

# “A CREATIVE COUNTY”

## HEREFORDSHIRE ARTS STRATEGY

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Front cover images: (top row, left to right) sculpture by Simon Meiklejohn; sculpture by John Clark; James, photo by Silva Productions, (bottom row, left to right) 'Balcony' by Walenty Pytel, photo Archie Miles; sculpture by Charlotte Kimberley; artwork by Creative Consultation group; (bottom) photo of Kite Flying Day.



# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 Background and Overview

The arts are an important component of our quality of life. They enable people to come together in social settings, and provide opportunities to learn new skills and explore hidden talents. Research has shown that the arts can play a significant role in involving people who feel socially excluded, and the arts can be used to improve the health and well-being of communities and individuals. The arts also contribute to the economic prosperity of the nation through links to tourism and supporting creative industries businesses.

The arts are important at local as well as national level, and the Herefordshire Arts Strategy was commissioned by Herefordshire Council and West Midlands Arts to assess and address the arts requirements within the County. The Strategy was developed through a process of consultation and research carried out between the autumn of 2001 and the spring of 2002. Over 100 individuals and organisations were consulted and took part in discussion. Presentations were also made to a variety of bodies and groups, including the majority of the County's Local Area Forums.

A process of creative consultation was undertaken involving six community groups in the County, most of whom had little experience of organised arts activities. A facilitator and photographer were commissioned to work with the groups to assess their aspirations for the arts in the County. The facilitator documented the discussion and the photographer worked with members of the groups to create a visual representation of their view of the arts. A number of key issues and themes arose from the consultation which has been incorporated into the key elements of the Strategy.

The Strategy takes fully into account and addresses the strategic ambitions and aims of the Herefordshire Plan, the Cultural Strategy for the County and strategic aims of the relevant regional and national agencies, including West Midlands Arts and Advantage West Midlands. It also takes into account the economic and social profile of the County, its largely rural dispersed population and issues such as transport, tourism and economic factors which affect the provision of, and access to, services.

The Strategy is designed to complement the Herefordshire Creative Industries Growth Plan, produced in 2001. The Growth Plan identifies a range of measures to be undertaken in support of the creative industries in the County. These include new measures to support crafts and media, training and development programmes, marketing initiatives linked to tourism, and support for a number of new projects and community initiatives.

Herefordshire has a vibrant arts scene, and aspects of the County's impressive arts provision are regarded as field leaders both regionally and nationally. Its major arts assets include The Courtyard Centre for the Arts which provides the County's only regular venue for the professional performing arts and is the base for a wide variety of arts activities, including participatory workshops, exhibitions and films.

The County also has a network of arts festivals, some of which are now of regional and national significance, and a number of specialist agencies which play key roles in strategic policy development and deliver programmes of work in specific areas of the arts, including music, film and media, and dance.

Herefordshire College of Art and Design is also a vital and influential player in the arts in the County. The College has developed plans to create an Arts Academy for the County, that will provide a centre of excellence for nurturing and fostering the cultural and creative industries. The Academy would bring together a gallery, exhibition facilities, workshops, an innovation unit and retailing with further and higher academic facilities for 1,500 students.

It is also worth recognising that people take part and experience arts in the County in informal settings, for example, Herefordshire has a good network of churches that are used as venues for the arts, and pubs that offer live music on a regular basis. Additionally, there is a strong amateur sector in the areas of music, dance, arts, crafts and particularly drama.

Partnership and joint strategic planning is already at the core of much of the County's arts development and there is much evidence of arts agencies working in partnership with the local authority, the education sector and

other sectors to ensure that the arts are integrated into all areas of the County's life. Herefordshire Council has played a key role in many areas of development and has recognised the significance of the County's arts provision and community of arts, crafts and media practitioners to the economic life of the County. The County's arts sector, with the Council, has been particularly successful in attracting external investment to support the arts in the County, from West Midlands Arts and the Arts Lottery especially.

Despite the range of arts and media provision, the strength of certain sectors, and the particular achievements of recent years, parts of the County's arts infrastructure are fragile and there are opportunities for development.

The County has voluntary-run theatres in three market towns but no dedicated and purpose-built facilities in Leominster and Kington (though the Lion Ballroom serves as Leominster's arts venue and Lady Hawkins Community Leisure Centre in Kington runs a range of arts activities and performances). Hereford Leisure Centre and the Cathedral both host large scale arts events along with some of the festivals, but there is some demand for a permanent venue capable of presenting large-scale performances of over 1,000 seating capacity. It is questionable however, if a venue of such scale would be viable in an area with such a low population base.

There is no dedicated cinema outside Hereford City and no multiplex cinemas capable of showing a wide variety of films. Film exhibition outside Hereford is therefore only available on a limited basis through the Arts Alive touring programme, known as Flix in the Stix. There is a shortage of venues for popular music appealing to young people, coupled with limited facilities for music rehearsal and recording.

