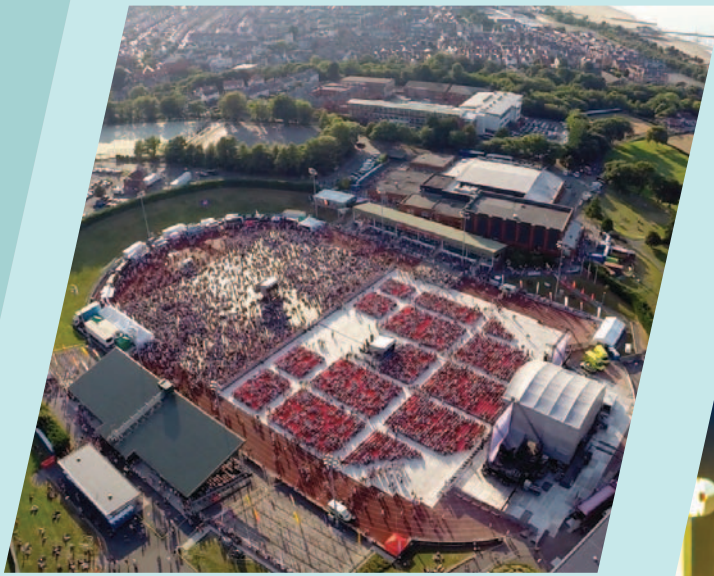


CREATIVE CONWY

STRATEGIC STATEMENT ON THE ARTS IN CONWY 2016-2018





PREFACE

Conwy County Borough Council is proud of the progress we are all making to deliver 'One Conwy - Working Together for a Better Future'. I welcome this document, Creative Conwy Arts Strategy, which demonstrate that the arts are a key ingredient in the delivery of our ambitions.



We have a significant history forged from a recognition of the importance of arts and culture within society. Theatr Colwyn, which is owned and operated by Conwy County Borough Council, is the oldest operating cinema in the UK and the oldest theatre in operation in Wales. In Conwy, the Royal Cambrian Gallery has been in existence since the 1880s whilst in Llandudno the first art gallery devoted to showing the work of female artists was built at the beginning of the twentieth century and now houses the prestigious MOSTYN contemporary arts centre.

These organisations represent continuity but to them have been added exciting new initiatives. Venue Cymru has established a reputation for bringing the best of arts and entertainment to the region. Colwyn Bay welcomed Elton John in 2015, another name to add to the list of world famous artists who have appeared Eirias Park. Helfa Gelf, Llawn and Migrations have all seen the arts taking place in public spaces across the county.

There is a growing recognition that creativity and the arts are important factors within education, tourism, regeneration and the promotion of well being. We have outstanding examples of how initiatives within the county are promoting success within these areas.

The arts have always been and continue to be fundamental to Welsh language culture with the Urdd, Eisteddfodau, papurau bro and the Welsh rock scene providing a richness and meaning to our identity.

We want the best for the people of Conwy. The arts increase quality of life, enhance our environment, inspire and develop our young people, promote tourism and play a significant role in the economy of the area. This document celebrates the richness and diversity of the arts in Conwy and we look forward to continuing to work with our many partner organisations in delivering high quality arts experiences for the people who live, work in or visit Conwy.

Councillor Dilwyn Roberts
Leader, Conwy County Borough Council

A photograph of two children from behind, wearing fox costumes with large ears and bushy tails. They are standing on a stage with a red and blue light wash. The child on the left is wearing a red dress, and the child on the right is wearing a blue dress. They appear to be in the middle of a performance or rehearsal.

1 OVERVIEW

This document outlines how arts organisations, creative experiences and cultural opportunities all contribute to Conwy priorities, playing their part in making the county a healthy place with vibrant communities.

It takes the eight key outcomes of 'One Conwy - working together for a better future' and highlights the role of arts and culture in delivering each one.

It describes the role that the arts have played, will play and could play over the next three years in Conwy County.

Most recognisably the arts are music, theatre, dance, literature, visual arts, architecture and design. They cover a wide spectrum of forms and disciplines and exist in varied and diverse ways including through digital media.

Residents and visitors to Conwy have a rich variety of opportunities to access and enjoy the arts as participants, artists, audience members and visitors to cultural centres.

The arts enhance the social well-being of the area; driving tourism and inward investment to the economic benefit of local businesses and citizens.

The arts inspire an appetite for learning and provide enjoyment, new opportunities and the chance to gain new skills.

The arts are delivered in both Welsh and English, celebrating our bi-lingual population and promoting the Welsh language.

Conwy County Borough Council is proud to own and manage Venue Cymru and Theatr Colwyn. During the period of this strategy the theatres will provide artistic hubs, delivering high quality work for our citizens and visitors. The theatres and gallery will also sit centrally within, and support, the huge array of participation opportunities that are offered by the county.

