

**State of the Arts
Solihull 2004-2005
A Background Research Paper**

Index		Page
Introduction		1
Section 1	General Context	
	National Context	2
	Regional Context	3
	Local Context	5
Section 2	Methodology	
	Approach	7
	Research and Consultation	7
Section 3	Current Resources Overview	
	Finance and Staffing (Solihull Council Arts)	10
	Arts Venues	12
	Arts Companies and Businesses	17
	Arts in Formal Learning	21
	Arts in Informal Learning	25
	Arts Provision in Wider Context	28
Section 4	Consultation Results	
	Quick Poll (Strategy Consultation Exercise)	33
	Year 9 Big Arts Grid	34
	Draft Strategy Questionnaire	36
	Arts Complex Customer Satisfaction Data	41
Section 5	A Strategy for the Future	46
List of Appendices		
	A. Full list of Desk Research	
	B. Full List of Consultees	
	C. Table of Performing Arts Venues	
	D. Local Societies Arts Maps	
	E. Artsmark Schools Map	
	F. Consultation Feedback Letter	
	G. Action Plan Documentation	

Documents available on request

External funding breakdown 2005/06

Records of all initial face to face meetings

Consultation notes from key group meetings

Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening and Partial Assessment

Direct linking charts between action points and a range of local and national strategies

Introduction

In 2000, Solihull Borough Council, supported by West Midlands Arts Board carried out an Audit and Analysis of provision for the arts in Solihull, leading to the creation of “A Strategy for the Arts”, an Arts Development Officer post, and a £12,500 budget to be used strategically to seed fund activity. That first Arts Strategy has been instrumental in allowing the council to raise over £400k from a variety of sources, primarily Arts Council England Lottery Funding.

That strategy is coming to the end of its life. A range of project work, particularly with young people, has increased what the borough has been able to offer, and raised the profile of what the arts can achieve locally, whilst nationally, the DCMS have put arts at the centre of many different agendas from Education to Regeneration. Solihull Council too is changing, with a strategic vision, objectives, and step change improvement targets which need to be reflected in a new strategy.

The process of reviewing the strategy began in September 2004, and this document highlights the context within which it has taken place, the approaches used, the findings, and the route to the solutions which have formed the draft strategy.

1. Context

1.1 National Context¹

Nationally there is a growing awareness of the role of the arts in tackling cross cutting issues. Since reports on Social Exclusion in the late 1990's understanding and case study evidence relating to how the arts can address inclusion issues and anti social behaviour has been growing. Arts Council England (ACE) have designated "Arts in Health" officers working in most of their regions. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have produced a document called "Culture at the Heart of Regeneration", which proposes that the only successful regeneration programmes are those that have considered cultural issues thoroughly and early in the process. At treasury level and through the Audit Commission there is still a cry for statistical evidence of these benefits. Whilst this is hard to find, across the country we can point to examples of good practice, and authorities very satisfied with how strategic use of the arts has contributed to achieving their wider priorities.

79% of people agree that arts should receive public funding, and 75% think it important to the life of the country

Alongside this Tessa Jowell has called for continued support for "Art for Arts Sake", recognising the intrinsic value of the arts in contributing to quality of life. DCMS have identified the following priorities for the arts:

- Broaden access for all to a rich and varied artistic and cultural life
- Ensure that the artistic activity we fund aspires to be world-class in terms of standards and innovation
- Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop artistic talent, and to achieve excellence in the arts
- Develop the educational potential of all the nation's artistic and cultural resources
- Raise standards of artistic and cultural education and training
- Ensure an adequate skills supply for the arts and cultural sectors
- Reduce the number of those who feel excluded from society by using the arts

In addition to its wider ambitions for the arts, which broadly reflect and build upon those listed above, Arts Council England has worked with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the National Association for Local Government Arts Officers (NALGAO) to establish four shared themes for partnership that reflect National and Local Governments Shared Priorities.

Vital Neighbourhoods

Engaging Young People

Healthy Communities

The Creative Economy

97% believe young people should have arts opportunities at school

¹ Sources for National Context: PAT10 report on Social Exclusion – Social Exclusion Office 1998; Culture at the Heart of Regeneration DCMS 2004; Government and the value of Culture Tessa Jowell 2004; Arts in England 2003 ACE 2005

This increasing recognition means that arts projects or organisations are now able to contribute to a whole range of National Initiatives. Some of the most important of these currently affecting Solihull Council include:

- Building Schools for the Future (National Rebuilding and Refurbishment Programme, where Solihull has four schools in the first wave)
- Every Child Matters and Youth Matters (Green Papers)
- Future Builders, and other Office of the Deputy Prime Minister generated funding schemes for community groups
- Neighbourhood Pathfinder Programme (relevant to the Fordbridge Plus Area)
- At Least Five a Week (Chief Medical Officer document about physical activity)

National Context – Key Issues

- Ever increasing awareness of the use of the arts as a means of tackling a range of cross-cutting issues
- Continuing calls for increased evidence of these benefits of the arts in order to secure funding
- Small but important lobby for the intrinsic value of the arts
- Key shared priorities around inclusion and around young people

1.2 Regional Context²

Culture is represented at the political level in the West Midlands through the regional cultural consortium Culture West Midlands (formerly West Midlands Life). The consortium is currently reviewing its strategy and action plan currently. DCMS have representation at Government Office West Midlands, and reflect the department's national priorities at a regional level.

Arts Council England – West Midlands has developed its own vision for the arts. This sits within the national framework and seeks to achieve the following:

- Recognition that the West Midlands is a region at the leading edge of diverse creative practice
- A healthy, sustainable and accessible arts infrastructure, which delivers the full potential of recent capital and revenue investment, and is committed to engaging with the challenges and opportunities of diversity
- A recognition of the value of the arts within health, regeneration and lifelong learning, which will deliver growth, profile, and more opportunities for the employment of artists
- A strategic approach to arts education, skills development and capacity building, which supports emerging artists, and empowers existing practitioners to take advantage of new opportunities both regionally and internationally
- A more robust programme of marketing and audience development initiatives focused on growing a more diverse audience base

It also develops key actions within the five national priorities:

² Sources. A vision for the Arts, 2003-2006 ACE West Midlands; Government Office for West Midlands Website; Learning and Skills Council Music Review 2004; General information from day to day working practice;

Supporting the artists: focusing on development of networks and agencies; international collaboration; workspace and gallery provision; skills to work in learning, health and regeneration; exploring rural commissioning agency

Organisations thriving not surviving: targeting funds to ensure the successful functioning of capital developments, increasing the rural infrastructure; support for producing theatres through the national strategy; piloting loans initiatives

Cultural diversity; encouraging Black and Minority Ethnic led applications to project funds, exploring infrastructure for BME dance and theatre; developing regional infrastructure for carnival; taking a strategic direction on disability arts

Young People Creative Partnerships (Coventry and Stoke); increasing support for youth arts; developing anti-social behaviour related youth work

Growth; sub-regional partnerships with local authorities; opportunities in health and regeneration; cultural tourism and creative industries; region-wide approach to audience development

The region has an increasing tendency to work in sub-regions to tackle various issues. Solihull tends to fall into one of two areas.

Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire

The Arts Council England led Sub-Regional Arts Partnership involving Solihull is a grouping of authorities from Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull. The partners have a range of approaches to arts development, and partnership work focuses on the themes of Dance, Public Art and Visual Arts and Crafts Business Development until 2006. The aim of the partnership is to deliver projects which will ultimately result in greater sustainability for the arts in the area. Each strand has elements which are focused around improved communications, networks and training opportunities.

This geographical area is also covered by Greater Warwickshire Sports Partnership, and a locally generated economic development initiative which brands the area as a High Technology and Motor Performance belt.

Birmingham and Solihull

Learning and Skills Council groups the whole of Solihull together with Birmingham. This reflects on funding for further education, lifelong learning, family learning and key provisions for 16-19 year olds. The LSC review many elements of their service, and pay particular attention to the needs of arts sectors, through sector specific music review. A music coordinator has recently been appointed. Whilst Solihull has strong partnerships on the lifelong learning and family learning side that ensure their voice is heard, sometimes in other areas it is felt that their needs are not heard as clearly.

Advantage West Midlands is relevant to the whole area, however, the regeneration zone of relevance sub-regionally is particularly East Birmingham and North Solihull. Relations with Solihull regeneration staff are strong, but cultural links within the regeneration zone have not yet been explored with Advantage West Midlands. This contrasts with some East Birmingham developments which have strong cultural elements (Custard Factory, Sam Wilkinson Public Art Consultants)

Regional Context – Key Issues

- Regional context broadly reflects national context
- Both tension and opportunity created by the existence of two overlapping sub-regions which include Solihull
- Regional arts aims focus on sustainability, growth, young people and cultural diversity

1.3 Local Context³

With a population of 199,521, Solihull has an ageing population, is recognised for its quality of life, the green environment, and has seen significant growth in economic development. Two contextual factors dominate the Borough. Firstly, the contrast in the social and economic context ranges from amongst the most affluent to the most disadvantaged nationally. Secondly, the Borough's recognised economic success and general affluence has masked the deprivation in the North of the Borough. Wards in the North of the Borough are amongst the 10% most deprived in the country. They suffer from structural unemployment as a result of being on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation, with traditionally poor transport links to the South of the Borough. This manifests itself through poorer health, unsuitable housing, lower educational attainment levels and child poverty.

Solihull Council operates to a clear vision, with a series of council objectives and step-change improvement priorities. The first round of step-change improvement priorities were the focus of prioritised budgets, the wider objectives are currently under review.

Current Objectives:

- CO1 – A brighter future for our children
- CO2 – Improving the Quality of Life
- CO3 – Closing the Gap of Inequality
- CO4 – Treating People as Individuals within a Diverse Community
- CO5 – Good Value Services

The direction of current consultation suggests that the priorities will remain broadly similar, with the following possible clarity of focus:

- Focus on education for children
- Drawing out of the concept of quality of life – particularly likely to recognise themes around waste, recycling, cleanliness, the street scene and around community safety
- Closing the Gap of Inequality – with a continuing focus on the physical, economic and social regeneration of North Solihull through the regeneration programme
- Treating People as individuals within a diverse community – with a growing focus on equality and diversity issues
- Good Value Services – with a particular focus on responding to customer need, community involvement and meeting the e-government agenda

Solihull Council, like other authorities, is currently in the process of responding to Gershon Efficiency savings. Additionally Cabinet has indicated that all budget planning must be done without increasing pressure on council tax. Historically the council has potentially suffered in its settlements from national government, due to the affluence of the south masking the deprived areas in the North of the borough. With a review of the local government settlements pending this situation may change. Nevertheless, the local funding context is one of limited resources for all services, and intense pressure for non-statutory services such as arts and culture.

Partnership working has proved successful across the borough in recent years, and a number of new key partners are emerging, frequently as a result of national initiatives:

- Regenerating North Solihull – InPartnership Consortium

³ Local Context Sources: A Place for People, Council Plan, State of the Borough Report, Service Specific Documents - Solihull MBC, Citizen's Panel 2005 – Solihull MBC, BVPI data - ODPM

- Fordbridge Plus Neighbourhood Pathfinder
- Children's Trust
- Care Trust
- Leisure Public Private Partnership – Rivendell
- Local Strategic Partnership Members – including Primary Care Trust, Police, Solihull Council for Voluntary Services, Colebridge Trust, Sure Start and many more

Solihull's Local Strategic Partnership was brought together during the development of the first Community Plan for Solihull. The plan has nine aims and a long list of objectives which are being reviewed and streamlined in a process led by the council, but involving all LSP member groups. All of these relate to broad quality of life issues, and it is expected that the emerging new priorities will also do so. The role of arts within the strategic partnership is currently implicit rather than fully recognised, with work ongoing to clarify the role of culture, particularly as a delivery mechanism for many agendas, but also having its own intrinsic value. Currently Arts is primarily represented in the form of public art via the Place to Live theme group which spans issues across housing, environment and transport.

Just under 8 in 10 residents perceive that it is important for the Council to develop an Arts Strategy in Solihull – Citizen's Panel 2005

In terms of arts development, the first arts strategy was a Public Art Policy developed in 1997, superseded by the 2000 document "A Strategy for the Arts". Arts activity in the borough, centers around a professional arts and entertainment programme and well loved amateur performances at the borough venue Solihull Arts Complex; local societies and lifelong learning classes in the decorative and visual arts has been established for many years, particularly in the south of the borough. In the five years since the development of the arts strategy, the profile of activity in the borough has changed dramatically, with new venues, schools achieving Specialist Arts College status and emerging opportunities in participatory arts and public art.

Only two nationally recognised indicators exist in relation to arts activities, and in both Solihull falls below the national average:

Satisfaction with Theatres and Concert Halls 48% against an average of 50%
 Satisfaction with Museums and Galleries 30% against an average of 49%

In terms of local performance indicators, figures are rising for audiences at the arts complex, participation in arts development projects, and audiences targeted for certain types of production (an example is an increase in dance audiences from 17% seats occupied to 67% in three years). However, there are no regional or family benchmarking groups to compare those figures. Data from non users is limited, as is information regarding participation by target groups. Both have begun to be addressed recently – partly through the arts strategy consultation.

Local Context – Key Issues

- A borough with a growing sense of its priorities as identified by its communities, and increased strategic awareness of how to tackle them
- A borough with a developing programme of participatory arts activity and increasing awareness of the benefits
- A borough marked by the socio-economic divide on geographical lines
- In arts terms, a borough which would benefit from fully embracing the arts as a delivery mechanism for tackling community raised cross-cutting issues, and which is beginning to embrace this role for cultural services

2. Methodology

2.1 Approach

***“Its in the doing not the planning”* Local arts group member feedback during Strategy Consultation in 2000**

The approach taken to the revision and renewal of Solihull Council's Arts Strategy in 2004 and 2005 has been a process full of doing, with the aim that it would move the borough forward at the same time as identifying priorities.

Three broad assumptions were made at the beginning of the strategy development process.

- That the greatest need was for a strategy that would ensure a sustainable future for the arts, to build on a successful series of project based developments since 2000
- In order to be successful the strategy would need to be a document that could be embraced and delivered by several council departments, and by external partners and not one to be delivered by a single service
- That a focus on young people should be retained from the previous strategy, reflecting local and national priorities

The strategy has been produced “in-house” and with no additional resources, partly as a matter of financial expediency, but primarily because this has enabled core elements of the arts development service - project development, performance management development, advocacy for the arts, advice and support to external organizations to work seamlessly alongside, and as part of the consultation process.

The strategy has been developed in three phases:

Pre-draft research, advocacy and consultation to first draft
First draft release, advocacy and consultation on first draft
Development of final draft and action plan

2.2 Research and Consultation

This section describes the methodology used. The results of the research and some of the consultation have been used to inform sections one and three of this report, whilst statistical analysis of consultation is found in section four. Appendix A contains a full list of documents informing desk research and Appendix B a full list of consultees.

2.2.1 Pre-draft research, advocacy and consultation to first draft

This phase of consultation ran from October to April and focused on desk research, face-to-face meetings with key partners, and the creation of sector specific networks or group meetings to inform plans and begin to create a support infrastructure for future work. It included:

- Face-to-face consultation with 20+ current partners – taking forward existing projects whilst reviewing their priorities for a new strategy (Documentation available on request)

- **Creating Networks.** Open invite meetings, bringing professionals and volunteers together to begin the creation of an infrastructure, whilst reviewing the priorities for needs in each of those infrastructures (Learning and Libraries, Art and Design in the Public Realm, Venues, Professional Artists, Voluntary and business sector, Arts and Anti-social behaviour) (Documentation available)
- **Advocacy Newsletter.** A full colour document featuring updates on projects delivered under each of the six strategic priorities identified by A Strategy for the Arts 2000, and suggesting a model for a six monthly newsletter for the arts. Two thousand copies circulated primarily to community groups, schools, arts organizations and artists, arts complex dance and live literature attendees, and via outlets such as libraries and dentist surgeries.
- **Presentation to Local Strategic Partnership thematic groups, and other partnership groups,** with scope for input into strategy areas of particular interest to each group (Documentation available)
- **Local Scrutiny Board presentation regarding Youth Arts provision and potential priority areas.**
- **Quick poll.** A simple tickbox exercise circulated via newsletter, arts complex brochure and internet allowing interested participants to choose one of six key priorities for the arts, and sign up for further information about strategy development. Limited returns possibly due to no freepost return, but offering key direction reflected in later consultation
- **Year 9 Youth Arts Participation study.** Examining attitudes to taking part in arts activities and carried out by over 500 pupils to assist with strategy development and provide data for future comparison and tracking change. Headline results processed and further results available for future study
- **Desk Research – covering national, regional and local policy documents; previous consultations; other authorities' strategies (see Appendix A)**
- **Equality Impact Assessment – Initial Screening,** which identified the only area of equality where the strategy was likely to cause a potential negative impact which could be deemed unjustified was the area of age, and that the justification for this should be explored further in a Partial Impact Assessment (available on request)

2.2.2 First draft release, advocacy and consultation on first draft

- **Draft released as a full colour document with themes, priorities and objectives, together with headline targets, a sample action plan, and single page black and white questionnaire insert with freepost return at end May 2005.** Circulation as per Advocacy Newsletter above
- **Questionnaire aimed at arts organisations, or organisations and individuals that might consider using or taking part in arts, included option to work with council to develop action points for new action plan, as well as indicating agreement/non-agreement with themes and priorities**
- **Limited number of questionnaire responses collected. Individual responses prepared, and in a limited number of situations development meetings arranged to take forward joint actions.**
- **Top Trumps cards developed by Creative Solutions as a method for helping young people develop enthusiasm for new art forms, and piloted with young people by youth workers. Feedback from these will not inform the draft strategy, which does not specify art forms for development, but will inform future actions.**
- **Ongoing consultation with networking groups particularly Arts in Learning and Libraries and Art and Design in the Public Realm**
- **Renewed engagement with key partner organisations and services, confirming their needs and simultaneously developing projects**

- Citizen's Panel Questionnaire, designed to collect user and non-user data for support for the broad themes and priorities, as well as establishing some basic participation and satisfaction trends for arts in the borough
- Partial Equality Impact Assessment to ensure equality across the board, and explore in particular whether the potential negative impact of a priority for young people on other age groups was justified

2.2.3 Development of Final Draft and Action Plan

- Participation in State of the Borough consultation exploring community priorities for the borough
- Desk based work up of package of actions which deliver on strategic themes and priorities
- Discussions relating to action plan with key partner organisations and services
- LSP Forum presentation on cultural means of achieving wider objectives
- Ongoing work with networks

2.2.4 Project Development

The research and consultation process has had the desired effect of also operating as a method of advocacy for the use of arts as a strategic means of delivering other agendas. Some examples are indicated below.