The Library Service of Herefordshire Council has been proactive in initiating a range of literature projects, coupled with the work of Ledbury Poetry Festival which supplements its main festival programme with projects throughout the year. However, there is a need to bring together the work of the various organisations involved in literature development to create a co-ordinated approach and support writers to publish and present their writing.

There have been impressive measures in support of crafts development and in very few places in the rest of the country would crafts businesses receive so much support from their local authority. However, although the County has a very large community of visual artists and craftspeople, the opportunities to exhibit and display work for sale are limited. A number of organisations are involved in running participatory programmes of visual arts and crafts, but with a need for more cohesion and promotion. The County has a range of public art work, but there are opportunities for developing public art through working with businesses and community organisations.

There is opportunity for a range of departments within the local authority to meet their objectives through the use of the arts. There have been a number of initiatives that show joint working across services can use the arts to address issues of transportation, provision for young people, economic development and preventative health. There is potential to increase this work specifically with the Youth Service and Education to deliver a wider range of opportunities for arts within schools and arts with young people. Similarly there is great potential for the Library, Heritage and Social Services to work with the Arts Team in developing arts initiatives linked to their areas of service provision.

There is already a partnership with the Further and Higher Education sector in the County and opportunities to work in partnership, for example, in developing new creative partnerships between arts and education and in taking forward the Arts Academy project proposed by Herefordshire College of Art and Design. Additionally, Parish and Town Council play a crucial role in developing local services and this can apply to arts development taking a very local focus. At a regional level organisations such as Screen West Midlands, Museums Council and the Learning and Skills Councils have a remit to work with Herefordshire with this impacting on the arts provision in the County.

The local authority and West Midlands Arts have played a key role in supporting the arts in the County, and are the main funders. However, there are limitations on the funds of these organisations. It is therefore crucial to secure new funding sources with which to develop the arts. The future of the arts in the County will therefore rely heavily on the creation of new

partnerships which can release the additional resources which the arts in the County are in need of.

## **1.2 Mission and Aims**

If there were one statement or mission to define the ambitions of the Strategy it would be “For the arts to play a pivotal role in the economic, social and cultural life of Herefordshire and its people”.

Following from the mission, the key aims and objectives:

- 1.2.1 To broaden the range of opportunities for Herefordshire residents to participate in the arts and provide more opportunities for the arts to be integrated into community life.
  - Ensuring balanced provision of the arts in the County by supporting a broad range of activity
  - Providing opportunities to experience and participate in the arts for people and communities which are socially excluded
  
- 1.2.2 To strengthen and widen arts provision by building on the County’s existing arts infrastructure and working in partnership to develop new opportunities for arts involvement and enjoyment
  - Consolidating and strengthening the County’s arts infrastructure
  - Developing increased opportunities to experience and participate in the arts in rural areas
  
- 1.2.3 To work in partnership to increase resources for the arts supporting the growth and sustainability of the arts economy
  - Working strategically and cross-departmentally in developing the arts
  - Creating and strengthening strategic partnerships to develop and increase resources for the arts
  
- 1.2.4 To support the individual creativity of the arts community in Herefordshire
  - Supporting the further development of the creative industries
  - Encouraging and supporting of the County’s arts practitioners through the development of increased work opportunities and outlets for the presentation and sale of work.

## 1.3 Actions

The Strategy proposes a range of specific measures to address short, medium and long term objectives. These include initiatives aimed at improving joint planning and working and specific initiatives to expand the range of arts opportunities for the County's residents. They include:

- 1.3.1 Introducing new arrangements to improve joint officer and departmental working within the Council, with a possible "Arts Charter" for the local authority
- 1.3.2 Supporting the arts economy, through training, business advice, funding and promotion of creative industries
- 1.3.3 Developing a new Rural Film Festival for the County
- 1.3.4 Developing new partnerships to expand arts residencies in schools
- 1.3.5 Developing the Arts Academy initiated by Herefordshire College of Art and Design
- 1.3.6 Supporting Hereford City Partnership's City of Living Crafts initiative
- 1.3.7 Creating a Media Forum and Media Development Plan
- 1.3.8 Increasing the amount of arts activities in villages and market towns
- 1.3.9 Increasing the opportunities for young people to participate in the arts
- 1.3.10 Reviewing arts facilities and their usage in Leominster and developing the Ross Creative Learning Centre
- 1.3.11 Including a flexible gallery and space for readings in new library developments for Hereford
- 1.3.12 Increasing opportunities to show and display art work, including establishment of an annual "Art Week"
- 1.3.13 Co-ordinating literature provision through the establishment of a local forum
- 1.3.14 Promoting the use of public art, including the establishment of a Public Art Policy and supporting the commissioning of works for countryside paths, village greens and other locations
- 1.3.15 Identifying new opportunities for the presentation of professional performing arts in the County
- 1.3.16 Introducing more arts programmes into residential homes, day centres, youth clubs and other settings
- 1.3.17 Creating new opportunities for arts practitioners to undertake work in rural areas and in schools.