In the national context, this strategy sits within the context of the Welsh Government's commitment to the arts following Baroness Andrews "Culture and Poverty" Report, which highlighted the considerable benefits that the arts can bring to our communities. This strategy also outlines how the arts in Conwy will contribute to our responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and to the One Conwy - Working Together for a Better Future outcomes. The plan is also influenced by Professor Graham Donaldson's *Successful Futures. An independent Review of Curriculum & Assessment Arrangements in Wales* which recommends that Expressive Arts is one of the six equal areas of learning and experience. The strategy also supports the Arts Council of Wales *Creative Learning through the Arts - an action plan for Wales 2015-2020*.

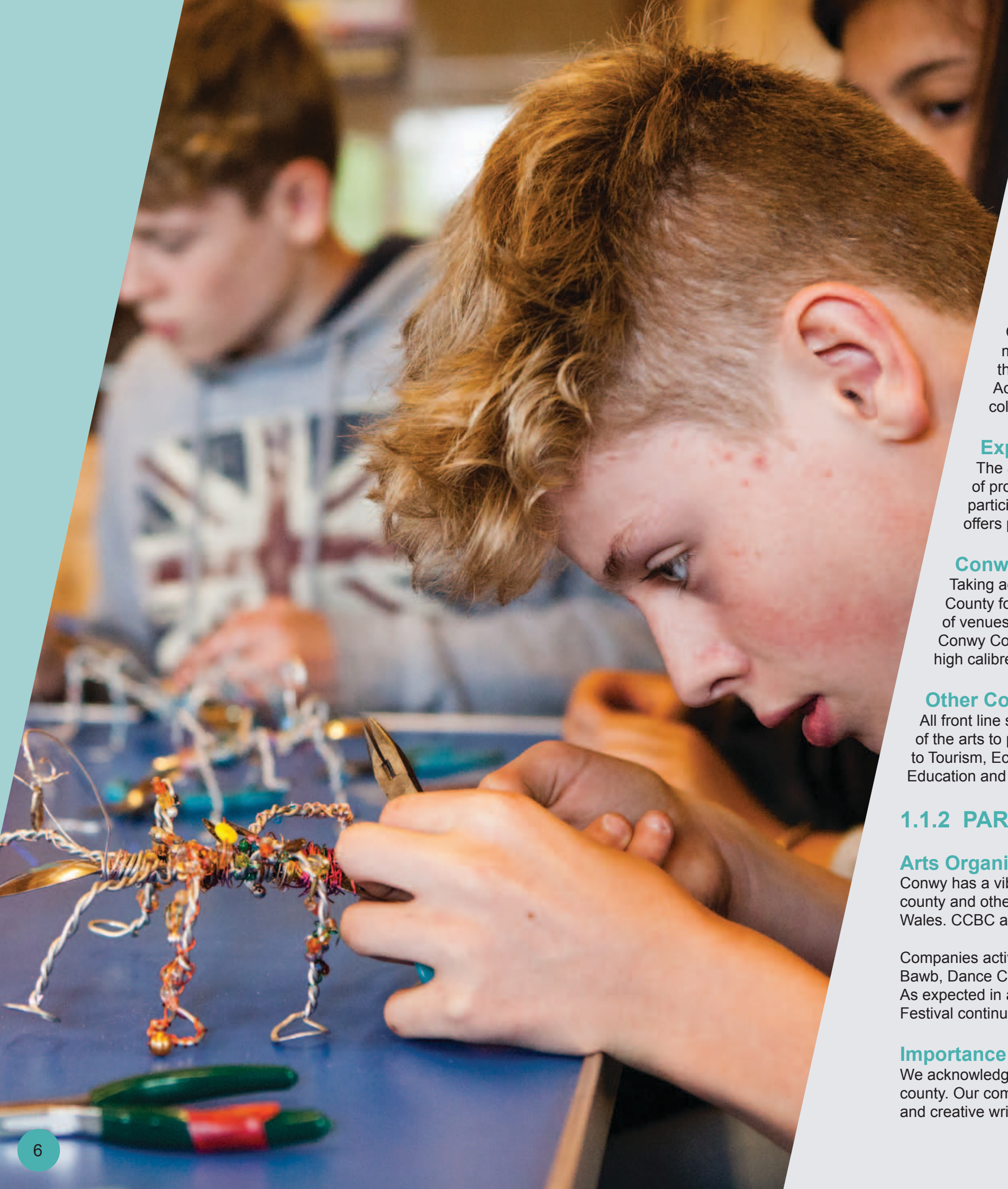
This document strengthens the case for continuing to fund and support the arts and outlines our priorities which, in turn, will inform future decision making. Resources are scarce and considered decisions have to be made in allocating public funding to ensure every pound is used to the best effect.

1.1 ARTS IN CONWY

1.1.1 CCBC SERVICES

Theatres and Conference Centres

CCBC's Venue Cymru hosts large-scale popular touring productions of music, drama, classical ballet and comedy. Venue Cymru boasts a traditional proscenium theatre, arena and a number of smaller spaces. It welcomes in excess of 200,000 people to arts events each year. A programme of smaller scale



touring productions, amateur productions, cinema and Oriel Colwyn is provided at Theatr Colwyn, Colwyn Bay. Both theatres provide year-round opportunities to experience and participate in a range of events including take pART in January and a variety of free monthly events. Oriel Colwyn is a renowned photographic gallery and associated dark room, offering high profile photographic exhibitions, talks, workshops and learning opportunities.

