

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 12TH DECEMBER, 2016

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
14TH NOVEMBER, 2016

“ ARTS DEVELOPMENT – MUSEUMS HERITAGE, ARTS VENUES,
LIBRARIES, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND ACCESSIBLE ART (IDLS) –

Councillor Franks, in presenting his Request, stated that given the lack of a museum in the Vale, consideration be given to the creation of a heritage centre of excellence to be potentially based in the Central Library of Barry. He had also requested that the report examine the options of utilising the Vale’s network of libraries, including the community libraries in Dinas Powys, Rhoose, Wenvoe, Sully and St. Athan, as venues for art exhibitions and displays. He had further requested that a report detailing what way further co-operation could be achieved between the Vale Council and Barry Memorial Hall in artistic matters. In addition the role of the Turner House, Penarth be explored and the National Museum of Wales invited to participate in discussions, with the details of such discussions being reported to Committee and the option of artefacts from the National collection being displayed across the Vale be examined.

In response, the Culture and Community Learning Manager advised that throughout the Vale there were a significant number of art venues that provided accessible art opportunities for residents and visitors to the area. There were also opportunities to attend and participate in free and fee paying arts activity in theatres, galleries, at outdoor and indoor events and festivals, in community centres, school halls, private lessons, adult learning, libraries and in the environment. The Arts Development Officer supported the programme of accessible art opportunities and created the annual arts exhibition at Arts Central Gallery.

Paragraph 6 of the report advised that a heritage centre for the Vale would be generally welcomed as there were a number of local historical groups who had been requesting a display resource in the area for some years. The Arts Development Officer had advised that the creation of a heritage centre containing information boards providing historical content or stories about the Vale with a small collection would avoid the legal requirements that surrounded the storing, handling, insurance and security of museum collections. Consideration would also, however, need to be given to the potential costs and resources required to facilitate setting up a heritage centre and a business plan would need to be developed which would explore different delivery models.

The report noted that the Vale of Glamorgan had nine libraries across the area, some of which had recently become community-run venues. Further research and discussion would however be required to map the varied knowledge within libraries to support the provision of art exhibitions by providing relevant training. There were also opportunities to develop a gallery venue in Dinas Powys Library as part of proposed refurbishment plans, but this would need to be considered carefully as a dedicated area would need to be identified in order to avoid damage to art work during parties, gatherings and other community events.

Committee was reminded that the Arts Development Service worked in partnership with the Memorial Hall, which generated 64% of its turnover from income made from a wide variety of arts activities. The Turner House Gallery had been home to Ffotogallery since 2003, which was a national development agency for photography and lens-based media in Wales. In discussions with the National Museum, the Museum had confirmed that they were currently supportive of Ffotogallery residing at Turner House as they considered they were an ideal Arts Council of Wales revenue supported organisation to have in residence. The Arts Development Service had a small budget and the one member of staff was working to capacity in managing the considerable amount of arts administration, projects and development programmes being undertaken. Plans for further development of the service would need to give consideration to the requirement of additional resources and if required, these would be found from within the Culture and Community Services budget.

The Culture and Community Learning Manager stated that he was pleased that the Request for Consideration had been put forward in order that discussion at Committee could take place. Options for developing a heritage facility would be identified and appraised, and a business plan would be developed which would identify the financial implications and funding options. Given the limited funding available within the Service, there would, however, be a focus on developing the facility in partnership with others and on maximising the opportunity to secure grant funding.

Having considered the report, Councillor Franks thanked the officers for the detail provided, but queried whether there were any options for using other historical buildings in the Vale, for example the Docks Office. The Culture and Community Learning Manager responded by advising that during the consultation such issues could be put forward for consideration.

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Education stated that it was currently a work in progress and referred to the recent meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee which had considered the Sense of Place Report. Many groups, she stated, were also starting to work together and the establishment of community capacity building officers which could support organisations was an aim for the future. The Cabinet Member also referred to the significant number of events that were being run by the Council and in partnership with other organisations which acted as an aid to regeneration.

Although acknowledging the access links to Barry for the Library, Docks Office, etc. and Barry being an iconic place for visitors, the Chairman stated that in his view the area was missing a heritage centre. The Chairman also welcomed the emphasis in the report for a business plan to be developed and that he would support such a plan. A Member, although agreeing that the Docks Office was an excellent building, was concerned about its accessibility and the need for more signage etc. to be considered for the town. The Cabinet Member advised that signage would be considered as part of the Sense of Place project.

The Interim Director of Learning and Skills concluded by advising that the service area was looking to develop the provision across the Vale, building upon what was already there and looking to work with groups to support its development. For example, if a group wished to set up any displays, the Council could offer the space but that the facility would need to be well used and demand established, which would be assessed during the consultation process.

Having fully considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the report be referred to Cabinet for consideration advising that the Committee would support the desire to explore and establish a business plan to explore different delivery models.
- (2) T H A T the information provided on the Arts Development Programme, the range of activities on offer and the development of heritage facilities be noted.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) In order that all options can be pursued for consideration.
- (2) To provide Members with an awareness of the breadth of arts related services provided or facilitated by the Council and of the intention to develop heritage facilities in the future.”

Attached as Appendix – [Report to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee: 14th November, 2016](#)