- 1.3.18 To work in partnership to increase resources for the arts supporting the growth and sustainability of the arts economy
- 1.3.19 To support the individual creativity of the arts community in Herefordshire

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 The Current Position**

Herefordshire is a culturally rich County with a varied and vibrant arts scene. The County has a strong tradition in the arts and an established and successful community of arts practitioners, companies and small businesses, many of which are known regionally and nationally, that are a vital resource to the County and contribute to its arts economy. Herefordshire has a strong cultural identity and leads the region in much of its arts and crafts practice and provision.

The County is particularly known for its high quality contemporary crafts and for innovative measures, such as the Association of Creative Breaks, Hereford Contemporary Craft Fair and Craft Routes programmes, which have helped to support and develop the sector. It is also a centre for traditional rural crafts. Herefordshire also has one of only four independent art colleges in the country, Herefordshire College of Art and Design, and the growing links between the educational and arts sectors are opening up new opportunities for learning and training in the arts and for expanding the creative industries.

The County now has a flagship arts venue, The Courtyard Centre for the Arts, built with the support of the Arts Lottery, which is playing a developing role in theatre production and participatory arts activity. There are a number of smaller performing arts venues in market towns, and an impressive range of festivals of regional, and in some instances national, significance. These include the Ledbury Poetry Festival, the Ross International Festival and *Exposure*, the Herefordshire Photography Festival. There are also more local festivals in Leominster, Bromyard, Madley and the Golden Valley that ensure all parts of the County have access to arts provision.

The County plays a leading role in other ways. It has several arts and media development agencies that address specialist areas of provision. These include the Music Pool, the Rural Media Company, DanceFest, Alloy Jewellers, New Theatre Works and Arts Alive. These agencies specialise in

developing participatory and training programmes and in producing work of high quality that is recognised regionally and nationally. The County also has an exceptionally strong voluntary sector that provides opportunities for its residents to engage in the arts in their own communities.

Herefordshire is a county of ideas and its arts and media sector is constantly strengthening and growing within the broader framework of the creative industries to play an increasingly important role in the County's social and economic life. The plan to develop a Herefordshire Arts Academy, the recent development of a programme to support the creative industries, backed up with EU funding, the designation of Hereford as *City of Living Crafts*, and the Rural Media Company's plans for a new rural film festival demonstrate the vitality and imagination of the County.

In recent years Herefordshire Council, with the support of West Midlands Arts and other partners, has played an increasingly important role in supporting arts development, building and strengthening the arts infrastructure and widening access to the arts. In Hereford for instance, the Hereford City Partnership is developing cultural provision linked to tourism and the local economy and at County level work within the Herefordshire Partnership brings a range of agencies together in support of cultural development.

Herefordshire Council has played a particularly active role in developing the arts infrastructure. It has taken on responsibility for supporting The Courtyard and, through the work of its Arts Team, implemented a range of measures and initiatives to support creative production and presentation. The Council also encourages improved networking, information and partnership in the arts. In certain areas of activity it has implemented specific measures, such as Hereford Contemporary Craft Fair, to support the creative and economic development of the area.

The Council has recognised and pursued opportunities for the arts to play a role in the economic, social and community development of the County and has worked with some success to integrate key areas with work on tourism and other policy areas. Measures taken as part of broader initiatives to improve the quality of life and regenerate and develop the economic base of

Herefordshire have contributed to the County's tourism development, while also extending the range of opportunities available to experience the arts.

The County has pursued a strong partnership approach in developing its policies for culture. The Herefordshire Plan and the Cultural Strategy have been forged through integrated planning and working by a wide variety of agencies and provide a framework for developing the arts in relation to other strategic ambitions for the County. Close working with external agencies, West Midlands Arts and Advantage West Midlands for instance, has opened up a range of new opportunities, including access to new resources.

Herefordshire has a growing reputation for its cultural provision and for the dynamism and imagination of its cultural sector. In certain key areas of crafts, media, festivals and creative industries support in general, it is viewed as playing a leading role in the West Midlands region. This position of strength in certain areas of provision now needs to be built on and expanded.

Despite these strengths, there are opportunities to develop arts provision further. The County has a low population base and dispersed in largely rural areas; as a result, the Council's own financial resources are seriously stretched across all service areas. The local authority recognises the value of the arts in terms of its community and economic value and would increase investment in the arts if resources became available. However, it is unlikely that a major increase in funding for the arts from within the Council's own core budget is likely within the next few years. Working in partnership to access new external funding is therefore crucial to the future development of the arts in Herefordshire.