Conwy Arts Service - Culture and Information

The Service initiates, manages and monitors a wide range of arts projects and activities in consultation with other local authority departments, professional arts organisations, community groups, artists and members of the public. We provide advice and support on funding sources and manage the Conwy Arts Development Grant Scheme.

Conwy Arts Service works with the Museums Service to promote our heritage and museum collections through a range of arts-related projects and activities throughout the year. The museums service takes strategic responsibility for the delivery of Heritage Actions within Destination Conwy and is responsible for the archive service whose collections which are put to use for arts projects such as Artiffact.

Expressive Arts and Music Service

The Service makes specific provision for schools and their pupils with a varied programme of professionally led arts activities. All children and young people are given opportunities to participate in workshops, projects, exhibitions and performances. The Conwy Music Service offers pupils weekly instrumental and vocal tuition and organises courses, concerts and gigs.

Conwy Events

Taking advantage of our central location, CCBC has attracted world and national events to Conwy County for the benefit of both local communities and visitors and making the most of our portfolio of venues. Events such as Access all Eirias, which is an award winning partnership between Conwy Council and Orchard Media, has seen two successful events in 2012 and 2013 attracting high calibre performers in its first two years of operation.

Other Conwy Services Arts Input

All front line services contribute to the arts provision in Conwy Borough. The potential for the power of the arts to play a part in the delivery of the key outcomes outlined in One Conwy is of relevance to Tourism, Economic Development, Social Services, Planning, Regeneration, Libraries, Heritage, Education and Leisure.

1.1.2 PARTNERSHIPS/ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Arts Organisations in Conwy

Conwy has a vibrant arts community. A number of professional arts organisations are based in the county and others are active in Conwy as part of their commitment to arts development across North Wales. CCBC awards a limited number of annual and project grants to support work in the county.

Companies active in Conwy include MOSTYN gallery, Royal Cambrian Academy, Helfa Gelf, Dawns i Bawb, Dance Collective, Migrations, Theatr Bara Caws, Cwmni'r Frân Wen, TAPE and Ensemble Cymru. As expected in a dynamic sector, new groups such as Blinc evolve and new events like the LLawn Festival continue to emerge.

Importance of the Independent and Voluntary Sectors

We acknowledge the importance of the independent and voluntary sectors within arts provision in the county. Our communities are enriched by the many choirs, amateur artists and craftspeople, reading and creative writing groups and drama groups etc. that offer opportunities to take part in the arts. Many



thousands of people give of their time to help organise and run such groups, Festivals and Night Out performances in village halls.

The voluntary sector is also key in the delivery of a range of participatory activities for young people. The Urdd and Young Farmers movements are central to this as well as a variety of voluntary and commercial dance and drama groups. The work of volunteers in providing ushers and invigilation services is recognised and appreciated by many arts organisations across the county.

2 CONWY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL VISION AND OUTCOMES

Conwy - a progressive county creating opportunity

This arts strategy sits within a framework of commitments that Conwy County Borough Council has made to its citizens. In particular, it supports the Council's Corporate Plan 2012 to 2017 that sets out the improvements we intend to make, and also 'One Conwy - working together for a better future 2012-25' that is the strategy for all public service agencies. The One Conwy Outcomes are:

- People in Conwy are educated and skilled
- People in Conwy are safe and feel safe
- People in Conwy live in safe and appropriate housing
- People in Conwy are healthy and independent
- People in Conwy live in a County which has a thriving economy
- People in Conwy live in a sustainable environment
- People in Conwy live in a County where heritage, culture and the Welsh language thrive
- People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to

In addition, the Welsh Government has adopted the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as the basis of all work for children and young people in Wales. The Welsh Government has translated this into the "7 Core Aims":

- 1 Having a flying start in life
- 2 Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities
- 3 Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation
- 4 Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities
- 5 Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised
- 6 Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional well-being
- 7 Are not disadvantaged by poverty

Each One Conwy outcome is listed in this document with examples of how the arts do and will contribute to its delivery.

When considering what work we will do, what we will support and what we will plan for the future these outcomes and the associated core aims will be our guiding principles.

The arts are a lively and dynamic area, and Conwy is an ever-changing environment. This strategy and its implementation will be regularly reviewed against this shifting landscape to ensure it remains relevant and effective.


2.1 OUTCOME 1

People in Conwy are educated and skilled

(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome "A More Equal Wales")

The arts have a significant and fundamental role to play within education as a means of gaining life skills, as a gateway to the enjoyment of and success in learning, as the provider of productive and meaningful ways of spending leisure time and as disciplines in which qualifications can lead to employment.

Speaking at the Hay Festival, Dai Smith, Chair of the Arts Council of Wales said, "Teaching in and through the arts, far from detracting from literacy and numeracy, should be seen as an enabler to driving up standards in those academic priorities. The value of the arts therefore needs to be reiterated within schools and, importantly, schools need to be supported in taking up and delivering more imaginative approaches to cross-curricular creative activity."