- ALLCreative Network for Arts in Libraries and Learning – Teachers reported they were uncomfortable choosing artists without meeting or personal recommendation. Approximately 30 teachers and youth workers met approximately 20 artists at our second network meeting in April. We have been made aware of at least 6 projects developed as a result of this before the end of Summer term 2005.
- Shaping our Spaces, and other related parks developments – as a result of two different network meetings discussions (art in the public realm and art and anti social behaviour), several service areas have come together to develop an inclusion project encouraging families to use green space for recreation through arts projects in the Cole Valley Corridor
- Need to address the issue of access to performances in the north of the borough has led to successful awards for all funding for Live and Local which will enable them to work with community groups in North Solihull to help develop marketing and ensure performances become sustainable

Methodology – Key Issues

- A Strategy review method based on doing whilst planning
- Three distinct consultation phases engaging with a wide range of partners in a range of ways appropriate to their needs
- Successful project development during strategy review process

3. Current Resources Overview

The detailed context for strategy development comes from a general review of resources available to and for the arts in Solihull.

This review is an indicative look at the range, quality and geographical spread of arts provision available in the borough of Solihull. It is not however, a full audit and detailed needs analysis of provision carried out on a sector by sector basis. The decision to proceed in this way is based on a number of factors including the relative maturity of partnerships within the sector; need to focus on the role of the council as supportive and encouraging rather than a controlling and monitoring partner at this stage; lack of nationally agreed methods of comparison; focus on delivering new strategy within existing budgets; recognition of capacity pressures in partner services and agencies.

The information we do have is sufficient to make the kind of decisions we are making, and part of the challenge of the strategy is how to achieve increasingly clear pictures of nature, accessibility, take up and demand for provision alongside future development work.

The review is split into sectors with definitions for the practical purposes of identifying key issues. It is important to recognize that these issues frequently overlap, and developments in one sector can influence another.

3.1 Resources – Arts Finance, Staffing and Information⁴

3.1.1 Finance

Since the first audit and analysis of arts strategy Solihull Council has moved from no investment earmarked specifically for Arts Development to over £40k arts development funding per year. This marks a significant step.

The creation of the strategy and the Arts Development Officer post has resulted in over £400k external funding drawn into the borough for arts projects, developments and activities.

For projects where funds were raised in the financial year 2004/2005 (not previously) and activity that is to be carried out before the end of March 2006 this breaks down as follows:

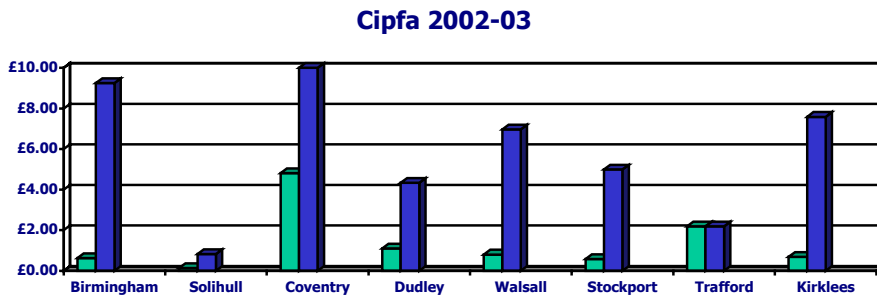
Solihull MBC Contribution	External Funding Levered	Ratio
£33,000	£71,000	2:1 for every pound spent, more than twice its value is levered in match funding

Additionally, the Arts Complex is sustaining high ticket income and hire income targets. These high targets are set to allow for spending on outreach work with schools and youth groups and links to regional initiatives, as well as maintaining a high quality overall service to all theatre users. The Arts Development Service and Arts Complex together function on a net expenditure to the council of just £302,000.

⁴ Sources: Arts Council England Data 2005; performance management data; CIPFA statistics for cultural services (2002-03); Information provided in face to face meetings; VFM Profiles –Use of Resources

However, despite these improvements there are funding issues:

- Solihull MBC is still in the lowest quartile for both its family group and its nearest neighbours for overall spend on the arts, and its spend on arts development remains relatively low.



(chart shows a mixture from family group and local authorities)

- With only a very limited ring fenced arts development projects budget (£12,500 per annum) external organisations cannot be offered core funding, and neither is it possible to provide significant levels of match funding for applications
- There are no funds allocated to a grants pot for local organisations to use either for general cultural or arts specific purposes
- As spending on outreach and development work by Solihull Arts Complex is linked to achieving high income targets these areas are always at risk – particularly of poor sales performance, or organisational changes to the income generating pantomime

Partnership working, both externally and within the council, increases the amount of arts activity that can be offered. The range of services working with artists or arts organisations is wide, and explored in more detail in further sections of this document. However, financial pressures in other areas also hit the arts. Two key providers of arts activities nationally are youth services and local education authorities or their replacements. In Solihull the schools improvement service has a settlement from National Government reflecting the high achievement of the south of the borough and which can be demonstrated to result in a lower spend per head per pupil than across the borough. Additional resources are targeted directly into schools, where the expertise and time to plan successful projects involving artists and arts organisations does not always exist. Both the schools music services and advisory teacher and schools advisor work is provided on a buy back basis, limiting the scope for development work. Likewise, funding within youth services is limited. Youth Services rank at 2.83 out of a hundred for spend per capita on youth services this places them right towards the bottom of the lowest quartile. This low funding means that key facilities such as the music studio – developed through external resources – struggle to be maintained

A recent Regular Performance Assessment by the Audit Commission has identified the reliance on external funding as a high risk strategy, and this is a risk that is only likely to increase in future due to national developments:

- From 2006/2007 onwards DCMS funding to Arts Council England is frozen with no rise to cover inflation. With a commitment to their regularly funded clients prioritised, Arts Council England may reduce funding to sub-regional partnerships
- Grants for the Arts (the Arts Council funding scheme open to organisations in Solihull, as the borough has no regularly funded organisations) for organisations is tied to National Lottery income. Pressures on this income due to the Olympics are likely to be huge, so competition for this scheme will intensify
- European and Regeneration Funding have only been available to Solihull in certain programmes (SRB and Objective 2) and in limited postcode areas. The arts have not capitalised on these funds, and many of them run out in 2006. There is no certainty that they will be replaced by new initiatives
- There will be no Lottery large scale capital programme for Arts buildings in the foreseeable future. This means that any arts based initiatives conceived in the regeneration programme will need to make the economic development or community involvement case for any capital grants
- Learning and Skills Council Funding is focusing tighter on 16-19 provision and on NVQ level 2 or equivalent qualifications. This could jeopardize future developments in family and lifelong learning, and in adult training programmes

Finally, even with its focus on external funding as a means of delivering activity, Solihull has one of the lowest spends per capita in the West Midlands in terms of Grants for Arts awards from Arts Council England.

Grants for the Arts Year 2

Spend per head of population	Solihull £0.35	West Midlands Average	£0.99
% of applications that are successful	Solihull 45%	Position in West Midlands	Lowest
Quartile			
Number of applications per head	Solihull 0.0006	Position in West Midlands	Lowest
Quartile			

Anecdotal research across authorities nationally is inconclusive as to whether the poor performance in Grants for the Arts is related to a low arts development spend. It tends to suggest that the problem lies particularly with not having any council or arts council core funded activities in the area, and historical weaknesses in community development work. It is worth noting that the borough is benefiting from some regional initiatives which are not reflected in the above figures as the lead organisation is not based in the borough, but even with those programmes included the figures would remain disappointing.

3.1.2 Staffing

As might be expected, the limited financial investment in the arts is reflected by a seriously stretched staffing capacity across many areas. This section focuses on the situation within Solihull Council itself.

Arts Development Provision:

- Single Arts Development Officer covering issues from strategic development and partnership to project management and advice services
- Limited marketing support for arts development through communications and arts complex teams
- Dance Development Coordinator for the Sub-Region of Solihull, Warwickshire and Coventry focusing on network development and supporting locally based dance initiatives across the sub-region, but based in Solihull (externally funded with contribution from Solihull)

- Visual Arts and Crafts Development Officer for Warwickshire and Solihull, a part time post with only limited capacity to support artists in Solihull (externally funded with contribution from Solihull)
- Direct Delivery Coordination via Out of School Hours Learning and Family Learning Coordinator posts. (partially externally funded, partial arts remit only)

Venue Management

- All Arts Complex venue staff operating at capacity due to high income targets
- Only 1.5 FT posts dedicated to marketing with no staff dedicated to education and outreach development or social inclusion based audience development

Learning related services

- Capacity issues arise in schools, youth services and other areas wishing to develop arts projects sometimes from lack of expertise but frequently from time and budget pressures
- Buy back policy in Schools Improvement and Music Service limit possible development work
- Library linked venues primarily staffed only during library hours – therefore not fully utilised as arts resources

Many of these problems are reflected in the voluntary organisations across the borough which might otherwise look to develop arts projects.

3.1.3 Information or Performance Management.

Information is a key resource for developing a service, so it is important to review what information is available. This refers to information gathered on an ongoing basis, rather than information gathered through consultation specifically for the production of the strategy.

Arts Complex data collection had been focused on income generation, with reducing the ratio of subsidy to income as a major driver of performance. Ticket purchases per annum is a further traditional measure, together with number of people performing or working back stage in amateur productions. Further analysis of databox returned meant that staff had a broad picture of where the audience came from geographically – primarily used for marketing purposes, and a broad idea of proportion of tickets going to young people and children.

In 2005/2006 the following improvements have been made:

- Ticket booking process changed to give a more accurate breakdown of children and young people attendance
- Satisfaction data survey set up, suitable for analysis by target group and by type of production once sufficient data is collected. All amateur dramatic societies signed up to take part in this process

Arts development targets have primarily been project orientated and reported at management level only, with an approximate count of number of participants in activities, which is inherited from when the service focus was on project delivery. From 2005/2006 new targets are being developed. The most important of these are:

1. A target based around participant experiences – which mirrors visitor count at leisure centres and libraries is being developed. Initially, this will be measured for arts development led projects, however it should evolve to become a corporate figure.

2. A target for external funding raised to be spent on arts projects in the borough by the Council and its partners

During the strategy development process further targets have been identified as reflecting clearly progress towards the identified ambition – *“To invest in a strong future for the Arts which will help us become a borough where well being, pride and quality of life is enjoyed by all”*.

These are:

- Increase percentage of audiences at Solihull Arts Complex expressing overall satisfaction with their visit from 82% to 87% by 2006/2007
- Increase percentage of borough residents surveyed expressing satisfaction with access to arts in the borough from 68% to 80% by 2010
- Increase percentage of participants in projects expressing a quality of life benefit gained (i.e. increased confidence, new skill) with the first measurement in 2006
- Increase percentage of young people surveyed taking part regularly in a group arts activity outside school time at age 14 from 45% to 60% by 2008

Within projects, it will be important to continue monitoring involvement of target groups as much as possible without compromising participation. There is a tension however with early activities introducing people to arts and working together and excessive form completion, particularly requesting monitoring data such as ethnicity or socio-economic background. There is also limited ability to influence local societies to contribute to any data picture of the borough, as consultation shows that residents feel performance management should not be a priority area, and the borough operates no grants scheme which could provide data.

Finance, Staffing and Information – Key Issues

- From £0 spend to approx £40k pa on arts development service in five years
- Spend remains lowest quartile for arts, and for arts development
- Low spends and settlements in related departments mean no designated arts budgets in education or young people’s services
- Reliance on external funding for project development, and income generation for Arts Complex outreach activity
- National changes to funding schemes increase the risk in reliance on external funding
- Poor performance relative to the rest of the West Midlands in Grants for the Arts and other external funding schemes from individual artists and community organisations
- Staffing suffers capacity pressures across the board
- Performance management data limited but with significant plans for improvement
- Possible improvements limited by lack of formal relationships with professional, voluntary or amateur sectors
- No benchmarking groups operating or planned

3.2 Arts Venues

Located between Birmingham and Coventry, residents of Solihull have the possibility of accessing arts provision in their own borough, or for those with their own transport, in a travel time of less than 45 minutes, venues in Birmingham, Warwick and Stratford. Therefore, when we consider

provision within the borough, it is important also to recognize that a role is played by such venues as Warwick Arts Centre, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham Symphony Hall and others.

However, both traffic and public transport difficulties can mean that travel time to those nearby venues takes over an hour, or from certain areas notably in the rural south or east, it is not possible by public transport.

3.2.1 Performing Arts Venues

There are seven designated performing arts spaces in the borough, all with differing (and frequently very limited) provision (see Appendix C). Our key challenge, for performing arts venues in Solihull is to maximise the usage of both arts and non-arts spaces in the borough to support a range of performance, and access to opportunity appropriate to the needs of our community.

Since the previous audit in 2000 the following progress has been made:

- Solihull Arts Complex has a full, planned amateur and professional programme, allowing local societies to plan their performances as far as two years ahead, whilst delivering audience development work around selected elements of professional programming (notably dance and live literature)
- The Arts Complex also welcomes the film society, creating limited, but popular access to some art cinema
- A programme of performance run by Solihull Arts Complex in borough parks and Chelmsley Wood Library theatre has begun to extend the availability of professional performance outside the town centre
- Dovehouse Theatre at Langley School has increased capacity for amateur performance and dance schools and provided an opportunity for both primary and secondary pupils to experience a real theatre environment
- Community Touring organisation Live and Local are working with Solihull Council and community groups in North Solihull to develop a programme of professional shows in community venues
- Arts designated venues are exploring ways of working together, particularly looking at options for shared marketing and online ticketing facilities

Additionally, there are a range of non-arts venues which are used for performing arts within the borough. These include school spaces not at Specialist Arts Colleges (eg. Arden School Hall, Heart of England school dance studio), youth service buildings (eg. Hatchford Brook drama room, Kingshurst Music Studio), churches (eg Shirley Methodist Church, Chelmsley Wood Baptist Church), community halls (eg Arden Hall, Monkspath Community Centre).

However, even with these additional resources, there are key concerns which remain.

- Outside of dance and live literature programming is conservative. There is very limited drama provision in the borough with almost no opportunity to see physical theatre or new writing. The Edge at Alderbrook School hopes to reverse this trend in a limited way with its Theatre in Education company, and Birmingham Rep and Warwick Arts Centre do offer this opportunity to those who can travel easily
- Whilst all arts venues meet physical accessibility standards, and Solihull Council has a commitment to Welcome All training for its staff in assisting disabled customers, provision across non-arts venues varies

- New initiatives look set to generate more space that may potentially be suitable for performance (new spaces at Archbishop Grimshaw School, Craig Croft Hub Regeneration, New Chelmsley Wood Library Theatre, NOF developments at Heart of England School). However technical and administration support to ensure that full use can be made of these facilities by the community are not yet certain
- Limited outreach provision, and particularly limited capacity to develop further provision (dance workshops for schools at Solihull Arts Complex, Primary School projects at Dovehouse Theatre). The MAC in Birmingham extends some of its outreach programmes to Solihull schools, however greater opportunity on the doorstep would be valued by schools in the borough

3.2.2 Visual Arts and Crafts Venues

Solihull Council is working with Arts Council England to address one of their regional concerns, which is lack of gallery space available for emerging artists. The gallery space at Solihull Arts Complex, redesigned and enlarged in 2001, has appointed a curator in 2005 and plans to move forward as a significant centre for emerging local and regional contemporary artists.

However, this is the only significant non-commercial art and craft space in the borough. A small community gallery is available, and well used at the Arts Complex location, work is being done to raise its profile, and address local societies' concerns about lack of visitors and lack of display space. Additionally, a small movable community gallery has been acquired by local organisation ST!ART for the Craig Croft area of Chelmsley Wood.

For artists hoping to sell work there is still limited access to space. Of approximately 7-10 local galleries only two - three sell local artists' work. There appears to be no strong tradition of church hall sales exhibitions as one might find in a rural community. Nevertheless a strong network of visual arts societies and adult education painting groups exists.