## **2.2 Strategy Overview**

The Council's strategy for developing the arts will focus on supporting creative industries, and growth in areas of the arts. These are, or might be, integrated into other areas of policy development as part of an overall approach to economic and community regeneration. It has identified the opportunities which exist in external funding programmes, the West

Midlands Objective 2 programme, Rural Regeneration Zone and Herefordshire Rivers LEADER + programmes in particular.

In identifying the future objectives for the arts in the County, especially highlighted are opportunities for growth, taking into account the broader economic context and the potential new and external funding sources to support new developments.

Importantly, the Strategy adopts a realistic approach to challenges faced by the arts in the County, whilst exploring and proposing dynamic and effective solutions and options which will ensure success in the arts in the County, and place Herefordshire at the forefront of the arts in the region. These themes will build on the distinctiveness of the area through the development of arts in rural areas, arts and tourism, media and communications, the creative industries, learning and training, crafts and festivals.

Herefordshire is a success story in the arts, but the achievements of recent years could be lost if support for the arts is not maintained and strengthened. This Strategy will aim to consolidate and build on the successes of the past and to continue the work of building and developing the arts infrastructure, rather than attempting radical shifts in direction. The Strategy will aim to bring the local authority together with all of its partners, including the arts and education sectors, to ensure that all agencies take on ownership for the Strategy and play an active role in achieving its ambitions.

The key aim is to bring the arts into more communities and into the lives of more people. The Strategy will aim to broaden the range of opportunities to experience and participate in the arts, and the range and quality of arts on offer. It will aim to strengthen the arts economy so that creative practitioners can prosper and make a full contribution to the County. Crucially it will seek to ensure that the arts are fully integrated into all aspects of the life of the Herefordshire community and that they become a natural and intrinsic part of the environment and lives of the County and its people.

### **3. STRATEGIC AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1 The Vision for the Future**

This Strategy sets out a series of aims and objectives for the next five years and a vision for the next ten years. It identifies ways in which some of the County's arts ambitions might be achieved through partnerships and addresses opportunities for further development and growth.

If the Strategy is successful, then the arts in the County will be stronger, more diverse and more fully integrated into the lives of the County's residents. The Courtyard will be supported by a network of arts venues and facilities in other parts of the County running cinema and performance programmes. There will be a "cradle to grave" approach to learning in the arts with a thriving arts programme for children in and out of school time, with opportunity to learn and develop skills in the arts to follow careers in the creative industries sector. There will be opportunities to see and buy art through a network of galleries and public art initiatives; and the chance to take part in arts activities, events and community arts projects regardless of age, ability, background or income.

The County's arts sector will be working in partnership with other sectors, to provide enhanced opportunities for learning and training, to improve and secure the quality of the natural environment, to ensure that the County maximises its use of new technology in creative enterprises and to ensure that all of the County's residents are touched by the arts in their everyday lives.

There will be greater involvement in the arts by a wide range of agencies and Herefordshire's artists and crafts people will be an integral part of the County's economic life and an important contributor to its economic success. The arts will be accepted as part of the economy of the County and a cornerstone of the County's tourism industry. The arts will also form part of the work of a range of Council services and Herefordshire Partnership's Ambition Groups in addressing and meeting their own objectives and targets.

Some elements of the arts infrastructure will only be achievable if other partners play a leading role. The development of a multiplex cinema is outside of the direct control of the Council, it can play a key part in attracting such a development to the County if it is able to act as broker in major development schemes and to ensure that arts and leisure provision is included within major schemes.

The future of the arts lies therefore both in the work of the Council and its partners in continuing their support and in the success of the Herefordshire Partnership in taking the County forward to a stronger and more prosperous future. The arts will be a key part of that future and prosperity.

### **3.2 Aims and Objectives**

If there were one statement or mission to define the ambitions of the Strategy it would be “For the arts to play a pivotal role in the economic, social and cultural life of Herefordshire and its people”.

Four key aims to deliver that mission would be:

- 3.2.1 To broaden the range of opportunities for people of the County to participate in the arts and provide more opportunities for the arts to be integrated into community life.
- 3.2.2 To strengthen and widen arts provision by building on the County's existing arts infrastructure and working in partnership to develop new opportunities for arts involvement and enjoyment
- 3.2.3 To work in partnership to increase resources for the arts supporting the growth and sustainability of the arts economy
- 3.2.4 To support the individual creativity of the arts community in Herefordshire.