Pan agori di'th lygaid
Fe gei brofi lle amgenach,
Ceisia unrwybeth a fynni
Newid cwrs y byd.....



Research shows that young people's engagement in the arts can lead to improvements in their achievement across the curriculum:

Participation in structured arts activities improves pre-school and primary school aged children's literacy skills, academic attainment in secondary school aged pupils and young people's transferable skills.

(DCMS Learning impacts for young people participating in the arts 2010)

94% of schools in the county participated in an arts experience organised by the Expressive Arts Service in 2013/14.

We enjoyed the concert hugely! To give children the opportunity to play in a large orchestra with accomplished musicians is invaluable. It's been a fantastic confidence boost; to enjoy and participate in music has given her a chance to develop and accomplish and feel passionate about something.

(Parent of a member of Conwy Junior Orchestra)

The power of the arts to re-engage young people who have become disaffected from schools and the education process is being demonstrated by a wide variety of successful projects for young people who are not in education, employment or training.

As the amount of leisure time increases for many people, the arts can provide a variety of worthwhile activities the pursuit of which brings meaning, purpose and a sense of achievement to the participant.

The arts can be a catalyst for personal development, nurturing self-confidence and self-esteem, developing social skills such as team working, communication and active participation.

The creative industries contribute over £650 million annually to Wales' economy and are growing at 9% per annum; much higher than the average for the whole economy. Working within the creative industries should be seen as a positive option for young people with our education system supporting those with an ambition to achieve the relevant skills and qualifications.

Work experience at Venue Cymru has provided a pathway for many young people to find careers in marketing or technical services within theatres. Adam Jones, who now works professionally in the arts, undertook a voluntary placement at Venue Cymru. He writes: "I cannot recommend Venue Cymru's work experience programme highly enough. Not only did it instil in me a passion for arts marketing and working in a theatre environment but through it I also began my career in the industry; having progressed from work experience to a maternity cover position at Venue Cymru to my current role as Marketing Officer for the Sherman Theatre in Cardiff. The efforts made by Venue Cymru to encourage young people to pursue careers in the industry are to be commended."


CCBC will champion the arts and utilise the benefits that the arts can offer in improving educational outcomes and enhancing life skills. We will work with our partners to ensure that our young people have access to the arts.

2.2 OUTCOME 2

People in Conwy are safe and feel safe

(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome "A Wales of Cohesive Communities")

Involvement with the arts in a community can not only see the incidence of crime drop but can also have significant impact on the way an area is perceived by the residents and visitors.



The arts have been recognised as a leading component in schemes to generate community cohesion. Living within a vibrant and caring community engenders positive behaviour which in turn cultivates feelings of safety and security.

Where young people participated in the SPLASH out of school arts activity, robbery dropped by 9-13%. Where children did not have access to the scheme, street crime increased by 56%.

Where the arts are included in regeneration projects and involved in creating a positive community attitude towards the changes taking place, the success rate for regeneration is increased.

In 2012, artist Joseph Ayavoro worked with residents and pupils of Ysgol Nant-Y-Coed to design "Togetherness" at Cae Derw Park in Llandudno Junction. The artwork is part of the redevelopment and enhancement of the Park engineered by the Llandudno Junction Regeneration Steering Group.

CCBC will consider arts opportunities in regeneration projects as a means to improving outcomes for our citizens. We will work with our partners to support arts projects that will assist with community cohesion.

2.3 OUTCOME 3

People in Conwy live in safe and appropriate housing

(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome "A More Equal Wales")

The arts can create the interface between planners and the people who live in the housing that they create. A house is a building whereas a home is somewhere where you feel safe and part of a sharing and sociable community. Transforming houses into homes and groups of people into communities is key to successful regeneration.

Artworks for Conwy Estuary Strategic Route and Conwy Quay. An exciting art project initiated by Conwy County Borough Council and co-ordinated in collaboration with Cywaith Cymru. Stone carver, Graeme Mitcheson, was commissioned to produce a sculpture for Conwy Quay. Graeme is from Derbyshire and is a well-known artist with public art sculptures sited throughout the UK.

Arts are integrated within the plans being formulated at the moment by Conwy County Borough Council for Colwyn Bay waterfront and town link. This scheme will involve a number of public art projects that will give members of the local community opportunities to work alongside artists to plan and create aspects of their new environment.

The Masterplan vision for Colwyn Bay is to create, 'A thriving, attractive and vibrant town that is welcoming, safe and friendly; a place with a unique character that people are proud to live in.'

The involvement of artists in regeneration schemes, particularly in public art commissioning, is a key area that can clearly help deliver this vision and provide lasting benefits for the people of Colwyn Bay and the wider community.

A characteristic of successful towns is that they nurture and support an active cultural offer. Towns that wish to perform effectively as welcoming, safe and friendly require a high quality, well maintained public realm. For public spaces to perform well they should be designed with an understanding of, and respect for, their locale and with pride and regard for people.

A town's "unique character" is often perceived through its architecture, public realm and cultural activity, and the ability of artists to see things differently and create thought provoking and



beautiful interventions (both temporary and permanent) will significantly enhance the 'unique character'.