In terms of creative industry development, whilst the borough has a high proportion of nationally designated creative industries these are primarily around software development, web and graphic design. There is no provision in the borough for live/work spaces, arts and craft units or incubator space. There is an economic development interest in exploring the role of creative industries, adopting models used elsewhere, but not necessarily commitment from the regeneration company to explore those models, or any work on feasibility as to how appropriate they are for the particular needs of the area. There is an opportunity to take advantage of an intention to give one of the first North Solihull Village centres – Craig Croft – an arts focus. However the concept has not been developed at the present stage.

Arts Venues – Key Issues

- Range of small scale venues, with increasing efforts going to providing professional productions outside Solihull Town Centre
- Limited capacity at all venues for inclusion focused audience development and outreach work
- Risk of venues without feasibility plans for ongoing admin and technical staffing can lead to wasted physical resources
- Under used non-arts venues, particularly in terms of potential exhibition spaces
- Limited range of high quality facilities available
- Strong commitment from existing venues to quality, outreach and inclusion as far as possible within budgets, particularly serving dance and literature
- Gallery facility begins to tackle issue of space, but scope for further visual arts development remains

3.3 Arts Companies and Businesses

Arts Companies based in a location have the potential to be a key resource for an area. They raise the profile of a certain kind of arts activity, and frequently help to build audiences for it or increase participation in it among young people. They are able to apply for Arts Council funds for initiatives, and can offer services to schools and other user groups. In a borough where capacity among staff who are considering using arts projects to deliver their objectives is limited – particularly in terms of time – being able to turn to a locally based provider to offer solutions can be a huge bonus – and the lack of such companies can actually prevent projects materializing.

Arts Companies are described here in four ways. Professional Companies – where those producing the art work are paid both for the art work they make and for workshops they provide, as well as staff being paid for running the company; Voluntary sector companies or community organisations – where staff are paid for running the company (often with the help of volunteers), and arts workers are paid for leading work, but most people making the art or performing are volunteers; Amateur groups – where everyone taking part is volunteering (except occasionally one key individual such as a conductor or choir master); Small businesses – dance teachers running private dance schools, individual artists selling their work. Each has a different capacity to contribute to the borough, and the work of all is important.

3.3.1 Professional Companies

The borough has no well-established professional arts companies. Two professional theatre companies exist (Groundbreaking Theatre and Troika Productions), but they are operating at a level where a lot of their office work and administration is done by the performers and directors because they want to get the company off the ground, not on a fully paid basis. Additionally, Playbox Theatre Company – a professional theatre company based in Warwick - offers a youth theatre workshop in the borough.

Strengths

- Enthusiasm from young companies
- Well respected youth theatre

Weaknesses

- Not supported by the borough, so focus is not on work they can do in the borough
- Not yet established enough to receive support from Arts Council England, therefore not a resource for the borough
- Young performers have to travel to Warwick to integrate into performances

3.3.2 Amateur Groups

The borough has a wealth of local societies offering drama and visual arts activities, many supporting traditions that go back over half a century. This amounts to one of the biggest forms of participatory activity available for adults in the borough (together with adult education classes). Appendix D shows a breakdown of types of provision available and its location. Particular mention should be made of the Solihull Festival a rotary club run initiative. Its programming includes both professional (primarily light entertainment including jazz, classical, pop and big band) performance and local societies, as well as youth music competitions and art exhibitions. It is paid for through sponsorship, free use of Solihull Arts Complex venue and marketing resources. All profits generated are used to raise funds for charities selected by the rotary clubs.

Strengths

- Strong opportunities for performance, self-sustaining and contributing to the sustainability of Solihull Arts Complex and Dovehouse Theatre, whilst receiving subsidised use of the council and school run venues
- High audience numbers
- Important social activities for older people provided through visual arts groups
- Popular borough festival showcasing arts as light entertainment, with willingness to work to include new audiences and more performance in north of borough

Weaknesses

- Limited opportunities for young people
- Provision focused on the South of the borough
- Provision primarily limited to musical theatre and traditional visual arts
- No strategic plans around accessibility, diversity or involvement
- Variable quality standards so pathways to progression (ie professional careers) vary
- Lack of audience data on Solihull Festival – questions around who benefits
- Fundraising nature of festival prevents risk taking and development work

3.3.3 Voluntary/Community Sector

The borough hosts only two voluntary sector organisations with an arts focus. Both these organisations have staff and volunteers, and deliver crucial projects offering arts solutions to inclusion issues (SoLO North and South Arts Group working with young people with learning difficulties, Northern Star Community Arts Organisation increasing opportunities for participation and community confidence building in North Solihull). A third, emerging organisation Fordbridge Youth and Community Theatre looks set to echo their strengths, and reflect similar weaknesses, as it adapts to project funding. It hopes to focus on community involvement and possibly regeneration agendas, however at present its staff are all volunteers.

Strengths

- Two companies with excellent awareness of community needs, high quality standards in child protection, equalities and other community agendas
- Two companies advocating strongly for arts to achieve those agendas and running successful projects
- Both companies have attracted project funding from Arts Council England and other non-arts sources
- Improved accessibility of arts activities to two key groups (young people in various areas of North Solihull and young people with learning difficulties)
- Good working relationship with Solihull Council to support the development of activity

Weaknesses

- Core funding for the running of the projects is raised as part of project applications causing fragility
- Both organisations have limited, though growing experience of the range of art forms and solutions to community issues that those art forms can offer
- Organisations need to focus on their funded projects and deliver them well, and can only occasionally turn to offering project solutions for other organisations who would like to use an arts project
- No core arts funding commitment from Solihull Council can weaken the organisations' case with external funders

3.3.4 Small Businesses

Our information on this sector is not detailed. The list of individuals who are operating as small arts businesses that we hold is far from exhaustive, and doesn't cover part-time music and art teaching staff who could be considered a resource for the borough separately to their time employed by the education establishment. Additionally, we have carried out no studies as to how effective or sustainable those businesses are. An estimate of 50% of those listed making a living from their art activity outside of formal teaching would probably be optimistic.

Alongside a limited amount of out of school hours provision offered by schools, and a comprehensive range of music groups provided by Solihull Music Service, private dance and theatre schools offer the majority of opportunity to take part in the arts for young people outside the school timetable and so this sector must be considered significant to the borough.

20 private dance schools
4 private theatre schools
10 commercial galleries
10 photographic businesses
60 visual artists known to the council as functioning or aiming to function as small businesses

Strengths

- Vibrant dance sector with national teaching standards and opportunity in North of Borough
- Artists Forum developing networking opportunities for visual artists
- BA Fine Art course offered in the borough
- Recently appointed Visual Arts and Crafts Business Development Officer to offer advice and support on a sub-regional basis

Weaknesses

- Limited number of artists with skills to work in arts and regeneration, health or education (reflects a national issue)
- Networks between artists and sectors only in their infancy
- Private sector youth provision has no inclusion pricing system
- Arts training (Degree or BTEC level) does not properly reflect vocational opportunities
- Lack of small business support for artists historically
- Lack of breadth to sector

3.3.5 Enhancing the resource available by looking outside

Work so far on enhancing this resource of companies – people – working in the arts in the borough has been adhoc, but successful on a time limited basis.

Whilst companies based in neighbouring areas can frequently be overstretched delivering activity in the area where an authority offers them core funding, and therefore not available as a resource to Solihull, there is a wealth of talent and expertise available which can sometimes be developed through partnership. This approach has led to several successful projects like Big Brum Theatre Company's Sea Child production which was developed with Solihull primary schools, or Dance Xchange's Dance Artist's in Residence initiative, which is moving towards a sustainable model in future. Additionally Solihull Arts Complex takes a limited but planned approach when arranging its dance and drama bookings – entering into ongoing relationships with companies with a national reputation like Motionhouse Dance and Quicksilver Theatre.

Specialist Arts Colleges are also becoming a focus for other schools in the borough to link to professional arts resources, from specialist skills teachers, to visiting professional companies – this is covered in more detail in the next section.

Solihull Council has since 2004 sought to build in opportunities for training in delivering engaged arts work (ie work tackling issues such as regeneration, health or anti-social behaviour) within its projects, and intends to track the results of this in terms of generating artists based in the borough with the right skills to deliver projects tackling cross cutting agendas.

All these steps will begin to improve the arts resources available to the borough, and the communication between those potential resources, but needs strategic planning to ensure that this results in better, more accessible provision, tackling cross cutting issues, in a way that benefits residents of the borough.

Arts Businesses and Companies – Key Issues

- How to balance need to develop a professional sector with support to voluntary sector
- No locally based companies, and few locally based artists currently have the strength to support a range of cross-cutting issues based work
- Limited contact between council and organisations means very limited monitoring of frequency, take up, satisfaction and quality of activity
- No grants scheme means no method of applying inclusion quality standards to local societies
- Enthusiastic amateur sector is a vital means of taking part for many
- Enthusiasm of voluntary sector could be harnessed into a stronger resource for arts in the borough
- Lack of core funding to professional and voluntary sector means fragile organisations
- Need to ensure opportunities for local development when harnessing outside expertise

3.4 Resources – Arts in Formal Education

“Work with the Schools that’s the heart of it” Local Services Scrutiny Board Member, October 2004

This section of the review looks at the links between Solihull Council arts development and the various aspects of the education sector – from individual schools, to the services managing different parts of the education system, and also at the links those different providers have to wider arts resources. This is an overview only. A range of documents have been used to compile this information, together with face-to-face interviews and these cover key areas in more detail.

3.4.1 The Schools Improvement Service

Partnership with the Schools Improvement Service was built very strongly when Solihull MBC embraced its first arts strategy. The Borough Arts Group, which met to allocate arts grants to schools provided by a budget pot from the then West Midlands Arts, and involved teachers, advisors, inspectors and local artists and arts organisations was a driving force behind the creation of an arts development post. Key partnership projects (Dramatic Effect, DaiR, Teaching Creatively and Teaching for Creativity) have been developed between schools, the school improvement service and the arts development team, with strong evaluation and action research strands.

“Being part of the Dance Artists in Residence consortium was one of the best things the school has done” Danny Murphy, Alderbrook School and Specialist Arts College

Schools, particularly those involved with these two - three year initiatives have looked to key Schools Improvement Advisors and Advisory Teachers to provide them with advice in involving artists within schools, and a key Schools Improvement Advisor has provided a strong link to regional Arts Education organisation ALISS, and picked up projects offered by ALISS to the region.

However, the current situation is such that the involvement of the schools improvement service in arts development is being increasingly limited:

- No days allocated for School Advisors to link into regional arts education initiatives
- Increasing amount of Advisory Teacher and Advisor time must be covered by buy back, meaning that staff developing initiatives can only really do so using their own time
- Education Development Plan phased out, and Arts not listed as a priority in replacement documents
- There is a lack of clarity over how limited core staff time (ie not required to achieve buy back) can be used for joint working on cultural initiatives

Additionally, action research projects whilst producing much anecdotal evidence for the confidence building, horizon expanding involvement of artists in schools, have not tracked any statistical evidence of increased education attainment, or shown that the artists achieve anything more, or different to teachers working in new ways.

3.4.2 Building Schools for the Future and Primary Regeneration

These are two programmes which will eventually see the rebuilding or refurbishment of the majority of the borough’s schools. Four schools in the north of the borough are part of Wave 1 of the national building schools for the future programme for which construction could begin as early as 2006.

Primary Regen is a project which will rationalise the number of primary schools in North Solihull and equip them for an increasing role in supporting community activity.

In both cases, decisions about arts facilities to be provided will be made by individual schools at a local level, not by the overall strategic team. In contrast to sporting facilities there are no minimum standards for provision of different types of arts facility.

Both projects are also opportunities for a great deal of artist involvement in process – particularly in pupil and parent involvement in planning and design. With the help of an Arts Council England Grants for the Arts Lottery Award the council has worked with Creative Solutions to develop ‘A Creative Welcome’, an artist led project which creates a DVD of pupils’ voices and public art suggestions for incorporation into Wave 1 BSF Schools. This is highlighted in the Initiation to Negotiate for bidders and there is hope that bidders will consider continuing with the work.

Whilst this involvement is extremely positive, and may have wider benefits, encouraging the use of arts for community involvement in other design and regeneration related initiatives, it still leaves the role of arts facilities and arts activities for community use largely unexplored and likely to remain undeveloped.

3.4.3 Specialist Arts Colleges

Whilst the role that the Schools Improvement Service is able to play in arts development may be diminishing, Specialist Arts Colleges are just starting to come into their own. The borough has two existing specialist Arts Colleges, Langley School in Olton and Alderbrook School in Solihull. Archbishop Grimshaw School in Chelmsley Wood has just received confirmation of its status, which will allow development of its new facilities simultaneously with its participation in the Building Schools for the Future Programme in 2006.

Each College has a slightly different focus. All three colleges have their status for performing arts, and have a strong emphasis on dance and drama. However Langley also focuses on music development, Alderbrook is interested in new media opportunities, and Archbishop Grimshaw on its visual arts programme. The initiatives listed below are just a flavour of what the colleges are contributing to the borough in arts development terms.

- Developing plans to become an accreditation hub for the national Youth Arts Leader Award (Langley)
- Developing a youth dance company (Alderbrook)
- Developing International Dance Festivals (Alderbrook and Archbishop Grimshaw)
- Linking in to regional initiatives for Specialist Arts Colleges via ALISS (All)
- Working with Solihull Council to help support schools through the ALLCreative network for arts in learning and libraries
- Sharing facilities with local drama and art groups (All)

If there is a weakness to date it has been lack of strategic planning, and time for planning both between the three colleges and between the colleges and the council. Partnership working has been very successful on a project by project basis, and there is great scope to take that success forward into a stronger plan which would ensure equality of benefit across the borough.

3.4.4 Solihull Music Service

The schools music service provision is focused on, but not limited to the 5 -16 age group. It has a base at Lyndon Music Centre, sharing the campus with Lyndon School (secondary), and operates, as many music services do in the current climate, primarily through buy back of teachers time (right up to

part of the time of the head of service). This provides limited opportunities for development, tackling cross cutting agendas, marketing new instruments or ideas, ensuring equality of access or embracing new partnerships.

Nevertheless the service offers an absolutely crucial resource to the borough, some of which is exceedingly innovative, including but not limited to:

- 40+ performance groups for young people of all standards (Olton)
- National Rock and Pop Festival at NEC and related smaller performances at Solihull Arts Complex
- World Music Festival (although without maximizing opportunities for wider awareness of cultural diversity)
- Choral Development Officer working with community partners
- Role out of teaching of instruments at primary school (including use of ocarina)

3.4.5 Individual Schools

62 % of the borough's schools secondary schools and 60% of special schools, but only 25% of Primary and Infant Schools have had an arts mark status award made in the last 4 years (Appendix E).

We do not have a detailed audit of what facilities exist at which school, or which schools take part in local, regional or national opportunities.

The extent to which an individual school involves itself in arts activity is largely down to a matter of preference of head teachers and governors. Provision within the national curriculum for teaching of arts subjects does exist, but at primary level it is possible for it to be delivered by non-specialists, at secondary level it amounts to very small periods of time. Nevertheless many schools do have a commitment to the arts and recognize their benefits to educational attainment and self esteem and go far beyond this.

However, even where the commitment exists there are factors limiting what a school can do:

- Time available for planning – this is a particular an issue at primary school level
- Students time available away from core curriculum
- Understanding (what do we want from an arts project and how do we find the artist that can deliver it?)
- Budgets (in the last three years West Midlands Arts Artist in Residence funding has stopped, NOF funding has stopped, and both Grants for the Arts and Awards from All have said that they will only make grants to schools where community involvement or multiple schools are involved)
- Budget limitations affect not only ability to work with artists but ability of teachers to give pupils full benefit of their own creative talents due to limited materials

Schools are geographically dependant on certain factors which can ease those pressures:

- Excellence in Cities programmes
- Cluster groups where Secondary School has a strong arts focus
- Levels of parent involvement

Teachers meeting as part of the strategy development process produced a SWOT analysis of the current situation. At a later meeting discussions showed that communications between schools and about current initiatives would be more valuable than new celebratory initiatives. Significantly, there was still demand for more packages that could be bought into, with limited time needing to be invested by the school itself in order to gain the benefits.

3.4.6 Solihull College and Other 16-19 provision

No analysis has been done of overall 16-19 arts provision. A variety of arts courses are being offered in the borough, both as A levels and as BTEC qualifications and covering areas as diverse as performing arts, music technology and ceramics. Of the three specialist arts colleges only Archbishop Grimshaw has a sixth form and many pupils pursuing arts or media options head out of the borough to Stratford College. The limited provision at 16-19 is followed by even further limited provision in the borough at Higher Education level, with a BA Fine Art the only qualification offered in the borough. Detailed information on music provision can be found in the LSC music review for Birmingham and Solihull; however the review has a strong Birmingham focus.

More research would be required to establish what effect this has on students and their potential. One thing that has been anecdotally observed is that none of the courses offered within the borough (up to and including the BA Fine Art) highlight the professional opportunities available as “Arts in the Community Workers” – and these may well be the biggest growing employment areas nationally for people wanting to use arts skills in their career.