### **3.3 Arts Objectives**

There are eight Key Objectives:

#### **3.3.1 Working strategically and cross-departmentally in developing the arts**

The Council will aim to work through improved inter-departmental working and external partnerships to develop strategic arts initiatives which address cross-cutting themes and which will ensure that the arts are integrated into a range of corporate policy areas.

Particular attention will be paid to developing new measures to address the arts needs of young people and other strategic areas such as literature and exhibitions through an integrated cross-departmental approach, and through mechanisms which engage other partners including independent arts organisations and the education sector.

The Arts Team will provide advice and expertise to other departments, such as Planning, Social Services and Countryside Services for instance, so that the arts may be integrated more fully into the work of other departments. It will build on its partnership working with other agencies and play a leading role in strategic partnership development.

#### **Tasks**

In order to improve cross-departmental working a number of measures are proposed for the Arts Team:

- Identifying key contact links with other departments in the Council and maintaining these as key entry points into other departments
- Establishing specialist cross-service time-limited project teams for key areas of policy development such as public art and exhibitions
- Raising the profile of the arts and its potential through the communication channels of the local authority

Other tasks are:

- To continue to shift the work of the Arts Team into strategic working by transferring project management to other agencies, where possible, and greater input into other policy areas, such as Planning and Social Services.

- To work with Herefordshire College of Art and Design to develop the role of the Creative Partnerships Group as the driving force for the further development of artists working in schools.

### 3.3.2 **Supporting the further development of the creative industries**

This objective will be pursued through the separate Creative Industries Growth Plan which has identified a range of measures including:

- Development of a rural film festival
- Introducing improved joint marketing
- Training courses in business development and key areas such as marketing
- The establishment of an Innovation and Development Fund
- Initiating a series of new crafts and media initiatives
- Increased support for community festivals and projects
- Increased support for public art projects
- Further development in rural film touring.

There are other important initiatives, in particular the plan developed by Herefordshire College of Art and Design to create an Arts Academy. This ambitious plan is to create a centre of excellence for nurturing and fostering the cultural and creative industries. The Academy would bring together a gallery, exhibition facilities, workshops, an innovation unit and retailing with further and higher academic facilities for 1500 students.

The development of Hereford City as a City of Living Crafts by the Hereford City Partnership is another ambitious scheme which seeks to build on the City's strengths by promoting its contemporary and traditional crafts as a means of strengthening the City's cultural tourism and economy.

Other tasks are:

- Working with Herefordshire College of Art and Design and other agencies to develop the Herefordshire Arts Academy
- Increasing dissemination and distribution of information

- Supporting the Hereford City of Living Crafts initiatives
- Creation of a Media Forum and Media Development Plan

The creation of a centre for crafts in Herefordshire should remain a long-term aim and may be partly met by the Arts Academy. However, any opportunities to integrate crafts exhibition, retailing and workshop and studio space into appropriate tourism, community or economic development capital schemes should be given full consideration.

### **3.3.3 Developing increased opportunities to experience and participate in the arts in rural areas**

There is a wide range of voluntary arts activity taking place in the rural parts of Herefordshire and in the market towns, supplemented by opportunities to see professional performing arts work and film through the Arts Alive touring programme and through local festivals. There are also opportunities to participate in the arts through the work of some of the County's arts agencies, Rural Media Company, DanceFest and the Music Pool for example, and through adult education programmes.

However, there is considerable scope for developing arts activities in rural areas further, particularly in the following ways:

- Supporting the installation of public art works for public spaces, on footpaths and on village greens and in village churches and halls for instance
- Making greater use of the professional arts – visual, crafts, film and performing arts – in village celebrations
- Making use of the County's arts professionals to work with village arts groups
- Improving village hall facilities for exhibitions and live performances
- Including arts workshops in play schemes and with other young people's groups
- Supporting youth theatre and other arts activities for young people in villages and towns

- Developing arts activities for elderly people and people in residential homes in rural areas
- Developing new adult education classes and programmes in villages and towns.

These activities could be funded through a variety of means, including awards from trusts and foundations (e.g. The Elmley Foundation Small Grants Scheme), rural development programmes (e.g. LEADER+ and Rural Regeneration Zone) and with small grants from parish and town councils and the possibility of creating rural arts worker posts.

#### **Tasks**

- Improving liaison between arts and community workers to ensure greater awareness of existing opportunities
- Providing specialist information on developing the arts in rural areas and on funding sources to parish councils and other village groups e.g. through a rural arts pack
- Securing funding from rural development sources, to support local arts projects (funding to be matched locally)
- Supporting creative industries developments in rural areas through LEADER+ and Objective 2 programmes
- Exploring options for the creation of rural arts worker posts.

#### **3.3.4 Consolidating and strengthening the Herefordshire's arts infrastructure**

There are two main challenges in achieving this objective. The limited resource base of the County inhibits the Council's ability to invest additional funding of its own into the arts; also there is limited access to capital funding with which to address gaps in the capital infrastructure.