(From Masterplan vision for Colwyn Bay)

Arts projects can transform the way people think about their homes and their environment and can make a real difference in term of social interaction and positivity. A recent project in collaboration with Cartrefi Conwy that involved a photography project with elderly residents was particularly successful in this regard. The project was led by Paul Sampson, Curator/Resident Photographer at Oriel Colwyn.

Brenda Roberts of Old Colwyn, described the course as "absolutely brilliant". She said "It has got us out and about and taken me away from my flat. We have been learning but also talking together, we have such a laugh. I have made new friends and really enjoyed the experience. I never went out much to be perfectly honest so joining the course has really given me a new lease of life. I do have a computer but never realised just how much you can do with them and how much I didn't know."

CCBC will support arts initiatives that will assist in improving the built environment and improve citizen's perception of the area in which they live.

2.4 OUTCOME 4

People in Conwy are healthy and independent

(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome "A Healthier Wales")

The '5 Ways to Well-being' have been identified by the New Economics Foundation as having a beneficial effect on our mental well-being. Including them in our day to day activities will help us to feel good and function well in all that we do.

The concept of well-being comprises two main elements: feeling good and functioning well. These affect, and are affected by, many different factors: our age and gender, the quality of our relationships, where we live and work, our state of health and access to support and services. If we are to improve the physical health and well-being of the people in North Wales we must also work to improve mental well-being. We cannot achieve one without the other.

The practice of using the arts to promote healing and happiness is as old as the arts themselves. For early civilisations, aesthetic beauty in objects or surroundings and the soothing rhythms of words, movement and music contributed to the balance and harmony between bodily systems and environment which was believed to maintain good health. The burgeoning interest in arts and health in the last century was part of a swing away from the reductionist medical model, to once again considering mind, body and spirit when treating disease. With the current emphasis on primary prevention and health promotion, the arts and health field is flourishing... Arts activities are being used to encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own health through lifestyle choices and a reassessment of personal values. The arts and health field is making an important contribution to the wellbeing agenda in many countries, as the social injustices behind inequalities in health are addressed.

(The Royal Society for Public Health Working Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing July 2013)

Artefact - a partnership of the archives service and four museums and galleries in North Wales has developed a project to deliver art sessions within the museum and gallery environment to people who have a history of mental health problems or are experiencing an episode of stress. Qualitative data show that participants experienced immediate changes to their mental wellbeing as a result of the arts activity.



There is also the museums service 'Time to Remember' project which uses museum and archive collections as inspiration for hospital based arts sessions with Dementia patients. The Time to Remember project from the Arts, Archive and Museums service has been held up as an example of good practice by Betsi Cadwaldr University Health Board as an effective project for using museum collection with dementia patients for reminiscence sessions in a hospital setting. The museum and archive collections from CCBC were used in handling sessions and as inspiration for hands-on arts activities on the hospital ward;

- More than 20 Dementia patients and their families took part in the project
- Dementia Diaries recorded pronounced increase in cognitive recall and engagement, with more than 62% of the sessions showing increased communication and engagement and the re-telling of stories, even for patients in the later stages of Dementia
- In terms of wellbeing, 28% were 'indifferent' before the start of the session and 50% happy. This changed to which dropped to 11% indifferent and 67% happy
- Staff feedback - "Patients have definitely relaxed, the ward is calmer during the day; definitely having a positive impact, "Improved the atmosphere on the ward", "good vibes" "reduce boredom", "There's just no stimulation for them"

An exhibition about the project was created for Llandudno Library and this will tour hospitals in 2016/17.

Shared reading is a way of bringing people and great literature together for the benefit of improving mental health, reducing social isolation and enhancing quality of life. The innovative shared reading model brings people together in weekly groups to listen to poems and stories read aloud. Thoughts and experiences are shared; personal and social connections are made.

Reader development is a key aspect of library work. Reader development has been defined as 'active intervention to open up reading choices, increase readers' enjoyment and offer opportunities for people to share their reading experiences'. Reader development is audience development for literature. It sells the reading experience and what it can do for you. It builds the audience for literature by moving readers beyond brand loyalty to individual writers, helping them develop the confidence to try something new. Libraries have a unique role to play in this.

In addition, regular reading groups, creative writing courses and author events are held within libraries to encourage and inspire potential writers and readers and to enhance the reading experience.

Feedback from reader and writer events held in libraries when asked 'In what way is reading important to you?' include:

'To widen my literary horizons'

'It is essential to my life'

'In words I find comfort that we are not all the same but I love those shared experiences as well as those which are diverse'

'It helps with my personal development, it keeps me structured when my mental health starts to decrease'

'Reading is my way of life'

'For pleasure, enjoyment, escapism!'

'It is vital to my life'

'It takes me out of myself'

'Life force'

'Reading is as necessary as breathing'

Lost in Art is a new project aimed at people aged 50+ with dementia, along with their family carers. It aims to explore the role of the visual arts in addressing issues affecting people with dementia such as social isolation, confidence, communication and quality of life and wellbeing. People with dementia often experience poor quality of life due to reduced independence, activity and social contact. **Lost in Art** aims



to help redress this by providing an art programme for people with dementia and their carers to enjoy. The benefits of participating in the project are twofold, as the carers also benefit from making new friends, sharing common experiences with other carers and setting up new support networks.