Key Issues

- Increasing financial pressures on core support services (SIAS, SMS) reduce the amount of development work they can deliver and limits regional and national linkages
- Specialist Arts Colleges offering exciting projects and developments, but with insufficient long term planning between colleges and between colleges and council
- Staff feel they don't always know about all opportunities despite a wealth of work in the borough
- Lack of resources to deliver projects with or without artist involvement, both in terms of funding for materials and staff time or expertise for project planning
- Decreasing number of grant funds accessible to schools
- Support for arts and creativity in the curriculum varies from school to school
- Support for individual schools varies with geography (Specialist College Clusters)
- Post 16 teaching does not reflect modern vocational opportunities in the arts

3.5 Resources – Arts in Informal Education

Arts provision is also an important part of informal education opportunities both for young people and adults. Some of this provision is offered through the arts groups and companies discussed earlier, but much of it is, should, or could be available from council provided or supported sectors. These include youth services, Early Year's services, libraries, leisure and park services and family, out of hours and lifelong learning.

In broad terms there is a great deal of support for the use of arts within informal education, as a means of engagement, confidence building, skills development and creative expression. This is embraced formally by the Youth Services under one of their four curriculum areas "Creativity and Challenged", it is implicitly acknowledged by the extent of arts activities featured in both family learning and out of school hours programmes, and the choice of arts and crafts, in particular as an activity for individual libraries, Children's Fund initiatives and play activities across the borough.

No quantity, frequency or quality audit has been carried out for this type of provision to date. However some evidence is available:

- The Out of School Hours Learning review highlights key projects at borough schools (such as Northern Lights)
- Extended Schools data shows schools intention to provide out of school activity of certain types (this is limited as arts are not recorded individually but grouped with sports)
- Project reports and user feedback show a range of projects delivered by youth services in partnership with arts organisations or using youth workers skills
- Solihull College 2003 Lifelong Learning Inspection report gives information about visual arts provision in lifelong learning, which is focused primarily on informal opportunities
- Positive Futures Leisure Services programme is monitoring demand and take up for arts activities

It is easiest to look at the provision in broad groupings relating to the age groups catered for

3.5.1 13+

The key services concerned with delivery for the 13+ age group are Youth Services and Connexions. Whilst the former offers a range of venue and street based provision, Connexions is primarily an advice and guidance service for young people and its remit also covers the 8 -13 age group.

Within Solihull youth services there are a range of facilities available across the borough – from fully equipped recording studios to rooms with mirrored walls for dance practice, also kilns and screen printing equipment. Issues exist around the quality of these facilities in some cases, and also, due to limited administration capacity within the service, equipment is rarely circulated from one venue to another. Moreover, flagship facilities, such as Kingshurst Music Studio, are dependant on external funding for their day to day running costs.

The service is accustomed, within limit budgets and often for externally funded projects - to buying in specialist arts provision, particularly mural work, voice tuition, break-dance tuition. Additionally, a number of youth arts worker posts with different specialisms exist within the service, based at key youth centres. These include studio engineering, photography, dance, arts and cooking, and drama and are paid at youth work rates. Sharing of expertise between centres is beginning, but limited.

The most developed area of arts provision within the service is the music studio at Kingshurst which has recognised the benefits of engagement for young people and uses skilled workers to run projects around behaviour improvement, and links up with Solihull College to offer accredited learning in Music Technology.

There remains a gap between ambition and what is possible to deliver given budgets – often leading to a cycle of projects in familiar art forms “mural, DJ, streetdance, t-shirt design”, and a lack of profile outside the service for the work produced by young people and workers. This is a shame as key projects have clearly empowered young people and enabled such things as: taking part in national dance competitions, completing dance exams, branding own bands merchandising, and more.

Youth Services also offer support and small grants to voluntary run youth clubs, which could be a start up route for new youth arts groups in the area to consider.

Working with the youth service to ensure that the ambition of the “creativity and challenge” curriculum can be achieved is a key area for future development.

“Young people would most like to try new arts activities at school, followed by at a Solihull Arts Venue, Leisure Centre or Youth Club” Year 9 Big Arts Grid

3.5.2 Under 13

There is no single out of school hours service that caters for pre youth service age groups, though youth clubs themselves often have junior sections, Connexions personal advisors work with young people from 8+ and Solihull Children’s Fund have set up and funded key initiatives in specific areas (Off the Wood, On Track, Arts Out) and a wide range of holiday provision exists, frequently offered through Solihull Libraries or schools as wraparound systems. Providers for under 8’s of all types are almost always (unless their provision is very limited) registered through Solihull Children’s Services for Ofsted purposes.

As a broad rule for this age group within the informal learning provision arts activities fall into two categories. Firstly, activities (usually visual arts and crafts) led by sessional workers with no particular arts training, which form the bulk of the provision, supplemented by some sessions where sessional workers have training (eg storytelling in Libraries, Park Rangers willow weaving). Secondly, taster sessions where artists run one-off sessions at libraries, or as part of schemes such as Arts Out, or Positive Activities for Young People (Connexions funded initiative).

Whilst it is important not to forget the role of Solihull Music Service and our private dance and theatre schools in providing for this age group, this does mean that sustained activity tends to be limited to music groups, dance or occasionally drama, and sustained activity within informal learning designated settings is almost non-existent. There is little evidence of opportunity for young people in visual arts, new media, creative dance (as opposed to learning choreographed routines), circus, photography or film.

There is however a need for this sustainable activity. Pilot projects led by a Family Learning officer are beginning to show a demand for ongoing activity with progression and development, as well as more unusual art forms such as collage and environmental arts, and family learning research shows the biggest issue for the borough is pathways to progression.

3.5.3 Lifelong Learning

Solihull College offers a range of courses in visual arts. These are well subscribed and received a three out of five rating in the 2003 assessment for teaching and learner retention, with some limited criticism of inadequate facilities and resources. The range of opportunity is tightly focused on decorative arts and traditional painting and drawing techniques, although steps are being taken to broaden these. The biggest issue faced within this form of provision is the funding within Lifelong Learning is becoming increasingly targeted to 16-19 NVQ Level 2 equivalent accredited courses. This may put the visual arts programme, which includes just a few accredited options, in jeopardy.

The offer is likely to be affected by the national movements reducing subsidy to classes where benefit is considered purely social, and where learners who are not unemployed may receive potential career benefits. It is likely that the classes will need to generate higher fee income in future. Leisure provision by the College of sport activity has already been halted due to lack of funding available to achieve quality provision.

3.5.4 The Future of Informal Learning

There are many options to explore with the different providers. These partnerships will be particularly important as this is a key area of potential development for the borough for a number of reasons

- Projects have an ability to tackle issues raised by Every Child Matters
- Delivery of Youth Matters requires sustained access to activities of various types
- To date the role of arts has not been fully developed within Children's Trust planning
- Informal Learning opportunities offer excellent links to cross cutting agendas (see next section)
- The Big Lottery Fund Young People's Fund is an important new funding opportunity

Arts in Informal Learning – Key Issues

- Children and Young People – across all age groups there is a need to find a way to meet the ambitions of the sector regarding arts activity within limited budgets, with frontline staff identifying delivery training and fundraising training as possible options
- Children and Young People – across all age groups there is a need to provide pathways to progression and links to ongoing provision following taster sessions and sessions by general workers
- Children and Young People – essential to develop sessions with young people's needs fully understood in order to ensure participation and secure funding
- Children and Young People – need to work together with providers and funders to ensure both quality of provision and range of activity
- Lifelong Learning – need to address limited range of activity within the sector, and consider future funding threats
- All Sectors – greater sharing of resources and strategic plans to maintain high quality resources

3.6 Resources - Arts Provision in a Wider Context

Solihull Council's Arts Strategy in 2000 was carried out when the arts department sat within Libraries, Arts and Education, and before the council had developed a single vision, corporate objectives and new policies. That link with learning and with activities for young people in general has been retained as a focus for the new strategy. However it is absolutely essential that this new strategy embraces the single vision of the council, and works corporately to ensure the maximum strategic benefits of using the arts. Evidence for the value of this approach is growing, and is showcased by such organisations as IdeA and the LGA.

This section therefore reviews existing links and potential for development of arts projects as part of a solution to a wide range of Agendas.

3.6.1 Art within the Community Plan and the Local Strategic Partnership

As identified in the general context section, art, and indeed culture generally has no broad endorsement in the Community Plan. Rather than recognizing the broad ability of arts activity to address a range of cross-cutting issues effectively, and to be a delivery mechanism for part or whole of a range of priorities from all strategic themes, certain objectives exist around creativity in learning, high quality design and cultural celebrations, which could be considered to relate to arts.

Within the new plan it is hoped that the role of arts and culture generally will be recognised primarily as a delivery mechanism to achieve other priorities as and when opportunity is identified. It is also likely that a small place will be found to focus on the intrinsic value of culture, and therefore arts, as a part of quality of life. However, as that theme has been developed by the Place to Live Group, which also focuses on Transport, Environment and Housing, there is a chance that messages and opportunities regarding the intrinsic value of culture will be lost.

In developing this Strategy, the Arts Development Officer made detailed presentations to three of the six Local Strategic Partnership Theme Groups, as well as the LSP Forum. Other groups could equally have received presentations had time allowed. This poses an issue for future working. The LSP progresses agendas such as Crime and Disorder, Health Inequalities, the creation of the Children's Trust. At present staffing levels, and with only two voluntary sector organisations with staffing capacity to represent the arts, both also representing other agendas, the case for the arts is not currently being made consistently and strategically to all these groups.

Nevertheless, two areas of arts development have moved forward over the last two years through involvement with the Local Strategic Partnership.

- Community Involvement and Consultation
- Public Art

3.6.2 Community Involvement and Consultation

Solihull Council has a Community Consultation SORP produced in January 2004. In June 2004 a supplementary document detailing how arts could help departments achieve their consultation and communication needs was produced. It has not yet been made corporately available.

However key teams are experimenting with arts in community involvement in consultation

- Children Looked After Service – projects with Red Rose and Chain Theatre Company to design service improvements
- Local Strategic Partnership – using theatre companies to illustrate areas for debate, arts activities to encourage participation
- Regenpoint – using arts to engage communities in regeneration – photo projects and attention grabbing entertainment
- Fordbridge Pathfinder – ready to explore how arts can be built into their capacity building programme

This is a major area for future development, and will be taken forward alongside plans for public art and work with Regeneration Programmes

3.6.3 Public Art

Whilst public art was the first area of interest for Solihull Council, producing a policy in the late 1990's, the recommendations of that policy, whilst accepted, were never fully implemented, and it was subsumed into the wider arts strategy and partnership agreement with West Midland Arts in 2000 onwards.

There have however been notable public art developments in the borough:

- Kingshurst Parade Public Art project and related festival (2002 onwards)
- Burton Green Park temporary Public Art (2002) project cited as a national example of good practice
- Lead partner in artist led Social Fabric (2005) designing a new transport project for #71 bus

Additionally, at the request of the LSP Place to Live Group a working group of officers was formed to look at Art & Design in the Public Realm in Solihull with a particular emphasis on Art in Transport and Planning.

This group has been meeting for almost 18 months and the following progress has been made:

- Officers from landscape design, architecture, transport engineering, arts, regeneration, horticulture, planning working together
- Broadening of the concept of public art
- Specific initiatives planned for the Cole Valley Corridor using public art as a means of persuading families to enjoy green space recreation
- Public Art Consultant working alongside Urban Design Consultants for Stratford Road
- Future plans for Artist in Residence in Transport and Highways
- Wider recognition of the community involvement possibilities of Public Art
- Longer term planning around design and art standards in Planning Framework

The most significant commitment comes from the Corporate Management Team, who have requested the development of a set of guidelines for public art within council projects, to be developed by the end of 2005/2006

3.6.4 Regeneration

Both Public Art in its widest sense, and art to enhance community involvement and consultation are key elements of art in regeneration programmes. These programmes should also be interested in art

to tackle anti social behaviour (covered below), as well as arts projects for skills development, and art as an economically viable leisure provision or business unit.

Discussions are ongoing with Fordbridge Plus - the Neighbourhood Pathfinder Area, and Inpartnership – the North Solihull Housing Led Regeneration programme. There are, as yet, no firm commitments within either scheme to a strategic vision for the arts within their delivery. There are however early signs of interest:

- Pathfinder funded a quick win youth theatre production and has helped establish a new community youth theatre
- Inpartnership has worked with arts entertainment as a means of attracting people to consultation
- The Strategic Framework recognizes scope for Public Art in contributing to the legibility, profile and cultural cohesion of the area
- Plans are being discussed for an arts focus to the village centre at Craig Croft
- Community Regeneration Support Officer currently employed has a drama background and is exploring further possibilities for community involvement through arts

Timescales and budgets are the biggest concern. Will the necessary communication and contact occur to allow the schemes to make full and early use of arts to achieve their aims, or will it be reduced to an add-on activity. Both initiatives have had initial delays in sorting out legal and government agreements. Now these are clear hopefully options for strategic planning will begin to emerge

3.6.5 Anti-Social Behaviour

There is almost no strategic recognition of the benefits of arts activities as a means of combating anti-social behaviour in the Crime and Disorder Strategy or related documents. Whilst this is partly because the strategy focuses on crimes such as burglary and car crime, even the Anti-social Behaviour Strategy and documents relating to “fear of crime” prevention do not show the breadth of change that arts can support. A brief mention is made of the role of arts and leisure as diversionary activities.

This does not reflect the commitment from officers on the ground; key members of Youth Services, Children’s Services, Youth Offending teams recognize the range and scope of activity that can be offered. The borough has had one or two successful projects – a film project in Hockley Heath, a photo project as part of “Youth Start”. However both local projects which provide convincing evidence of the importance of this kind of work and national hard data are scarce.

There is a real need to identify companies capable of delivering benefits of change, self esteem, moral guidance, reducing fear of crime, and pilot initiatives in order to see this kind of work reach levels delivered in neighbouring boroughs. Work with the Arts and Inclusion LSP Theme Group has identified a desire for intergenerational work, tackling fear of crime and other community cohesion issues. However, nowhere is there currently capacity to deliver these new initiatives.

Two areas have been identified for pilots which will provide a means of opening up the topic for further discussion and possibly leveraging future investment:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour of the very young through family engagement in outdoor arts projects
- Adding to the leisure activities offered as part of Positive Futures with good quality dance activity and a photography project

3.6.6 Wider Inclusion Issues

There are a range of inclusion issues where arts can play a role in changing the situation. These include disability awareness, community cohesion and cultural diversity, exclusion through poor self esteem, mental health stigma, and much more.

At the same time it is also essential to ensure that arts projects of all types throughout the borough do not exacerbate those inclusion issues by excluding or failing to include members of the community for one reason or another.

A Partial Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out which explores the extent to which the new arts strategy document aims to ensure equality across all areas, and in doing so it covers what we know about the relative inclusivity of the arts provision currently available in the borough. In addition to the information contained in that assessment document, some recent developments in Arts and wider inclusion issues are listed below:

- A small, but resource intensive project offering professional performances of classical music to residential homes has been discontinued due to limited take up. Although greater interest in participatory activities or opportunities for visits have been expressed by some homes
- Efforts are being made to ensure that all types of leisure provision in the borough can become more inclusive, with staff having the right training to support young people particularly with learning difficulties. However, take up from arts activities has been limited as primarily arts activities in the borough are small private businesses or voluntary societies
- Solihull Arts Complex provides at least one signed performance of Pantomime and suggests to its amateur dramatic societies that they consider signed performances following the lead of SoSage Factory Youth Theatre Group, but it struggles to offer this option across its programming as signing cannot be developed for one-off performances
- Solihull Arts Complex has had an internal disability audit and made changes including signage and handrails
- Communications have been opened with Primary Care Trust and Adult Social Service staff and interest identified in arts to improve mental health, arts project management training for care home activity coordinators and arts for physical activity. However these initiatives have not been given high priority by arts service or partners at present
- Arts Complex programming throughout the year reflects diversity through its performers on stage and the complex intends to monitor this further. However it has yet to develop an audience for culturally specific work, despite programming such work at least once a year.
- Black History Month has become a showcase time for the council to profile its diversity work, and this includes a range of performances and workshops scheduled for this period each year
- Partnerships are being explored with Solihull Carer's Centre, Disabled People's Network and Warwickshire Rural Community Council to address issues for the potentially isolated groups that they represent
- A Council wide approach to voluntary sector communication and in particular diversity issues is being developed. This will provide a key means of ensuring arts provision develops inclusively in future
- When exploring ways of developing projects that deliver on new agendas capacity is the biggest issue. There is also some concern over projects being developed for groups, rather than with them and resulting in low take up, and risking tokenism. Better planning will help to reduce these risks

Key Issues – Arts Provision in a wider context

- The scope of areas to look at is very broad, including: community involvement and consultation; regeneration; anti-social behaviour; fear of crime; older people's activities; physical activity; inclusion - rural; inclusion – disability; inclusion – race and ethnicity; regeneration; public art as a means to good urban design; arts in health including mental health
- Almost no strategic planning for use of arts has been carried out to date in any of these areas
- Pockets of good practice exist on a project basis
- Front line staff show interest and enthusiasm for new methods but do not always have the expertise to implement, or the budgets to develop initiatives
- Lack of acknowledgement of benefits at strategic level is a barrier to funding and planning progress
- All potential partner organisations are showing an interest in exploring arts solutions, but limited capacity to respond
- The regeneration programme is seen by the council as an essential means of progressing new socio-economic programmes, including arts led programmes
- In 2005 a planned approach to public art is emerging with the intention to submit new guidelines for high art and design standards, also embracing community involvement, on council led projects

