendees etc.?

Outcome: There were no requests for additional statistics to be added to the Baseline Report from arts & culture representatives.

3. Identified Issues

Joanne Wallace, Wallace Consulting led a series of group discussion and feedback sessions. A number of problems, which hamper ABC's arts & cultural development were identified during

group discussions. These have been thematically grouped as follows, please note that any references/overlap with tourism have also been reported:

Lack of recognition of value of arts & culture (& potentially tourism)

- Lower levels of financial investment on arts & culture relevant to size & compared to other Council areas;
- Quantitative statistics don't reflect the impact of arts & culture on quality of life, economic, community, regeneration impacts;
- Lack of political lobbying for arts & culture;
- Some people's perception of the arts acts as a barrier - "not for me", unaffordable;

ABC has a low profile of ABC relating to arts & culture (& potentially tourism)

- Tourism performance within the Borough is low (9th of 11 local authority areas). This also correlates to the low bed-space provision within the borough;
- ABC isn't really seen as a visitor destination, uncertainty around proposition;
- Local people don't fully value or use our assets, not as well promoted as a visitor destination;
- The assets that we have aren't maximised, not key drivers of arts, culture & tourism.

Lack of investment in arts & culture infrastructure (& potentially tourism)

- Lack of emphasis on arts & culture in schools;
- Amateur arts are comparatively less recognised & valued;
- Low levels of financial investment in facilities, venues, programmes & events;
- Lack of coordinated thinking (e.g. events, clustering opportunities);
- Support for artist development needed;
- Varying levels of artistic quality

4. Shared Priorities

Members discussed the issues that needed to be prioritised and would benefit from a collaborative approach under community planning. The following agreed priorities are inter-linked:

Improve Accessibility, Attendance & Participation

- Overcome barriers to arts & culture attendance & participation, such as lack of information, perception, cost, confidence, transport etc. – promote free events;
- Communicate the social, economic & environmental benefits – reasons to be involved messages;
- Resource and develop a strategy for the collection of consistent qualitative and quantitative data related to engagement and participation in the arts & cultural sector in the borough (Baseline) which will inform the borough's new Arts & Cultural strategy;
- Recognise the entity of the sector – collaborative approach;
- Work in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector in order to develop a prioritized programme of arts provision that is responsive to the needs of citizens and

visitors and that is delivered through outstanding facilities and engaging outreach programmes;

- Improve reach in culturally deprived areas;
- Build a combined identity & raise local awareness & pride in our arts & cultural offering (international & global standing – Observatory & Navan);
- Develop a collaborative events calendar;
- Development a focused digital communications strategy for the promotion of arts & cultural events within the borough, nationally and internationally;
- Develop dynamic audience development strategies which will improve data capture, evidence of engagement and encourage collaborative working - use of libraries/museums for health & wellbeing benefits, tours, open days & behind the scenes, show & tell events – focus on local people, others will follow.

Build Creative Capital

- Invest in people, places, organisations and partnerships to ensure a robust and vibrant arts & cultural sector in the Borough and lever external funding to assist in resourcing this;
- Strengthen local arts & culture infrastructure - offer experiences, innovative, exciting, family orientated;
- Develop the creative skills and capacity of our citizens across all ages through a programme of community & voluntary activity, work with education providers;
- Work with key partners to support the development of the professional creative sector, support job and company development in arts and culture, link arts & STEM subjects – target young people, equip a new generation, develop creative thinking, link to entrepreneurship & economy;
- Develop the capacity of the community & voluntary sector, use of community buildings;
- Explore potential for social economy, creative hubs, clustering;
- Develop and promote the ABC as a centre for creative skills development;
- Raise our profile - Bid for City of Culture (Armagh), build local, national & international profile for arts & culture;
- Lobby Stormont for ABC investment - Champions

Outcome: TWG members agreed Improve Access & Build Creative Capital as shared priorities.

5. Long-term Outcomes

Based upon the agreed priorities, TWG members discussed long-term goals (10-15 years) for the community plan. These have been developed as follows for discussion at Workshop 2 (see Table overleaf).

Outcome: TWG members to discuss & agree LT outcomes at Workshop 2. Joanne Wallace to draft Short- & Medium-Term outcomes based on existing information for discussion at Workshop 2.