Participants meet weekly at MOSTYN gallery, work with a professional artist on a range of activities and use the galleries as a starting point and inspiration. Each project includes a visit from a primary school. The children work alongside the Lost in Art group to create artistic pieces, becoming Dementia Friends through our collaboration with the Alzheimer's Society.

CCBC will continue to use the arts to improve the health and well-being of our citizens, our services will work together to offer projects that make a difference and we will support arts activities offered by partner organisations in this area.

2.5 OUTCOME 5

People in Conwy live in a County which has a thriving economy
(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome "A More Equal Wales")

Conwy County Borough Council recognises that the arts play an important role in local employment and economic impact for the area. We will continue to support the arts wherever we can when we can see a clear economic or social benefit.

Businesses in the UK arts and culture industry generated an aggregate turnover of £12.4 billion in 2011... The arts and culture industry employed, on average, 110,600 full-time equivalent employees in the UK...
(The contribution of the arts and culture to the national economy. Report for the Arts Council of Wales May 2013)

Venue Cymru contributes between £16-20 million to the local economy each year. Some 167 people are employed on site. Local hotels benefit from in the region of 70,000 bed nights each year generated by visiting conferences, events and theatre performances.

The county is well placed as a centre for cultural tourism. There are a growing number of 'cultural tourists', people who seek areas of the country that they can visit for short breaks where they can find good hotels, excellent cuisine and a range of cultural experiences including theatre, galleries, museums, festivals etc. There is significant potential for Conwy to exploit this tourism trend further.

A number of festivals and events enrich the cultural offer in Conwy. These include the Helfa Gelf Art Trail, Access All Eirias, the Blinc Festival, take pART, Conwy Feast, European Heritage Days (Open Doors), the Festival of British Archaeology, the Welsh Museum's Festival and LLAWN. Planning for these festivals embraces the spirit of partnership and co-operation that allows organisations working together to achieve more than they could working alone. These festivals provide enriching experiences for the people of Conwy while also broadening the tourist offer.

In 2010, CCBC's Corporate Events and Marketing Unit set out its vision as "Working with others to build on Conwy's location at the centre of North Wales and to revitalise our communities so that they can play an active part in making this Conwy County an even better place to live in, work in and visit". 2014's Access All Eirias event has attracted the Welsh global superstar, Tom Jones, his first major outdoor concert in North Wales, Elton John and Lionel Richie. Generating an average of £300k new additional economic spend a year and approximately 20,000 attendees, the prestigious Access All Eirias event is an important part of the Conwy events calendar.



CCBC will continue to use the arts at Venue Cymru, Theatr Colwyn and Eirias as economic drivers for the area. We will ensure that the work we offer attracts visitors to the area and we will encourage people to use local services and attractions.

2.6 OUTCOME 6

People in Conwy live in a sustainable environment

(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome “A Globally Responsible Wales”)

Theatres, galleries and arts practitioners are well placed to become leaders and exemplars for sustainable working. Conwy County Borough County is keen to raise the profile of sustainability through its venues and the work that it produces and funds.

Venue Cymru has been shortlisted for two environmental awards in recent years. It has had a focus on reducing its environmental impact in all aspects of its work. For example, by adopting a series of energy saving strategies the theatre has succeeded in halving its energy consumption which realised a saving of £129,739 between May 2008 and July 2013.

Public art on the National Cycle Path and Coastal Path through Conwy raises the profile of these facilities and gives residents and visitors a safe, visually attractive outdoor option for exercise be it walking, running or cycling.

CCBC will continue to focus on the environmental impact of our theatre buildings and will work to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing energy consumption and continued improvements of waste control. We will engage with our partners to encourage and assist them to improve their green credentials when they are working with us.

2.7 OUTCOME 7

People in Conwy live in a County where heritage, culture and the Welsh language thrive

(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome “A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language”)

Heritage

The County has a rich heritage and it is our responsibility to ensure that the people of Conwy and our visitors have access to that heritage in a variety of ways. The arts can play a key role in interpreting, showing and sharing that heritage. Theatre companies such as Cwmni'r Fran Wen often use themes from local history in their shows for young people. Oral history projects use writers, artists and photographers to help people remember and tell their stories. Outdoor performances can often bring a site of historic importance to life.

Theatr Colwyn, the oldest operating cinema in the UK and the oldest theatre still in operation in Wales, benefited from a major refurbishment in 2012 which has seen enhanced audience facilities and a rapid growth in visitor numbers. Oriol Colwyn, upstairs at Theatr Colwyn is an award winning photographic hub which has a rapidly growing national reputation and ensures that there is North Wales provision to exhibit professional and emerging Welsh talent.

The county's accredited independent museums regularly incorporate visual art, storytelling and drama into interpretation and education projects with schools and for lifelong learning.