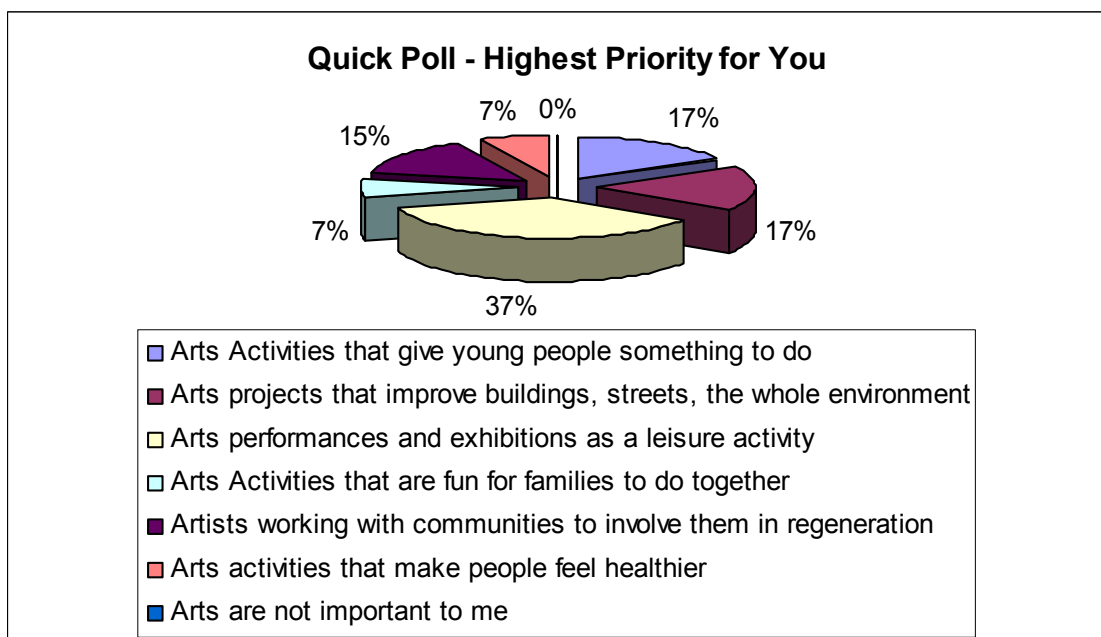
4 Consultation Results

As discussed in earlier sections, the main focus of consultation during the development of Taking Arts Forward has been around strengthening networks and developing ideas simultaneously whilst gathering feedback on the issues which affect the borough. To support this detailed work, three consultation exercises specific to strategy development were carried out, as well as two consultation exercises intended for long term project management which are relevant and summarised here.

4.1 Quick Poll (Strategy Consultation Exercise)

In January 2005 the Artsplan Solihull newsletter was circulated with a seven option quick poll and reply coupon on the back. Respondents were asked to identify their highest priority for arts development, or indicate that arts activities were not important. Response could be anonymous, or respondents could send contact details to receive strategy updates. The same poll was made available via www.solihull.gov.uk and advertised on the front page of the website. It was also printed in the back of the Solihull Arts Complex Brochure.

A total of approximately 50 responses were received, with only one sent back from the Arts Complex Brochure, and the others divided equally between website and newsletter. Due to the limited response, the results are far from conclusive.



The strong message returned by the sample was the importance of arts as a leisure activity, and, as described here, particularly arts which one attends as an audience member or visitor, not as a participant.

Interestingly, support for public art – art to improve buildings, streets and the environment was prioritised by as many people as arts for young people. This is noteworthy, as when local groups have recently been asked about whether they want public art in key developments (Dickens Heath, Tudor

Grange Park) they tend to give it a low priority. The wording change may be responsible for this difference, or a high number of practising artists returning the poll. Similarly, although family activities were not prioritised by respondents to this poll, arts based family learning activities offered around the borough have been consistently oversubscribed.

Quick Poll – Key Findings

- Highest supported priority is for performances and exhibitions as a leisure activity

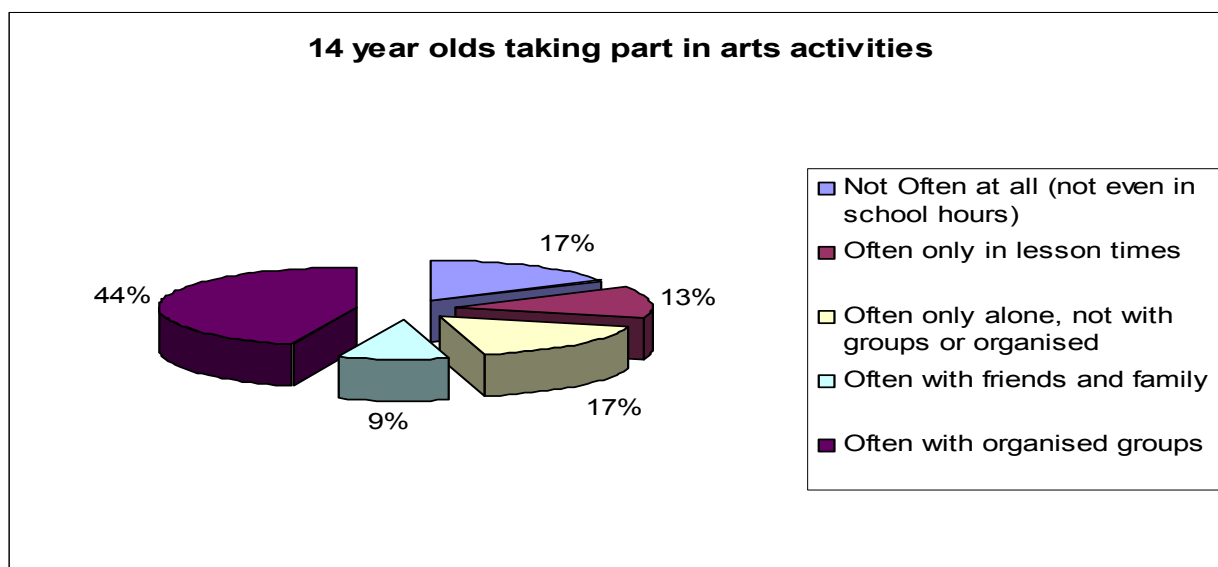
4.2 Year 9 Big Arts Grid

This was a Participation Study carried out as an initial research exercise with plans to repeat it on a tri-annual basis. Borough Schools were asked to spare tutorial or lesson time for mixed ability groups of Year 9 students to complete an A5 questionnaire called The Big Arts Grid. The eventual aim is to be able to show comparisons across a range of factors, Specialist Arts College Status or not, Primary School attended, Pupil Ethnicity, Parents involved in arts or not and more, contrasted with levels of participation in arts activity by the young people.

At present key data is available as an overview of the borough.

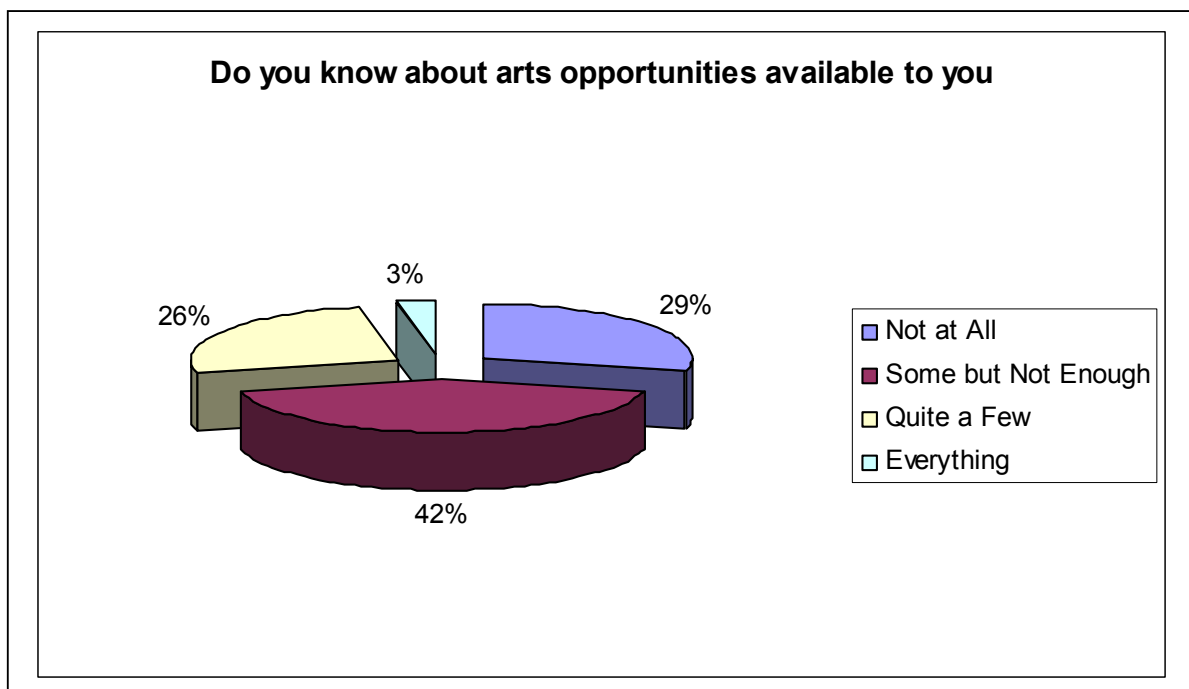
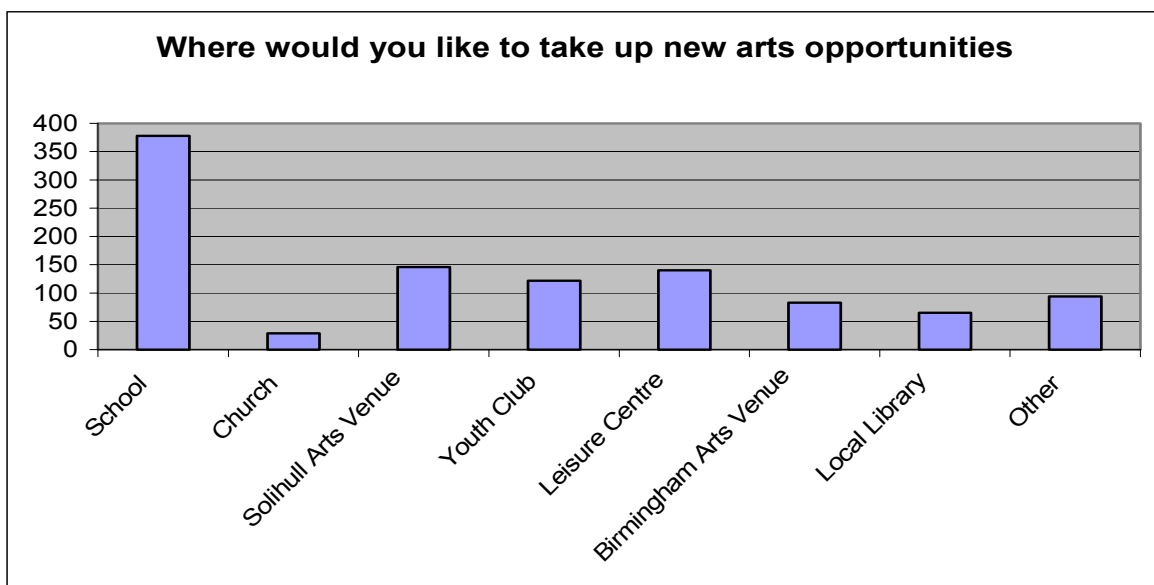
Our first interest was in participation in arts activities. We defined participation as: Often – once a week or more, Sometimes – a few times a term, Never – never or not anymore, and we were particularly interested in regular participation in activity – defined as Often in the question.

The chart below shows that 44% of young people surveyed taking part in regular organised arts activities (primarily dance and music). It shows a substantial number (26%) taking part either alone or with friends, but without the support of an organised setting. It also shows a worrying 17% not even taking part in activities at least once a week at school. It has been decided to track these particular participation indicators as a means of seeing progress on arts activities available to young people in the borough. The aim is for an increase in young people taking part in regular organised activity outside of school time (though not necessarily at different locations), and a decrease in those not taking part in any arts activity regularly at all.



Two follow up questions establish things we need to know to increase take up. The first shows that young people do not feel sufficiently aware of arts opportunities available to them with only 29% feeling that they have information about activities in their area.

The second looks at places they would like to take up new activities. The high preference for school may indicate a desire to try new activities within school hours. However the results also show that arts venues and leisure centres are a slightly more popular second choice than youth clubs. Other, showed a significant number of responses for village halls, but also “at home”, highlighting that not all activity needs to be organised. The relatively low place of Birmingham Arts Venues suggests that transport to activities is an issue for young people.



Over 500 young people took part. Eight schools were represented including one special school, two PRUs, one Specialist Arts College, and four secondary schools with non-arts or no specialism, based in south, central and rural areas of the borough. In future years, for the survey to be successful a broader sample will be required.

Year 9 Big Arts Grid – Key Findings

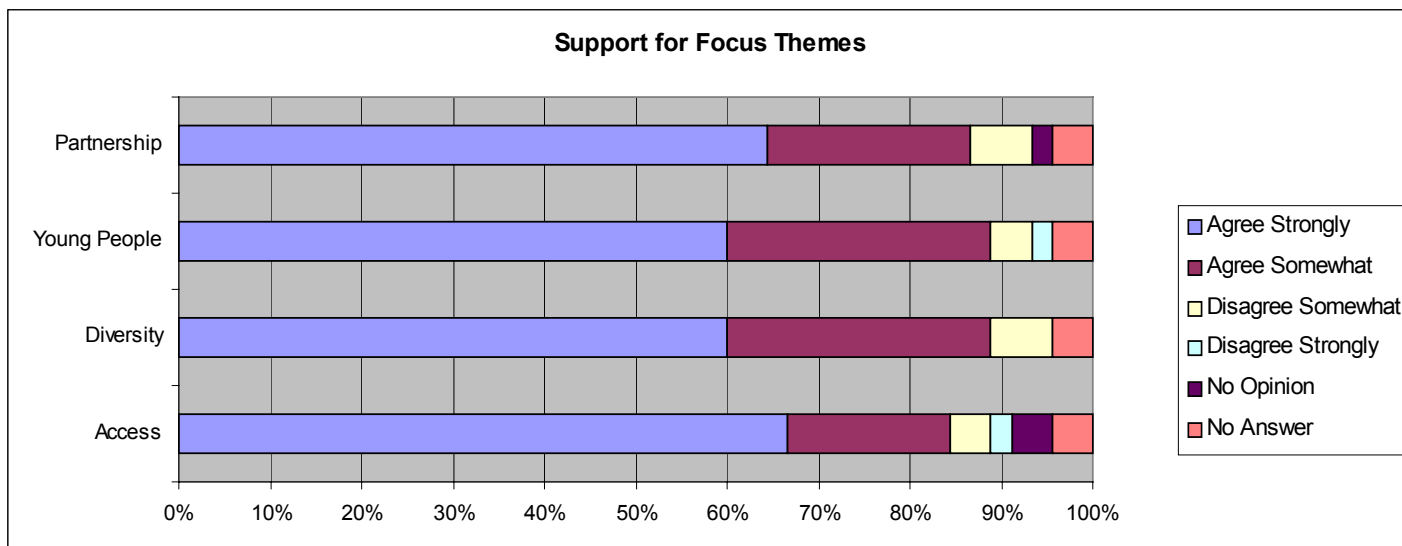
- 45% of pupils take part in an organised arts activity outside of school hours
- less than a third of young people feel that they have enough information about arts opportunities available to them
- Schools are the first choice of location for trying new activities followed by an arts venue in Solihull, a leisure centre or a youth club

4.3 Draft Strategy Questionnaire

The formal questionnaire based consultation on the draft arts strategy ran from the end of May to 16 July. The full colour strategy draft was circulated together with the questionnaire shown at Appendix <. The circulation target was arts teaching staff, community organisations (non-arts) and arts organisations wishing to respond in a more formal way than via networks or face-to-face meetings, or those who had not attended, regular arts complex attenders to dance and live literature programme, and interested individuals.

The questionnaire was designed to collect statistical response to themes and priorities, and to allow for more informal feedback, and the beginning of dialogue around action planning.

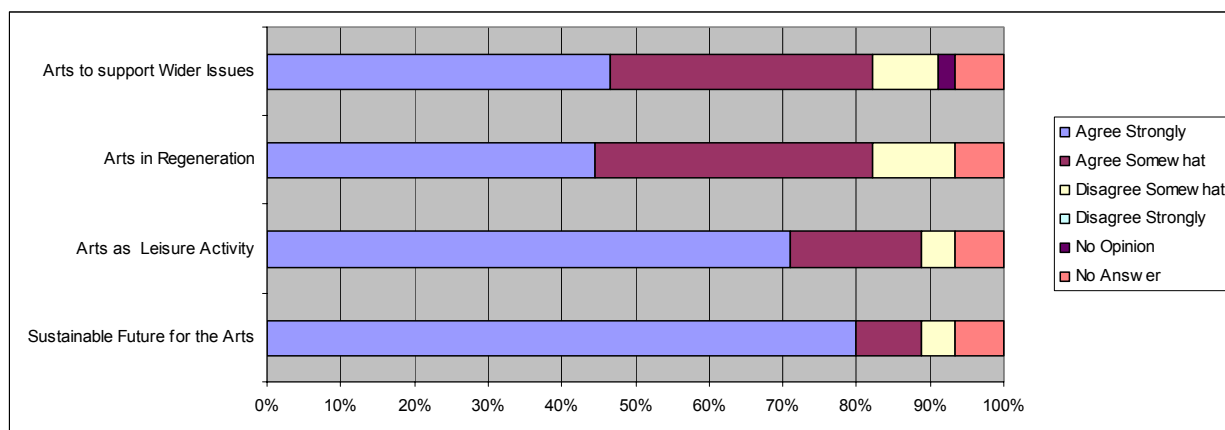
The first set of data is around support for the focus themes of the strategy – areas to be carried throughout all development work. The table below shows broad agreement for all focus themes with just over 60% agreeing strongly and about 85% agreeing at least somewhat across all four themes and no marked difference between themes.