Need	Priority	Long-term Outcome (10-15 years)
<p><i>Lack of recognition of value of arts & culture (& potentially tourism)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower levels of financial investment on arts & culture relevant to size & compared to other Council areas; • Quantitative statistics don't reflect the impact of arts & culture on quality of life, economic, community, regeneration impacts; • Lack of political lobbying for arts & culture; • Some people's perception of the arts acts as a barrier - "not for me", unaffordable; 	<p><i>Improve Accessibility, Attendance & Participation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcome barriers to arts & culture attendance & participation, such as lack of information, perception, cost, confidence, transport etc. – promote free events; • Communicate the social, economic & environmental benefits – reasons to be involved messages; • Resource and develop a strategy for the collection of consistent qualitative and quantitative data related to engagement and participation in the arts & cultural sector in the borough (Baseline) which will inform the borough's new Arts & Cultural strategy; • Recognise the entity of the sector – collaborative approach; • Work in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector in order to develop a prioritized programme of arts provision that is responsive to the needs of citizens and visitors and that is delivered through outstanding facilities and engaging outreach programmes; • Improve reach in culturally deprived areas; • Build a combined identity & raise local awareness & pride in our arts & cultural offering (international & global standing – Observatory & Navan); • Develop a collaborative events calendar; • Development a focused digital communications strategy for the promotion of arts & cultural events within the borough, nationally and internationally; • Develop dynamic audience development strategies which will improve data capture, evidence of engagement and encourage collaborative working - use of libraries/museums for health & wellbeing benefits, tours, open days & behind the scenes, show & tell events – focus on local people, others will follow. 	<p>The borough has a vibrant, authentic, dynamic & inclusive arts & cultural offering that is responsive to the needs of its residents and has a compelling appeal to visitors</p> <p>[Short & Medium term development ideas]</p> <p>People are more aware, more opportunities to participate, work in partnership to deliver high quality, accessible cultural experiences for everyone, Arts & cultural sector is valued, contributes to sense of place, embedded in community life</p>

Need	Priority	Long-term Outcome (10-15 years)
<p><i>ABC has a low profile of ABC relating to arts & culture (& potentially tourism)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism performance within the Borough is low (9th of 11 local authority areas). This also correlates to the low bed-space provision within the borough; • ABC isn't really seen as a visitor destination, uncertainty around proposition; • Local people don't fully value or use our assets, not as well promoted as a visitor destination; • The assets that we have aren't maximised, not key drivers of arts, culture & tourism. <p><i>Lack of investment in arts & culture infrastructure (& potentially tourism)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of emphasis on arts & culture in schools; • Amateur arts are comparatively less recognised & valued; • Low levels of financial investment in facilities, venues, programmes & events; • Lack of coordinated thinking (e.g. events, clustering opportunities); • Support for artist development needed; • Varying levels of artistic quality 	<p><i>Build Creative Capital</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in people, places, organisations and partnerships to ensure a robust and vibrant arts & cultural sector in the Borough and lever external funding to assist in resourcing this; • Strengthen local arts & culture infrastructure - offer experiences, innovative, exciting, family orientated; • Develop the creative skills and capacity of our citizens across all ages through a programme of community & voluntary activity, work with education providers; • Work with key partners to support the development of the professional creative sector, support job and company development in arts and culture, link arts & STEM subjects – target young people, equip a new generation, develop creative thinking, link to entrepreneurship & economy; • Develop the capacity of the community & voluntary sector, use of community buildings; • Explore potential for social economy, creative hubs, clustering; • Develop and promote the ABC as a centre for creative skills development; • Raise our profile - Bid for City of Culture (Armagh), build local, national & international profile for arts & culture; • Lobby Stormont for ABC investment - Champions 	<p>The Borough is recognised as an inspirational creative capital, with a well-resourced, flourishing and innovative arts & cultural sector, facilities and industries.</p> <p>[Short-Medium Development Ideas] Investment in creative skills development & infrastructure, work in partnership to develop creative skills & confidence</p>

6. Thematic Vision

TWG members developed their long-term vision, to be achieved under the Economic Wellbeing Pillar. These suggestions have been integrated into the following statement, for discussion at Workshop 2:

“The Borough is recognised as a creative hub, a place of discovery that capitalizes on its unique, authentic, cultural and natural assets - where arts & culture inspire, create, grow and flourish.”

Outcome: TWG members to discuss & agree Thematic Vision at Workshop 2.

7. Next Steps

The remaining Workshops are scheduled as follows:

- **31st August – 10.30am to 4.30pm in Lough Neagh Discovery Centre.**
- **16th September – 9.30pm to 1.30pm in Old Town Hall, Banbridge**

Workshop 2 will focus on:

- Issues emerging from the borough’s new tourism strategy & action plan;
- Revisions to draft Outcomes & Vision;
- Developing Short- and Medium-term outcomes;
- Identifying strengths/weaknesses;
- Actions & targeting.