At Llandudno museum, the Imagining Blodwen project works with local schools and storyteller Fiona Collins to bring to life the story of Blodwen, a Neolithic skeleton recovered from the Great Orme. All county museums regularly take part in initiatives such as the Big Draw, working with a range of artists across the county to use art as a means of interpreting collections.

Culture

The arts are an intrinsic part of the culture of Wales. It is important that we host performances by iconic national companies such as Welsh National Opera and National Dance Company Wales bringing their work to audiences in North Wales. In this provision Venue Cymru has a regional role in North Wales.

In parallel we seek to support smaller scale companies that are developing here in North Wales. Ensemble Cymru has been resident at Venue Cymru now for many years and the relationship is bearing fruit in terms of developing audiences for their concerts. The work of the Dance Collective is bearing fruit in developing audiences for dance work at all scales.

The culture is nurtured by a dynamic mixture of the professional and the amateur. So, alongside support for the professional arts, we acknowledge the importance of the strong voluntary sector input in the maintenance and development of the artistic culture of the area. Community activities such as choirs, amateur drama groups, art and craft groups and writing groups flourish across the county.

The North Wales Choral Festival, organised by CCBC, has grown from strength to strength since the festival began as a one day competition in 1988. It is now a three day celebration of choral music, incorporating school workshops, competitions, concerts and community performances in November in Venue Cymru and the surrounding area. It is one of the largest choral competitions in Wales and choirs compete in 5 different categories; Youth, Male Voice, Ladies, Mixed and Barbershop Style. The festival now runs workshops for schools and special evening concerts featuring popular acts from the singing scene.

People are active in their local communities, participating in arts activities and acting as volunteers to enable others to participate. The Night Out Scheme brings professional shows to village halls.


Cwm Penmachno is a small rural village located some 25 miles from the nearest theatre or cinema. As such, the village has benefited greatly from the Night Out scheme and the support given by Conwy County Borough Council. We have enjoyed immensely a series of shows ranging from story-telling, comedy, folk to world music. The enthusiasm of the village and its surroundings is demonstrated by the numbers attending the events.

(Cwm Community Action Group)

The Conwy Culture Centre project, developed in partnership with Conwy Arts Trust is a flagship, innovative co-location project that will house the county's archive and museum collections together with the area library for Conwy, Deganwy and Llandudno Junction. This project will include an arts hub / cornel Celf, that will provide a space for accredited learning, taste sessions, performance, and exhibitions working with local artists and community groups and making full use of the onsite resources of CCBCs museum and archive collections as inspiration.

Welsh Language

We celebrate and promote our Welsh heritage and culture. Information about non language based artforms such as Visual Art and Music is provided in both Welsh and English. For drama we currently support the work in the county of Cwmni Bara Caws and Cwmni'r Fran Wen. Other Welsh language productions are supported through the theatres and the Night Out circuit of community venues. We work with Literature Wales to support visits by Welsh language authors through their Writers on Tour scheme.



There is a vibrant Welsh language amateur tradition in the county with local and regional Eisteddfodau, the Urdd, amateur drama companies, bands and papurau bro.

CCBC will run and support arts projects that champion culture, in particular Welsh culture. We will continue to recognise the importance of Welsh language and will provide bi-lingual or Welsh language cultural opportunities.