In terms of the support for strategic priority areas we see the message sent by the quick poll reinforced, with Promoting Arts as a Leisure Activity supported strongly – with almost 90% agreement and 70% strong agreement. The importance of a sustainable future, identified by officers as a priority for development at the beginning of the strategy review was given resounding support at 90%

agreement with 80% strong agreement, whilst the priorities of Arts to tackle wider issues and Arts in Regeneration received agreement in broad terms – just over 80% but with only about 45% agreeing strongly with their

importance. This is not surprising given recognition during the strategy development process that work using the arts to address cross cutting issues has been limited in the borough, and therefore understanding of those benefits not widely communicated.



Respondents were given the opportunity to prioritise individual objectives within the new strategy – however this exercise gave less than clear results with some respondents simply picking their three favourite priorities or themes. Where individual objectives were chosen, in each strategic priority they are shown below in order of survey identified importance:

1.3 Network and Infrastructure	3.1 Arts in Community Involvement
1.5 Raising Profile of Arts	3.2 Skills development & lifelong learning
1.1 Funding	3.2 Art & Craft Business Support
1.2 Skills for delivering arts	
1.4 Performance Management	
2.2 Solihull Arts Complex	4.1 Arts to address Anti-social Behaviour
2.1 Programmes for Young People	4.3 Self Esteem & Educational Attainment
2.3 Work with Voluntary Sector	4.2 Public Art schemes
2.4 Quality and Equality of Opportunity	4.2 Public Art schemes

It is important to remember that once again, this was only a limited sample, with around 50 responses and so the relative weight of its conclusions are limited.

Areas of Concern raised in the Strategy Process

The detailed written comments made in this section are particularly important, and significant changes have been made to the final Taking Arts Forward document, taking those comments into account. This can be seen as comments are interspersed throughout the document, however key concerns, and how we have responded to them are addressed below.

- the focus on young people neglected the needs of older people

Decisions have to be made about priorities and wider consultation (see next section) has shown that the majority of people support our theme for focusing on the needs of young people. Significantly this support does not change with the age of the respondent.

The Using Arts to Tackle Wider Issues section now identifies older people as a target group. Within the action plan we undertake to review the extensive provision in the borough for older people which already exists (primarily local societies, lifelong learning classes, and professional entertainment programmes) to ensure that a wide range of opportunities are effectively promoted to all older people.

- The Strategy made no mention of the needs of local societies

This belief was down to the use of confusing language in the draft document. The strategic objective which was written “work with the voluntary sector to help them develop high quality and accessible opportunities” was always meant to reflect the need to support local societies. The wording has been changed to make that clear.

Particular criticism was focused around support for local arts societies using the community gallery at the Arts Complex. One of our actions in the new action plan will be about improving the use of the foyer space to highlight both Gallery spaces in the Central Library and Arts Complex. One meeting has already been held to bring together local societies of all types to communicate their needs to us, and receive information from us about opportunities, and more are planned.

- There was insufficient consideration given in the document to issues of accessibility for disabled people

In the new document it is made clear that our overall theme of Access includes disabled access issues. The action plan also details how all actions will reflect this commitment to access and accessibility

- There were no targets identified that reflected diversity

This is true. There are only a handful of headline targets, and they do not reflect any target area – not age, disability, ethnicity or socio-economic background. It is not possible, given the data collection systems currently in place in both the mainstream and voluntary sectors, to offer these targets at present. As the service moves forward, taking a cross cutting approach to arts activities, targets on a project and overall basis will continue to be developed in order to reflect improvements or weaknesses in terms of diversity, geographical spread of activity and much more.

Further key suggestions made feed into the action plan directly, and are covered in Section 5.

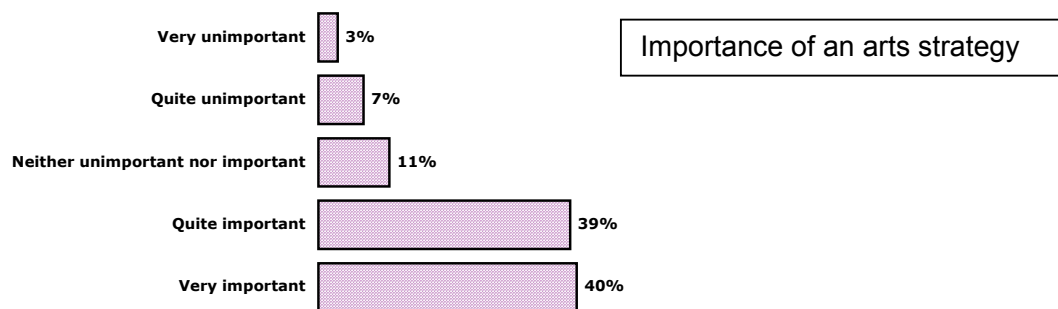
Draft Strategy Questionnaire – Key Findings

- There is broad overall support for all themes and priorities identified in the draft strategy
- Arts as a Leisure Activity and a Sustainable Future for the arts receive more support than Arts in Regeneration and Arts to tackle Wider Issues
- Wording has been amended, and action points developed to clarify planned support for local societies
- Headline Targets are accepted as useful by 90% of respondents, however no respondents place performance management information as a high priority

This is a 1000 strong poll, carried out by telephone and face to face by Brahms Consultants on behalf of Solihull MBC with a sample of 1000 residents whose make up has been assessed as representative of the borough. The majority are volunteers signed up to take part in such consultation once a year or more. The consultation was carried out alongside studies around the Care Trust and Primary Care Provision.

The questions relating to the strategy mirror the questions asked in the questionnaire sent to groups and organisations, but the wording reflects the fact that respondents have not read the strategy document. Other questions are added to build up a picture of arts participation and awareness in the borough. The importance of this data is that it provides a non-user response

Overall, participation in the arts in the borough is low: Only four in ten claim to be at least moderate spectators or participants in arts activities. Not quite one in three are aware of an arts development service within the council. Nevertheless, support for the development of an arts strategy is high with



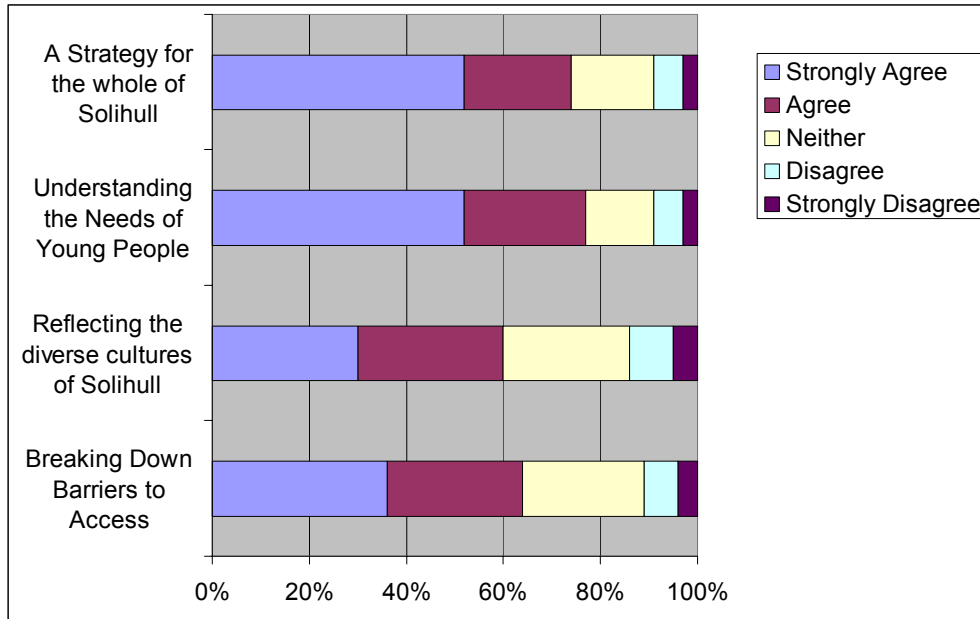
almost 8 out of 10 rating it as important. General satisfaction with access to arts activities is reasonable with 68% of the community satisfied or very satisfied. (This is much higher than the nationally collected BVPI for access to Theatres and Concert Halls and Museums and Galleries.)

There is variance based on different categories in the responses:

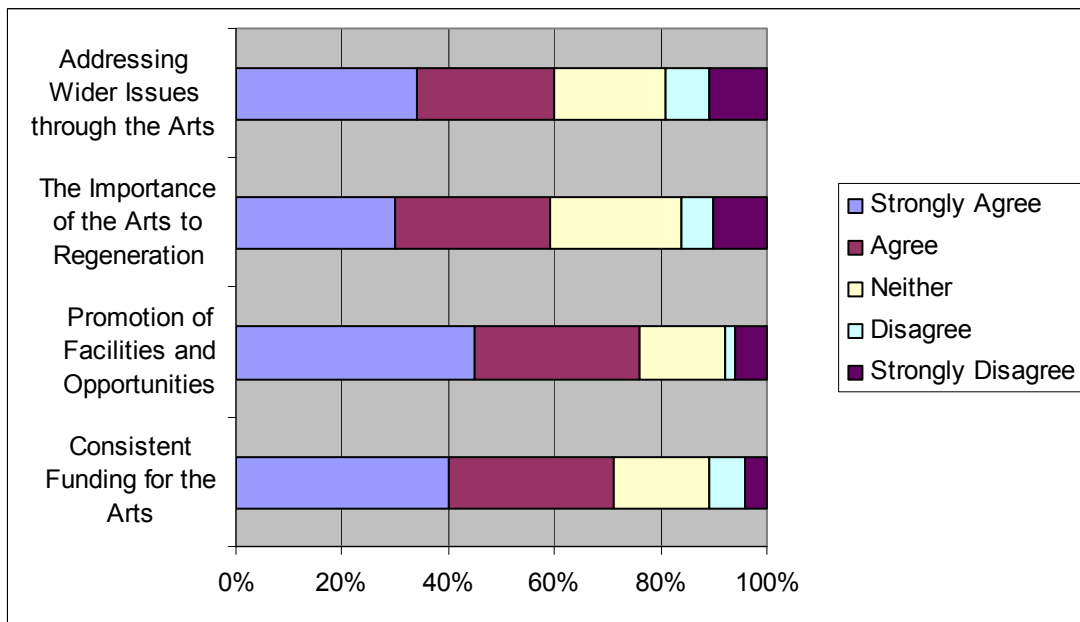
- Residents in the North being less likely to participate, less satisfied with access, and less convinced that an arts strategy is important for the borough (although still 58% rating it as important)
- Women tend to be both more involved in activities and more supportive of a strategy
- Satisfaction with access is higher among older and more affluent groups
- Those who take part in arts activities frequently are more aware of arts development service and more supportive of the strategy as might be expected
- Individual ethnicity responses have too small a sample group to show variance. However, comparing non-white respondents with white respondents, those from ethnic minorities are less satisfied with access to arts activities, and less supportive of an arts strategy, but equally involved in activities, and more aware of the arts development service

Almost 8 out of 10 respondents believe that an arts strategy is important for the borough

We then see varying levels of support for different themes and priorities. A full analysis is available on request showing where support comes from for each priority in terms of gender, geographic location, participation rate, affluence and age. Here we look at the overall response.



Of the Focus Themes the most clearly supported is the theme of the understanding the needs of young people, with nearly 80% agreement, and over 50% strong agreement – a stronger endorsement for this theme than seen in the interest group consultation, and significant evidence to be used in our partial impact assessment. Overall support for reflecting the diverse cultures of Solihull is the lowest, which may reflect political opinions, or merely response to a current culturally conservative offer of activities among respondents. Response is particularly low in Chelmsley Wood, an area where BNP support is high. However even this theme receives 60% endorsement.



In broad terms, the two more easily understandable priorities of consistent funding and promotion of facilities and opportunities receive most support, more than three in four respondents in both cases agree with these priorities. The other two priorities are not rejected – with 60% support – but detailed reading of the data shows that they are supported more strongly by people who take part in arts

activities moderately often than those who don't – reflecting the fact that belief in the power of arts to tackle cross cutting issues is stronger in people who have experienced the benefits.

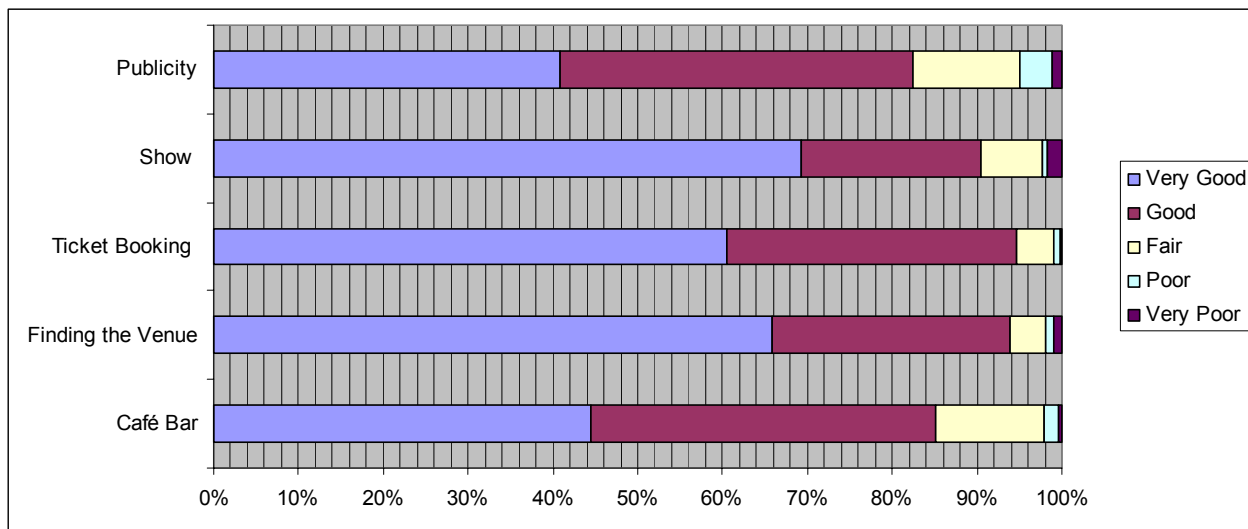
Citizens Panel – Arts Strategy

Key Findings

- Only four in ten residents take part in or watch an arts activity with moderate frequency
- Less than one in three residents are aware of the arts development service
- Almost two thirds of residents are satisfied with access to arts activities in the borough. However this figure is significantly less for residents in the north of the borough, and for those from non white ethnic backgrounds
- Almost eight out of ten residents believe it is important for the council to have an arts development strategy
- Residents give strong support for themes around young people, and developing a strategy for the whole of the borough
- Residents are more interested in promotion of facilities and opportunities, and consistent funding than in arts being used for regeneration and in the tackling of cross cutting issues

4.4 Arts Complex Customer Satisfaction Data

This is ongoing performance management data, which the arts complex has begun collecting, commencing with its Spring/Summer Season 2005. The data monitors different elements of a visit to a theatre in terms of satisfaction with rating as follows: Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor Very Poor. It also monitors new attendees, geographic location, age, ethnicity, gender and disability. The elements of the visit analysed are: publicity, ticket booking, finding the venue, café bar, and the show itself.



Overall Satisfaction with visits to the arts complex is high, ranging from 82% for publicity - 94% for the show itself.