The Council has already taken measures to secure additional funding support for the arts infrastructure through the Objective 2 programme support of the Ross Creative Learning Centre. Economic development and regeneration programmes are also a potential source of funding for capital developments.

However, resources will be stretched and the Council will need to make priorities in support of arts organisations. The local authority will take into account the extent to which arts organisations address the objectives and key tasks of the Strategy in deciding its priorities. Equally, initiatives will be supported on the basis of how they address the key objectives of the Strategy.

Three specific opportunities exist to strengthen the arts infrastructure. The Ross Creative Learning Centre will provide the County with specialist facilities for certain forms of youth and community arts activity, and plans for an Arts Academy would help in addressing arts and crafts workspace provision and in improving crafts exhibition facilities.

The plans to build a new library for Hereford City present the Council with a third major opportunity, not only to include within the new library building flexible spaces for exhibition and small-scale readings and other events, but also by freeing up the existing Museum and Art Gallery for other uses, given its location close to the Cathedral and other cultural amenities.

This could provide permanent exhibition space for the visual arts and textile collections owned by the local authority, as well as an excellent contemporary gallery which could increase the City's appeal to visitors and strengthen the City's cultural offer, contributing to its development as a City of Living Crafts. Space could also be provided to allow activities to take place associated with the collections and contemporary work.

Leominster has a particular need to enhance its arts facilities. This could be achieved through the further development of several existing sites, which may have multi-purpose usage, or by establishing a single focus for the arts. However, in considering the development of any arts facility, full assessment of the viability and sustainability will need to be made, taking into account the low population base and limited ability to support a venue through income generation.

## **Tasks**

- Implementing the Creative Industries Growth Plan
- A Council review of its financial support of key organisations and projects in the terms of the delivery of the objectives of the Arts Strategy
- Working with key agencies to identify new funding sources
- Supporting the Herefordshire Arts Academy proposal and Ross Creative Learning Centre initiative
- Reviewing arts facilities in Leominster and working in partnership with other agencies to improve facilities
- Working with Town Councils and the Community Leisure Trust to identify other opportunities to improve arts facilities
- Including a flexible gallery and reading space provision in new library developments
- Working with other partners to identify opportunities to develop new exhibition spaces in the County, including exploring the possibility of creating new exhibition facilities in the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery building
- Working with the private sector where possible to develop new cinema provision
- Ensuring that measures are taken to address the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

### **3.3.5 Ensuring balanced provision of the arts in the Herefordshire by supporting a broad range of activity**

There are areas of the arts where there is a need for new initiatives and measures to develop provision. For example, there are opportunities to enhance literature provision and dance development beyond Hereford City. There is a need for a new approach to public art which encompasses the whole County and for additional measures to support other forms of visual arts.

There is some demand for a permanent venue seating over 1,000 and capable of presenting large-scale performances, but there are questions

over the sustainability of a venue of such scale in an area with such a low population base.

### **Tasks**

- Establishing a literature development forum with Education, Library Services and organisations such as Young Writers and Ledbury Poetry Festival to develop new measures and resources to support literature
- Developing a new public art plan in partnership with other Council departments, aimed at encouraging more public art commissions throughout the County
- Developing a new festival for the visual arts and crafts
- Exploring the options for presenting more large-scale performing arts through working with organisations such as the Leisure Trust and The Courtyard
- Increasing the amount of dance in the County through the work of DanceFest and other agencies and services
- Exploring the options for increasing the amount of professional performing arts presented at the County's amateur-run theatres
- Supporting The Courtyard in developing its countywide role.

### **3.3.6 Providing opportunities to experience and participate in the arts for people and communities which are socially excluded**

Social exclusion is based on the combination of linked circumstances that cause people to be disadvantaged either through poverty, limited access to services, isolation or prejudice. Socially excluded groups tend to include young and elderly people, people with disabilities and learning difficulties, people in isolated rural areas and people with low incomes. Ensuring that such groups are not socially excluded requires an inclusive and holistic approach to arts development which ensures that the arts are delivered within other programmes aimed at addressing social inclusion and that they are embedded in the work of Social Services, the Youth Service and other service providers.

The Strategy will address issues of social inclusion through support for programmes of work which will target such groups and individuals and by working to include arts elements in regeneration and social and community development programmes. It will also aim to reduce barriers to participation in the arts and to ensure that facilities used for the arts are fully accessible.