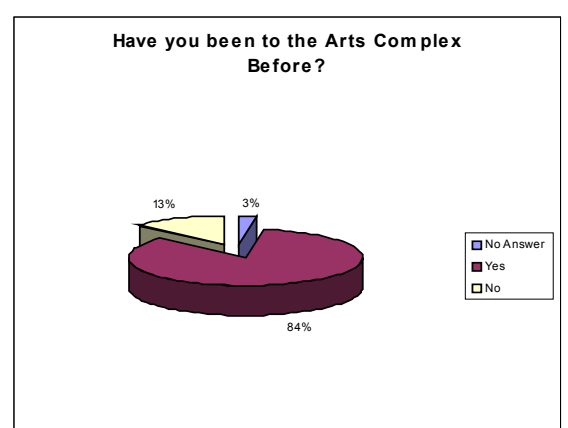
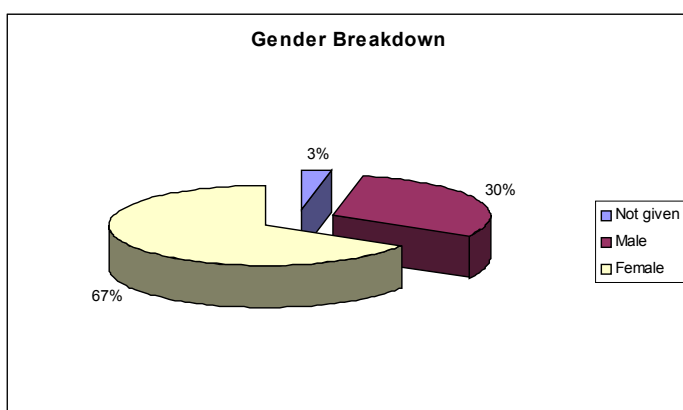
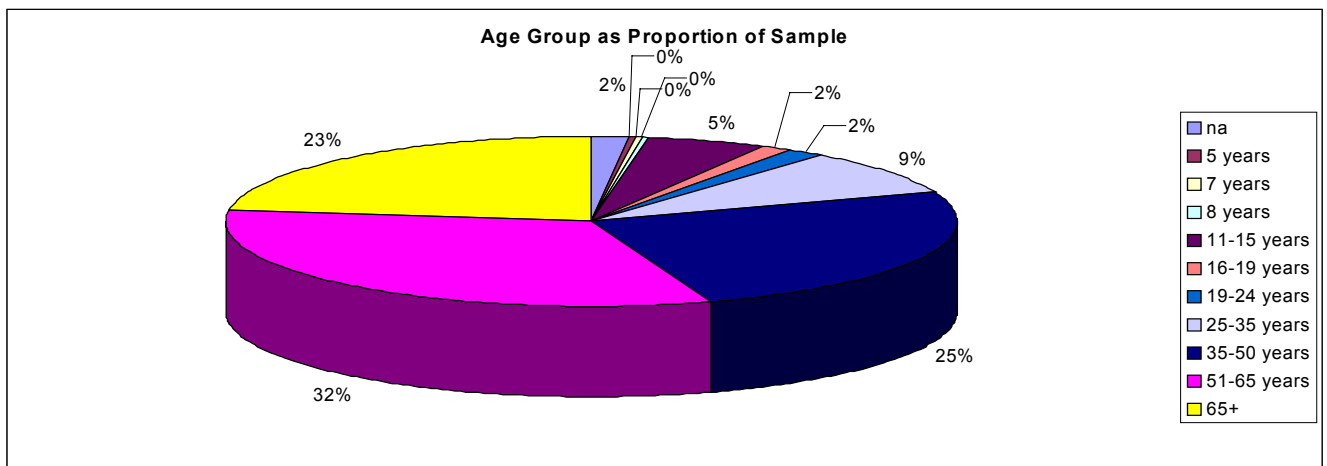
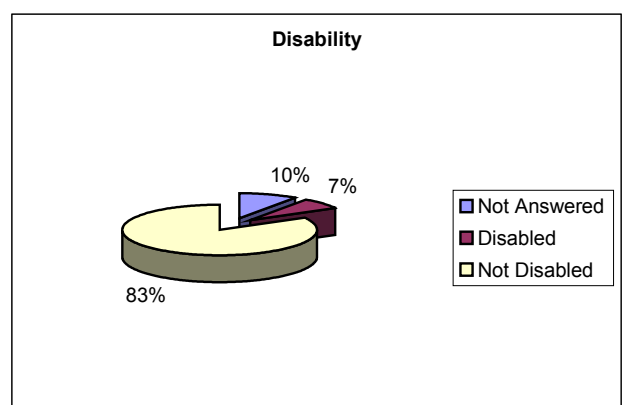
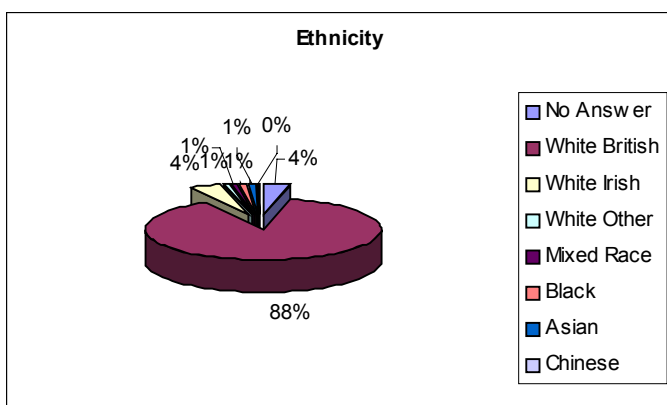
Limited analysis of ticket booking data at the arts complex has suggested the following broad themes of attendance.

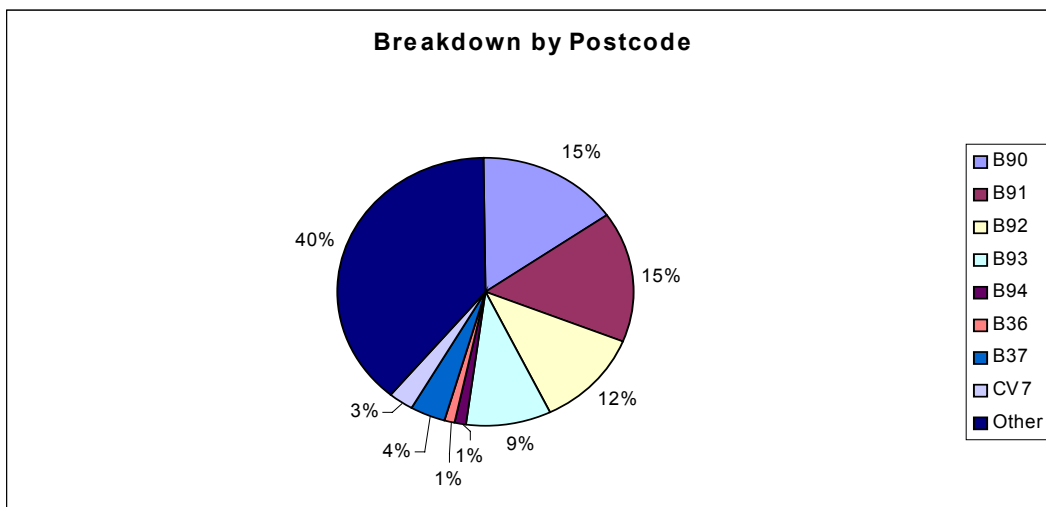
- Greater attendance per head of population from South and East of borough than North of the Borough
- Approximately 25% of tickets throughout the year are to under 16's

Staff anecdotal evidence of audience attendances made the following observations

- There is a big over 50's audience
- School visits have increased in recent years

The audience survey provides further information:





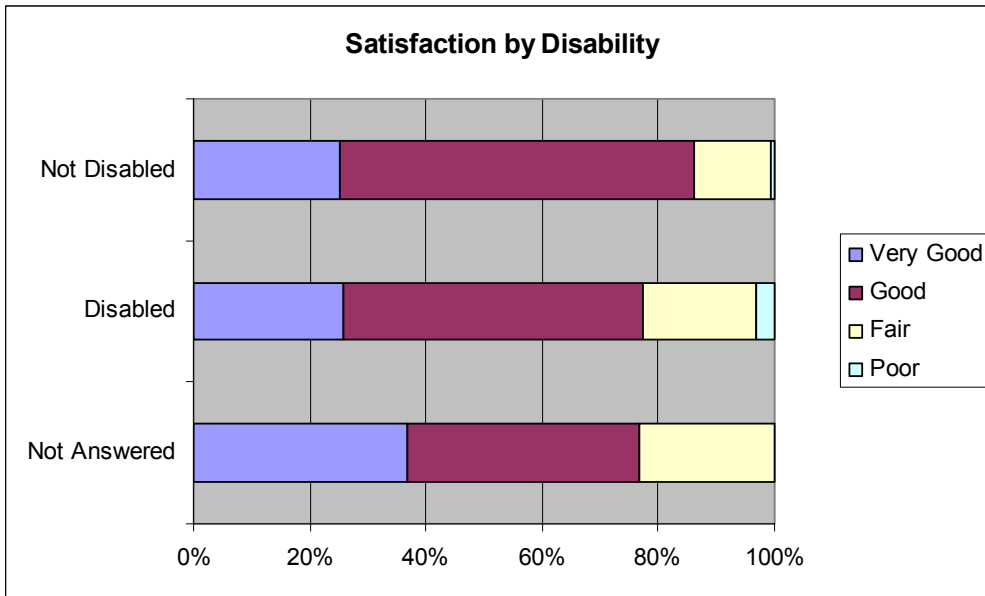
Whilst the data is affected by the fact that some groups are more likely to complete questionnaires than others, the following information is useful for planning future developments:

- Figures for attendance by ethnic minorities are low, even given a relatively low number of ethnic minority residents in the borough, and especially taking into account figures for communities working or studying in the borough are thought to show much higher levels of representation for ethnic minorities
- Attendance by those identifying themselves as disabled is low (7% compared with a national estimate of 10% disabled people in any community which is in itself conservative)
- Half the audience appears to be made up of attendees over 50
- Only 13% of respondents say that they have never been to the Arts Complex before
- 2/3rds of the audience appear to be female
- Only 5% of the audience appear to come from the wards in the North of Solihull

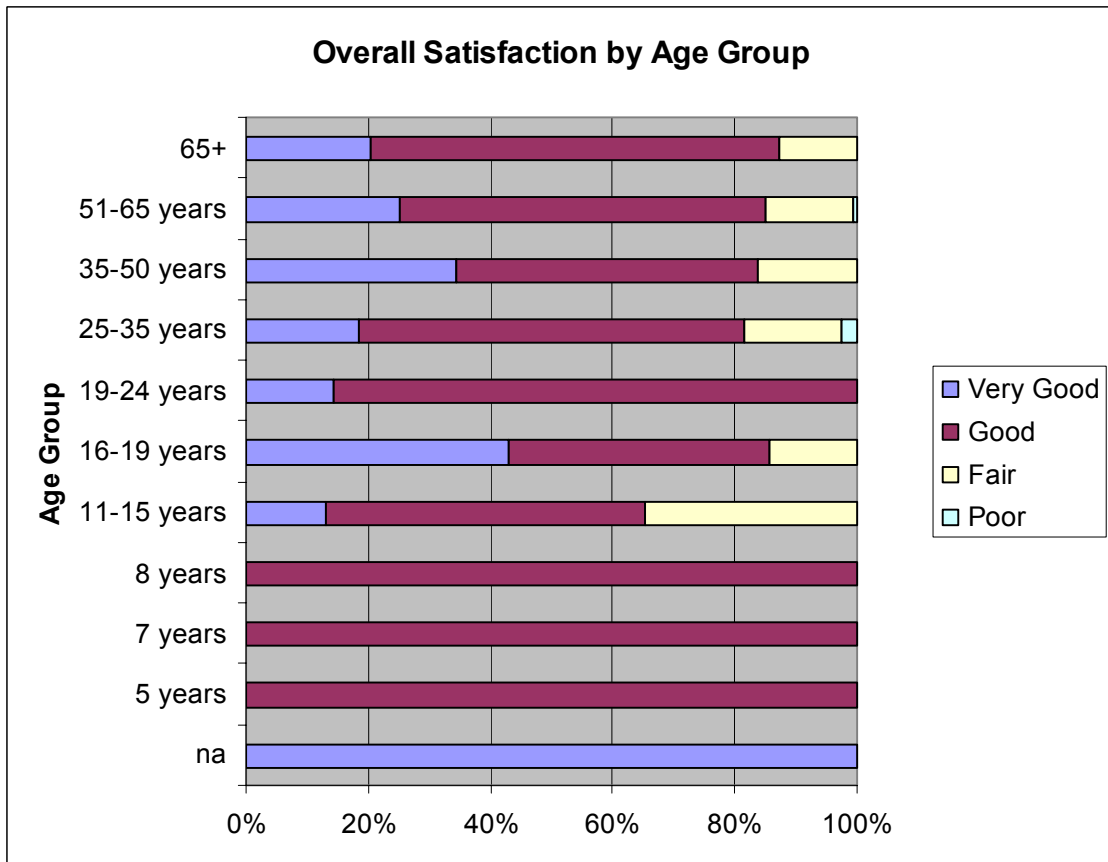
This data analysis is carried out across a range of productions at the arts complex, including professional programme, children's shows, and one show by each amateur dramatic society in the season. The Arts Complex will look in more detail at how statistics change for different types of shows, and use this to influence programming in future. However the ability to affect change will be influenced by high ticket income targets – which limit risk taking programming and inclusion targeted audience development initiatives, and a traditional programme from amateur dramatic societies which continues to please traditional audiences.

Satisfaction ratings are reasonably high across all elements of the Arts Complex service, ranging from 82% rating publicity as good or very good to 94% rating the show itself as good or very good.

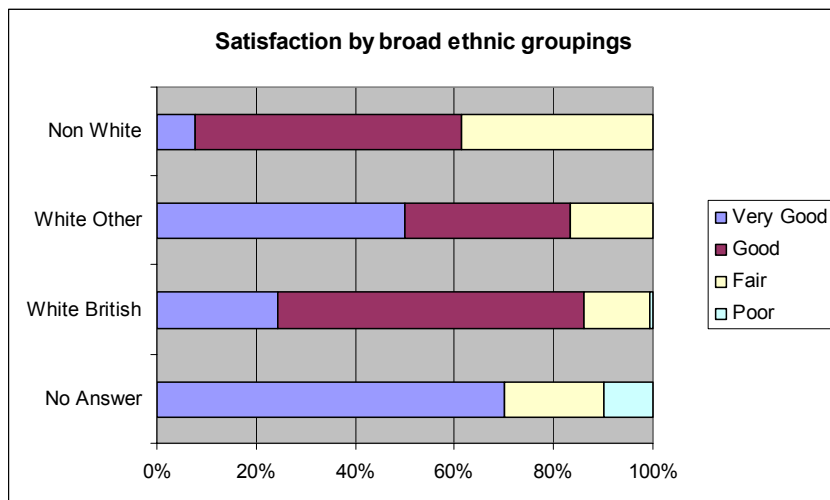
It is important to reflect on how that satisfaction changes with age, ethnicity and disability, as this will affect planning around audience retention, and developing new initiatives:



It is reassuring to see little statistical difference between satisfaction among disabled and non-disabled users – although disabled users are slightly more likely to rate the visit as only Fair or Poor, they are also more likely to rate it as very good.



Overall satisfaction by age is generally over 80%, however it is important to note that the 11-15 year age group are least likely to be satisfied with their visit with only 64% rating it as good or very good overall. This may affect retention of interest in performing arts among the age group.



Each ethnic group has too small a statistical return to be considered individually. However the low rating – less than 10% rating very good and only 62% good or very good among a group which is already under represented in the audience make up is a cause for concern. This low rating is partly influenced by the age of the respondents – over 1/3 of non-white respondents fall in the 11-15 age group who have a tendency to rate their visit lower regardless of ethnic background. Nevertheless this is an area for future attention.

Arts Complex Customer Satisfaction Data – Key Findings

- Overall user satisfaction with the arts complex is 83%
- Audiences are predominantly white, over 35 (over half are over 50)
- Ethnic Minority audiences are under represented compared with their presence in the borough
- Disabled audiences are under represented compared with national estimates of disability in the population
- Ethnic Minority audiences and teen-age audiences (11-15) are least likely to be satisfied with their visit

5. A Strategy for the Future

The SWOT analysis below begins to group key issues as they were identified in Section's 2, 3 and 4 of the document:

Strengths

Finance and Management

- Growing spend on arts development thanks to dedicated budget since 2000 and increased income generation by Solihull Arts Complex
- Significant improvements to performance management data, including initial steps towards target group specific data

Venues and Organisations

- Solihull Arts Complex, Dovehouse Theatre and The Edge, small scale venues with well attended programmes of amateur performance, local dance schools and arts entertainment
- Enthusiastic and well established amateur sector provides vital opportunities to take part
- Strong commitment to focused strands of audience development and outreach particularly around live literature, dance and children's theatre at Solihull Arts Complex

Children and Young People

- Series of successful, thoroughly evaluated projects using participatory arts with young people since 2000
- Specialist Arts Colleges developing exciting and ambitious programmes which benefit the borough as a whole
- Committed staff deliver successful initiatives using their own skills or bought in artists skills where budgets permit (youth services, libraries)
- Range of resources available in schools and youth clubs including ceramics, screen printing, recording facilities etc

Arts as a means of tackling cross-cutting issues

- Pockets of good practice in using arts to tackle cross cutting issues – eg. Children Looked After service improvements with Red Rose and Chain Theatre Company

Public Support

- Public support for the council developing an arts strategy at 80%
- Overall Arts Complex user satisfaction at 83%
- Reasonably high levels of satisfaction with access to arts activities at 68% (Citizen's panel)

Weaknesses

Finance and Management

- Solihull falls in the lowest quartile spend in terms of arts activity and arts development
- The borough has a high risk strategy of reliance on external funding for project development to meet its core aims
- No benchmarking groups or national comparisons for performance data gathered
- Lack of staffing capacity across the board – from strategic planning services (Arts, Education) to

individual schools and voluntary organisations

Venues and Organisations

- Limited capacity at venues across the borough for outreach or audience development work
- Lack of companies and artists locally based and experienced in delivering arts work on cross cutting issues
- Lack of formal relationships with professional, voluntary and amateur organisations limit opportunities for monitoring and for development
- Arts Complex audiences predominantly white and over 35, with at least half over 50. Similar figures likely but not measured for other venues in the borough

Children and Young People

- Lack of joined up planning across Schools, Specialist Arts Colleges and Council except on a project level means benefit to individual schools and young people is inconsistent
- Post 16 training does not reflect modern vocational opportunities in the arts and leads to lack of appropriate expertise locally
- Lack of pathways to progression in almost all arts sectors other than instrumental music, dance (young people) and visual arts and crafts (lifelong learning and BA Fine Art)
- Lack of strategic coordination (between schools, youth centres, arts organisations) to ensure maximum use of resources, and maintenance of resources at modern standards
- Very limited provision in any non traditional art forms (also a wider non generational issue)

Arts as a Means of tackling Cross Cutting Issues

- Staff in a range of sectors (formal, informal learning, care provision, anti-social behavior) feel they lack time, budget and sometimes expertise to implement arts projects
- Lack of strategic planning/budget allocation for arts within major developments – eg children's trust, crime and disorder strategy, regeneration

Public Support

- Significant reduction in satisfaction with access to arts activities among respondents from the north of the borough and respondents from a non-white background
- Less than one in three young people feel they know enough about arts opportunities available to them
- Public concern over whether disability and access issues are fully catered for in written responses

Opportunities

Financial and Management

- Maximise benefits of sub-regional partnerships in two directions (Birmingham Solihull and Solihull Coventry Warwickshire)
- Emerging planned approach to Public Art at corporate level

Venues and Organisations

- Developing partnerships with external companies which build skills for local artists
- Maximising opportunities within regeneration, extended schools and other programmes

Children and Young People

- Priorities for young people shared between arts council, organisations, local and national government
- Possibility of providing a structured link person to communicate between schools, specialist arts colleges, and council and ensure strategic development

Arts as a Means of Tackling Cross Cutting Issues

- Increasing awareness locally, regionally and nationally of the use of arts as a means to tackle cross cutting issues
- Increasing interest in arts and culture as a delivery mechanism for corporate and community priorities
- Improved corporate approach to access and diversity issues

Public Support

- Public support for priorities such as using arts to tackle wider issues or within Regeneration programmes increases for residents who take part in the arts more often. This suggests there is scope for projects to “win hearts and minds”

Threats

Finance and Management

- Not being able to provide evidence of cross cutting benefit locally or nationally and thus failing to secure funding externally and commitment internally or from partnership organisations
- Risk of national funding streams (Arts and Regeneration led) drying up and or becoming increasingly competitive

Venue and Organisations

- Risk of venues being created without detailed business plans for administration and technical resources leading to wasted physical resources
- Lack of core funding to professional and voluntary sector means fragile organisations

Children and Young People

- Decreasing number of arts grants schemes available to schools
- Failure to capitalise on project success and provide strategic direction to ensure long term benefit for participants (both statutory and voluntary sector)
- Imminent threat to family learning taster activities in arts due to redirection of LSC spend at national level
- Risk of being satisfied with the status quo and failing to address issues of provision – particularly issues of access and diversity (and in wider provision)

Arts as a Means of Tackling Cross Cutting Issues

- Lack of capacity within arts development service means development opportunities are missed as expertise is not available to feed into key plans
- Risk of arts being seen as add on, despite evidence to the contrary

Public Support

- Whilst Public Support for the arts strategy is high, when that is the issue focused on by the consultation, in wider consultation arts, and cultural activity, are rarely highlighted as a priority

The broad context for strategy development becomes one of balancing. Resident's priorities have to be balanced with national agendas; enthusiasm and ambition among staff and volunteers on the ground needs to be given strategic back up; access and diversity issues need to be properly embedded throughout practice. Moreover, the strategy must work as an advocacy tool for the arts

both publicly and at a corporate level; the benefits of external funding must be maximised, but reliance on external sources as a means of delivering core improvements must not be too strong. Above all this all needs to be achieved on a limited budget and staff capacity.

The table below shows how issues have led to solutions and create a final document that is shaped into an Ambition, four key Themes and four Strategic Priorities with Objectives, together with Headline Targets to monitor progress.

Issue	Origin	Strategy Solution
Ambition		
In order to be successful the strategy would need to position the arts to have a strong role within the council's corporate plans, and within the local community plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-draft assumption based on officer understanding of One Council One Vision • Audit Commission general guidance on culture block services 	Strategy opens with an Ambition statement which links the arts directly to the council vision, and is supported by references to both the intrinsic and cross cutting value of the arts

Issue	Origin	Strategy Solution
Themes		
That a focus on young people should be retained from the previous strategy, reflecting local and national priorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-draft assumption based on the main direction of project work from 2000-2005 • Reinforced by Local Services Scrutiny Board, National and Regional Arts Policy, Local Strategic Partnership Children and Young People's Group • Endorsed by Citizens Panel consultation 	Young People reflected in the strategy both as a Theme – meaning that the needs of young people will be born in mind during the development of every action towards achieving the overall ambition. Certain key objectives relate to specific areas of work with young people to ensure particular developments occur.
There is a need to consider race or diversity, and access in all its senses including accessibility throughout all work, rather than as targeted, project specific solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority-wide Equality Impact Assessment has shown a need for modernisation and proactive approach to all equality issues • Limited Arts Data shows lower satisfaction levels for target groups, particularly in terms of geographical location and ethnicity • Good practice requires proactive solutions • Arts nationally recognised as being a good means of achieving inclusion if correctly planned and implemented (Pat 10 report 1998) 	<p>Themes identified around Access – Breaking down all barriers to participation And Diversity – Reflecting the diverse cultures of Solihull and promoting the unique identity of the area. The positioning of the Themes ensure that access and diversity issues will be considered during the development of every action towards achieving the overall ambition.</p> <p>Secondly, within the Priority (see below) of Arts as a Leisure Activity, there is an objective relating to ensuring equality and quality of access to arts as a leisure opportunity (2.4)</p>

		There is also scope for specific actions around developing inclusion focused projects under the Strategic Priority of “Using Arts to Tackle Wider Issues” within the objective relating to “highlighting other benefits”
In order to be successful, the strategy would need to be a document that could be embraced by several council departments and a range of external partners, not one to be delivered by a single service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-draft assumption based on national emphasis on partnership as a fundamental tenant of good practice; direction of most funding bodies; previous successful projects locally • Reinforced by all consultation and network building during the strategy review 	<p>Final Theme identified as Partnership – A strategy for the whole borough, not just the council, by working together we achieve more. Again this sits in a position to ensure that all actions are developed with partnership planning in mind.</p> <p>Included among the strategic priorities one which emphasises the ability of the arts to deliver on a range of cross cutting and non arts service specific issues</p>

Issues	Origin	Strategy Solution
Priorities		
The strategy must balance the use of arts as a delivery mechanism for cross-cutting issues, and particularly for regeneration with the intrinsic value of arts as a leisure activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local resident interest in supporting arts as a leisure activity emerged during all phases of consultation • National awareness of both intrinsic and cross cutting value of the arts, and the need for corporate recognition is taking on increasing importance, particularly the position of the new Culture Block services within CPA • Local consultations on broad issues (quality of life) rate health, fear of crime and other issues much more strongly than the intrinsic benefits of arts and culture 	Strengthens the decision for strategic Priority 3 of “Using Arts to tackle Wider Issues”. This to be balanced with Priority 2 for “Promoting Arts as a Leisure Activity”
The greatest need, in order to be able to achieve progress in any of the areas identified above would be to ensure a sustainable future for the arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-strategy assumption based on progress on key issues highlighted in the 2000 audit, which showed some very strong project success but with limited fundamental change in infrastructure or core activity 	Strategic Priority 1 developed – “Ensuring a sustainable future for the arts in Solihull”.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by consultation on draft document 	
<p>The regeneration programmes in the North of Solihull could be a key opportunity for strategic development of the arts. This would be both in terms of using arts to achieve core aims of regeneration, and in terms of increasing the opportunity to experience arts as a leisure activity in the north of the borough as a result of regeneration. This will only be possible if early planning, comprehensive advocacy and identification of budgets and expertise are all necessary to achieve this</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weight given to regeneration programmes within Council Objective to reduce the Gap of Inequality Consultation with regeneration company highlights that budgets available for socio-economic programmes are unclear; speed of process means that arts for community involvement or as a masterplanning tool is being overlooked Corporate commitment to culturally led regeneration (cf. Culture at the Heart of Regeneration, DCMS) is high on personal agendas, but limited within strategic plans 	<p>Priority 4 “Putting Arts at the Heart of Regeneration” identified as an area of its own rather than being grouped with general wider issues because it is crucial to future developments in the borough.</p>

Issue	Origin	Strategy Solution
Objectives		
<p>It is necessary to address the need for development without drastically increasing the reliance on external funding, as this is already a high risk strategy. The key to this is likely to be partnership working in the short term, and increased or redirected internal budgets in the mid to long term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funder research has shown that almost all national, regional and local arts grants funds available to Solihull are for new projects and so cannot offer sustainability Funder research has shown that a number of socio-economic funds are available to community groups and not councils Gershon savings and Cabinet statement on budget planning emphasise that additional funding unlikely to be available in response to strategy development RPA Audit Commission report criticised the reliance on external funding across cultural services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of an objective (1.1) focused on maximising sustainable funding from a range of sources Creation of an objective around raising the profile of arts activity (1.4) in order to achieve a better funding position in future Removal of Headline Targets around post and grants budget creation from draft document – these transferred into actions to explore how to find this additional capacity. Action plan to be graded Green, Yellow, Orange – allowing for actions to be included before they are fully funded
<p>Sensitive and appropriate support is required for the wealth of small scale activity in the borough in order to ensure that it can broaden in range, increase</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk research highlights the wealth of activity in the borough Network meetings and questionnaires show that the 	<p>Key objectives in two parts of the strategy – the sustainable future, and arts as a leisure activity provide for support – the first (1.2) being infrastructure and</p>

<p>accessibility, guarantee quality, and provide pathways to progression, making a varied and vibrant contribution to quality of life in the borough</p>	<p>incentives to encourage the amateur and small business sector into partnership need to be carefully chosen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of current support infrastructure means information gaps exist, particularly with regard to accessibility and equalities • Low Grants for Arts spend in borough (lowest quartile regionally) shows that voluntary and professional organisations not developed to take advantage of all opportunities 	<p>communications across all sectors; the second being specific to providing the support needed by local societies and voluntary organisations as they contribute to Leisure provision in the borough (2.2)</p>
<p>Given the financial climate, the strategy must focus on cost effective methods of ensuring the ambitious aims of front line workers and key voluntary organisations can be delivered with limited resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face consultation and network meetings highlight feeling of “thwarted ambition” across many different partners • Schools, youth services and arts services in particular all identified as suffering from limited time, budget, capacity and expertise • Youth services and voluntary sector youth provision consultations indicate an interest in training to deliver quality activities and guidance on working with artists 	<p>Development of key objective around infrastructure and communication networks(1.2) and around training (1.3)</p>
<p>Strategy needs to reflect the national trend of requiring evidence for benefits of the arts, and for tracking activity and satisfaction by target group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPA culture block assessment from 2006 is to be a purely numerical assessment of service value • Some responses to consultation indicate disappointment at lack of diversity targets within headline targets 	<p>Objective (1.5) developed to reflect the need to continue improving project evaluation and performance management, and retained despite lack of support for it in public consultation.</p>
<p>Strategy needs to guard against badly designed and or undersubscribed projects for young people based on assumptions of need, or offered with inappropriate tuition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face consultation with regard to youth services, and projects targeting anti-social behaviour raised a key concern around appropriate young people involvement, the ladder of participation, and how to create successful projects 	<p>Key objective within the leisure priority about how we develop our programmes for young people, ensuring they respond to their needs (2.3) (see also Theme – Young People)</p>

<p>Strategy needs to support venue organisations to deliver the opportunities that residents want, and to expand their audiences to ensure that all residents of the borough are being catered for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the key supported priorities in draft consultation with community organisations was developing Solihull Arts Complex as a resource for the borough • Arts Complex audience data shows a very strong age and ethnicity bias • Arts Complex and Specialist Arts College Venue staff have an interest in outreach and audience development work 	<p>Key objective within leisure priority about venue development, with Solihull Arts Complex as the specifically named venue (2.1)</p>
<p>Arts work to tackle cross-cutting issues has been relatively limited in the borough to date, and whilst this is a key area of development for the borough, the financial and staff capacity to step forward across all areas of work simply does not exist. The strategy must identify a step by step approach. It must also ensure that the skills are available as locally as possible to deliver the projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directory of local artists and arts organisations shows limited number of companies or organisations with skills to work on cross cutting issues • Although there is national interest and frontline enthusiasm for arts projects to tackle cross cutting issues this is not reflected in strategic planning or budget allocations • Anti-social behaviour identified as a key issue during State of the Borough consultation and in regeneration consultation 	<p>Decision take to prioritise just one new area under “Arts to tackle wider issues” as a priority for development, leading to an objective focused on pilot projects for arts and anti-social behaviour. (3.3) Catch all priority added around awareness raising of benefits of arts in relation to other issues (older people, health, environmental awareness etc) to allow for flexibility in responding to circumstance (3.4) Training priority for local artists and organisations (1.3)</p>
<p>Care must be taken not to lose the benefits of past projects due to a focus on currently ‘in vogue’ cross-cutting priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network meetings with schools reveal a varying acceptance by individual schools of the benefits of the arts in raising self esteem and educational awareness, and an absolute need for support in developing activities • Pre strategy projects have focused on analysing the benefits of arts and creative activity on self esteem and educational attainment and show good anecdotal evidence • Schools Improvement Service has been key partner until 2005, and has recently removed its commitment to 	<p>Under the Arts for wider issues priority, an objective related to building on past success in the sphere of self esteem and educational attainment (3.1)</p>

	arts from strategic documents	
Public art is a major area for potential development, and could identify new funding sources for the arts. The strategy needs to capitalise on this opportunity, as well managed public art projects can deliver on cross-cutting issues, and provide leisure opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art and Design in the Public Realm Group work has placed developments in public art on the corporate management team agenda • Services as broadly distributed as planning, community regeneration, transport, environment and communications have an interest in public art • Art to improve the environment rated highly in initial public quick poll • Long term commitment from Planning Services to explore means of leveraging arts funding through planning policy 	Public Art with appropriate community involvement developed as an objective within the Wider Issues priority (3.2) Community Involvement and Consultation identified as a objective within the regeneration priority (4.1)
The arts strategy cannot command the financial resources to deliver on this agenda, however it needs to advocate for the potential benefits to the borough of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual artists and craft persons primary concern registered through meetings is having to go out of the borough for studio or workshop space • Informal consultation with Birmingham Organisations suggests gentrification of Custard Factory and tendency towards new media operations is limiting artist space available in Birmingham developments • Economic Development strategic officers are interested in creative industry led developments • Construction training being a main feature of Regeneration programmes suggests a natural link to certain types of craft unit 	Exploratory objective re arts and crafts industry within regeneration priority (3.3)
Strategy needs to position the arts within key areas of regeneration where arts can make a difference to wider objectives. The most clearly identified of these is Lifelong Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration Strategic Framework shows one of the biggest areas of concern is the skills gap and routes to employment • Family Learning and Out of School Hours activity 	Skills and Learning objective within the regeneration priority (4.2)

	<p>throughout last two years demonstrate clearly benefit of arts as a means of engagement in learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of good practice using arts classes to assess key skills exist 	
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Implementation

Headline Targets

It was felt essential to include some broad headline targets which would indicate steps towards our overall ambition. These can be difficult to identify in the arts as there are no national standards. The targets chosen have been identified for a range of reasons. These include: relevance to progress to the overall ambition; relative importance to interested residents'; ease of collection; possible use in national comparison.

They allow us to show:

- improvements to customer satisfaction at the Council's key arts resource Solihull Arts Complex
- overall increase in satisfaction with access to arts activities across the borough
- evidence to show that arts development projects do have quality of life or general learning outcome benefits for participants
- increase in young people at age 14 taking part in organised activity outside of school, as a reflection of improved programmes for young people

Action Plan

Actions have been developed within the objectives set, whilst taking advantage of opportunity, and responding to partners' agendas. Each objective is delivered by partners working together, with one or two agencies or services taking a lead.

A decision has been taken to produce the action plan as a public facing document; a communication tool raising awareness of the work that is going on to contribute to the ambition of the strategy, and to profile the range of partners involved. It groups actions according to areas of community interest rather than according to strategic priority, for ease of reference. It also uses a green, amber, red colour coding system to indicate whether the action is ready to launch or in planning stages, and whether it is funded, or needs to raise funds.

Behind this public facing document each action will be covered by a management tool which will focus on SMART targets for the project, and on ensuring that the project considers the themes of Access, Diversity, Young People and Partnership. This document will be shared between all partners, and used as part of the project planning process. A template for these is attached at Appendix G

Conclusion

The review process has highlighted the current situation in Solihull. A borough where some arts activities are thriving; where the widespread benefits are beginning to be recognised; and where there is significant opportunity for development. It emphasises the importance of partnership working to realise the full potential of arts to deliver on cross cutting themes and priorities, whilst showing the importance local residents place on access to arts as an important part of quality of life in the borough. Taking Arts Forward sets out a plan for the borough to step up to this dual challenge and take advantage of the opportunities available .