### **Tasks**

- Developing the Ross Creative Learning Centre as a base for arts and young people
- Working cross-departmentally and with organisations to introduce and develop arts programmes within residential and day centres and with other Social Services client groups
- Supporting new arts initiatives in rural areas through LEADER+ and other programmes
- Working across Ambition Groups and departments of the local authority to secure external funding for arts programmes aimed at target groups
- Working with key arts agencies to ensure that their work addresses social inclusion agendas
- Working with specialist agencies, such as New Roots, to develop work for young people and other target groups, including disabled and elderly people.

### **3.3.7 Encouraging and supporting the County's arts practitioners through development of increased work opportunities and outlets for the presentation and sale of work**

A range of measures have been put in place in recent years to support arts and crafts practitioners, and to assist them in developing markets for their work. The key to a successful community of arts practitioners will be a strong arts and creative industries economic sector and measures will need to support the creative industries economy in ways which will ensure its sustainability, rather than simply providing time-limited grant aid for specific projects and programmes.

### **Tasks**

- Implementing the Creative Industries Growth Plan
- Establishing an artists in schools programme
- Developing opportunities for artists to undertake work in rural communities within Objective 2, LEADER+ and RRZ programmes
- Maintaining and promoting the County database of artists
- Promoting County's arts practitioners through advice to youth and community groups
- Maintaining advisory and information services to arts practitioners
- Working to improve exhibition and retail venues for arts and crafts
- Continuing to support training programmes providing support for arts practitioners.

#### **3.3.8 Creating and strengthening strategic partnerships in developing and increasing resources for the arts**

The Herefordshire Plan establishes a broad framework for partnership working; and partnership underpins all aspects of policy development. The arts in the County will only be able to grow through effective partnerships, building on the successful relationship with West Midlands Arts and strengthening the links with Advantage West Midlands for instance.

There are developed partnerships with a variety of agencies in the County, such as the colleges of Art and Design and further education, Business Link, Hereford City Partnership and the health sector. There is opportunity for joint working between the Ambition Groups of the Herefordshire Partnership, for example, building on the current successes in working with the Ambition Groups that cover transportation and environment. Within the Council partnership working will be essential to the successful delivery of new arts programmes, in public art and artists in schools for example.

Herefordshire arts organisations and the Council have been very successful in attracting funding for the arts both from external and County-based funding sources. The Courtyard benefited from over £4 million of Arts Lottery capital funding and, as a result, will be attracting an additional £150,000 a year from the Arts Council in revenue support from 2003. The

Council's recent success in securing over £1.6 million for creative industries, new investment from the Objective 2 programme and Rural Regeneration Zone is another example of success in securing external funding.

The Rural Media Company and Ross International Festival spend a total of over £1.2 million on their annual arts and media programmes, a sizeable portion of which is secured from agencies and sponsors outside the County, and other arts groups and festivals also attract external funding in the same way. For instance The Music Pool has secured major project funding from the Arts Lottery through youth music funding programmes.

### **Tasks**

- Working through the Herefordshire Plan to identify key partners across various areas of arts development, arts and health, and rural arts for example
- Working with Herefordshire College of Art and Design to develop the Arts Academy
- Working with the education and lifelong learning sector to increase opportunities for arts in education
- Establishing time-limited partnership-based project groups to address key policy areas
- The Arts Team adopting a more strategic approach to arts development so as to engage with other policy areas and provide advice and expertise to non-arts agencies in developing arts programmes
- Providing support and advice to parish and town councils on arts development and encouraging them to support local arts initiatives
- Developing new opportunities for arts practitioners, in schools and the health sector for example
- Supporting the County's arts agencies and festivals in securing new external funding.

## **4. RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### **4.1 Partnerships**

Partnership working and increasing resources are two of the key objectives of this strategy and are fundamental to its success. Some of the partnerships that will help to deliver resources are identified in this section of the Strategy.

#### **4.1.1 The West Midlands Objective 2 Programme**

The programme is at an early stage and the Creative Industries bid submitted by Herefordshire Council will deliver substantial new financial resources to the arts in the County. The programme is also a source of potential capital funding of the Ross Creative Learning Centre and other capital projects which may emerge.

#### **4.1.2 The Herefordshire Rivers LEADER + Programme**

The Herefordshire Partnership has put together a package of funding amounting to £2.44 million for a major initiative under the EU LEADER+ programme, which supports innovative locally-led economic and community programmes in rural areas. The funding will support community activity that finds new ways to enhance the natural environment, cultural and historical resources of the countryside of the Wye and Lugg catchment area (including the towns of Leominster, Bromyard, Kington and Ross, and will include arts and heritage development linked to the Rivers).

The Development Plan for the Rivers Project specifies a range of ways in which the arts might contribute to social, economic and environmental development within the Plan, including festivals, exhibitions, workshops and residencies by artists, artists commissions and public art. It offers the possibility of significant levels of resourcing for arts initiatives.

#### **4.1.3 Advantage West Midlands**

The Regional Development Agency has a range of programmes addressing economic regeneration, including programmes to support the tourism and

creative industries sectors. Major funding could be delivered for appropriate projects.

#### 4.1.4 **The Market Towns Initiative**

Advantage West Midlands and the Countryside Agency launched the programme in August 2001. It aims to help create sustainable and viable market towns in the region. Resources are available to assist the creation of new job opportunities and new workspace, to restore high streets and improve amenities. Kington and Bromyard are both identified within the highest tiers of need.

#### 4.1.5 **Rural Regeneration Zone**

This new programme is supported by Advantage West Midlands and will provide substantial resources for identified areas in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. The programme is designed to support the economic development and regeneration of the area, but can include revenue and capital support for the leisure and cultural sector. The Zone is a source of partnership funding for the Creative Industries programme.

#### 4.1.6 **Countryside Agency Programmes**

The Countryside Agency administers several schemes of possible relevance to the arts. The *'Walking the Way to Health'* scheme supports footpaths and the use of public art to stimulate community involvement. The Local Heritage Initiative can help local community groups involved with local heritage and culture.

#### 4.1.7 **West Midlands Arts/The Arts Council**

The arts funding system contributes substantial amounts of funding to the County to support the sustainability and growth of key arts organisations and initiatives in the area. Additionally West Midlands Arts has directly supported creative businesses in the County providing a track record of support that has influenced the Creative Industries programme.

#### 4.1.8 **The Arts Lottery**

The Arts Lottery continues to support the arts in the County in a variety of ways, including through the Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP), which

can include capital awards of up to £100,000. The main capital programme will be re-launched in 2003.

#### **4.1.9 Other Lottery Funding**

Some Arts Lottery funding is channelled through independent distributors, such as the National Foundation for Youth Music, which is already investing heavily in the County through support for the New Roots Youth Music Action Zone programme, and support for work with early years children, both undertaken in the County by the Music Pool.

Awards for All is a joint Lottery programme which can award up to £5,000 towards a project and has supported a range of arts projects in the County including the Ledbury based Tilleys Artists and the Conquest Theatre in Bromyard.

#### **4.1.10 Trusts and Foundations**

Both the Elmley Foundation and Everson Trust are supporters of the in Herefordshire and from this year the Byford Trust will begin to distribute funding for arts and education initiatives. There are also many national trusts, such as the Esme Fairburn Foundation and the National Foundation for Sport and the Arts, which have supported programmes in the County.

#### **4.1.11 Other Regeneration Programmes**

A variety of regeneration programmes are currently in operation, ranging from rural programmes to address the after-effects of Foot and Mouth to ongoing government programmes like the Single Regeneration Budget, referred to as SRB.

#### **4.1.12 Other Government Programmes**

The Government operates a wide assortment of funding programmes, including programmes such as Education Excellence and Specialist Arts Colleges in the education sector, programmes addressing crime and safety, regeneration and tourism recovery funding. These can be accessed in support of a variety of community programmes.

#### 4.1.13 **Business and Training Support**

Business Link already provides training programmes on business skills for arts practitioners and there are various funding sources available including through the Learning and Skills Councils.

## 4.2 **Funding the Arts Strategy**

Herefordshire Council currently spends around £500,000 on the arts through its support for The Courtyard, employment of arts officers, a small expenditure budget, and Service Level Agreements and grants to arts organisations. In addition the Council spends on the arts through education and other non-arts budgetary sources. 75% of the dedicated arts spend goes on support for The Courtyard as key deliverer of the arts (which receives a level of funding broadly in line with that received by other arts venues in the UK).

The Council faces a number of challenges in supporting the arts:

- The low level of flexible, project funding available to support the arts infrastructure, including major festivals and agencies
- No funding available for capital development
- Small Arts Team with limited capacity to apply for and manage external funding
- Pressures on the Council's budgets limiting growth in funding for the arts
- The requirement to set priorities against demand

This Strategy proposes that Herefordshire Council maintains current funding levels for the arts and if possible, finds ways of enhancing its support for key elements of the strategic arts infrastructure as corporate priorities. The main focus for new resources is the range of non-arts funding and regeneration programmes and initiatives referred to elsewhere in the document. The financial strategy is therefore based on a review of current levels of funding for key agencies with new funds for partnership projects.

The arts within the Council and the wider County have some significant opportunities that can influence growth. These are:

- A good foundation of partnership working
- A proven track record of arts development meeting wider issues of social and economic development
- Recognition regionally that Herefordshire is a leader in several aspects of arts development
- Arts integrated into the work of the Herefordshire Partnership
- Increased recognition that the arts can be used to address a range of social issues
- The development of The Courtyard and a strong network of arts organisations providing quality products
- A creative county, with a strong amateur arts sector and a developing professional base of creative industries