2.8 OUTCOME 8

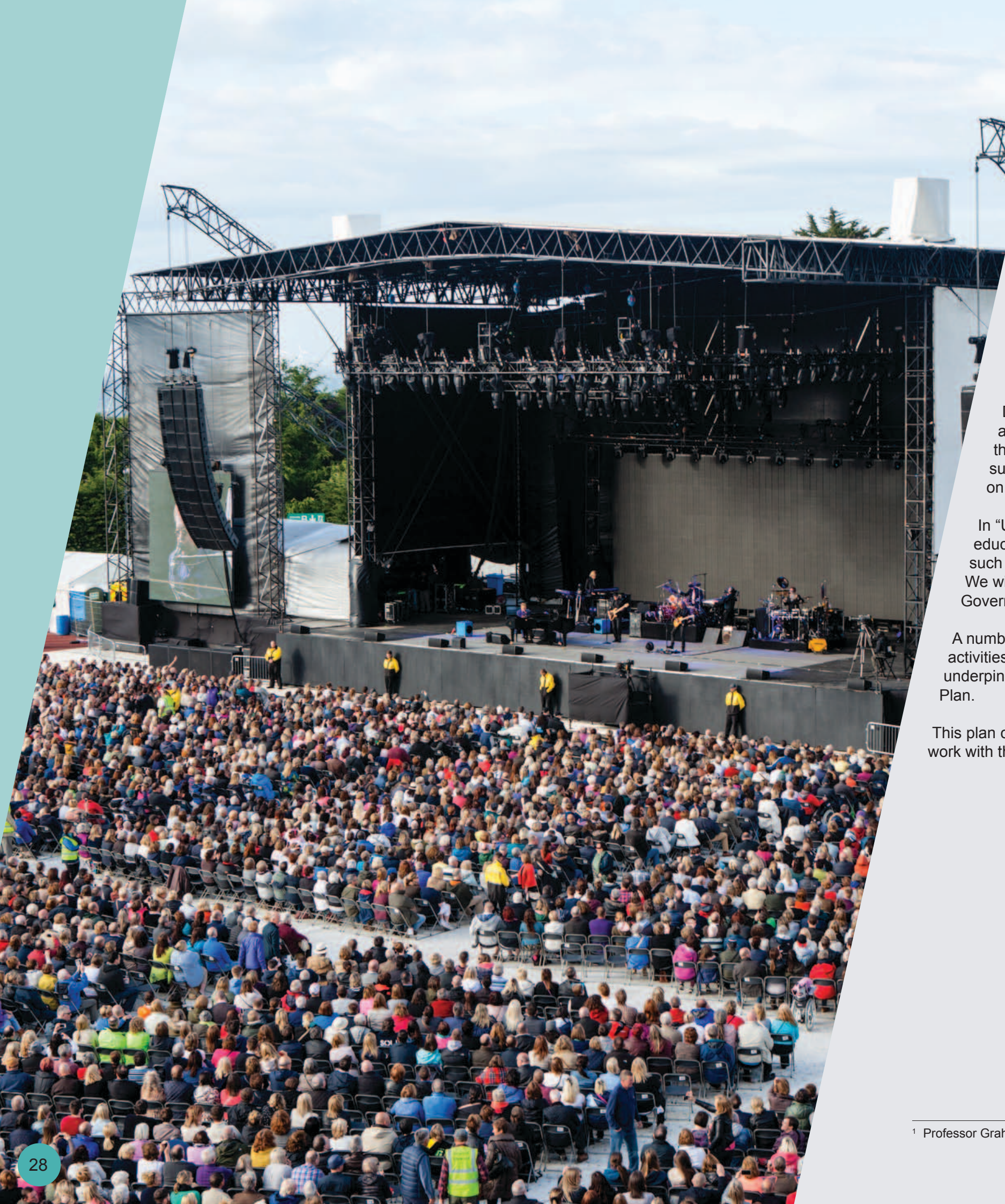
People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to
(Linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act outcome “A More Equal Wales”)

We regularly review and monitor events and workshops that CCBC supports collecting feedback from audiences and participants. Views collected in this way are taken into consideration when we plan further provision.

The eight long-term Citizen Outcomes, upon which this strategy has been based, have been developed from the Local Service Board’s plan, One Conwy 2012-25, and are in line with the Welsh Government’s ambitions outlined in their ‘Programme for Government’. The Outcomes were developed following lengthy consultation across communities and public sector organisations within Conwy and reflect the main priorities identified.

The arts strategy builds on that work to outline how the arts can play their part in delivering those eight outcomes. A draft of this strategy was shared with the network of arts organisations active in the county and their responses were taken into consideration in finalising the document which was approved and adopted by Conwy Borough County Council on XX.XX.15.

CCBC will engage with existing and potential arts participants with audience surveys at Venue Cymru and Theatr Colwyn; feedback forms from workshops and engagement activities; conversations with our partners and consumers; the County Conversation. We will listen to our customers views and will use these to inform our next Arts Strategy.



3 ACTIONS

Conwy is committed to arts provision as an economic driver, a means of facilitating community cohesion, in assisting people to be engaged citizens and within education to help develop our young people to be confident, empathetic and skilled for their future lives.

In addition to the actions listed under the headings , we will consider the impact of the arts across our services and will use the arts to the benefit of our residents and visitors.

We will use the arts to deliver our requirements under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. In particular, we will work with our partners to broaden the scope of the arts in Conwy encouraging access for all and using the arts to deliver health and community benefits.

In his response to Baroness K Andrews report “Culture and Poverty: Harnessing the power of the arts, culture and heritage to promote social justice in Wales”, Ken Skates AM, The Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, stated that “closer working between cultural and community organisations at local level between national and local organisations is at the heart of our approach.” Conwy will work with our partner organisations to encourage and support the arts both developed within our own services and communities and those that are on a national footing.

In “Understanding the value of arts and culture”, Crossick and Kaszynska state that “arts in education has been shown to contribute in important ways to the factors that underpin learning, such as cognitive abilities, confidence, motivation, problem-solving and communication skills” We will encourage and support the arts within our learning environments, aligning with the Welsh Government’s support for the Creative Arts as one of six equal areas of learning and experience¹.

A number of services of Conwy County Borough Council are involved with or delivering arts activities. Each of these services has their own business plan and action plans which support and underpin this strategy. These business plans also underpin the delivery of the Corporate Service Plan.

This plan crosses across departments and can be used as a guide when considering partnership work with the authority.

¹ Professor Graham Donaldson’s Successful Futures. An independent Review of Curriculum & Assessment Arrangements in Wales



4 KEY CONTACTS

Developing and supporting the arts in Conwy is an on-going process. As noted, each service has its own detailed plan and targets. All are informed by the principles outlined in the strategy. To find out more about specific projects and services, please contact the relevant people below:-

Conwy Arts Service
Culture and Information
Community Development Service
Library Building
Mostyn Street
Llandudno
LL30 2RP

Arts Development Officer: Sian Young
01492 575572
art@conwy.gov.uk

Expressive Arts and Music Service
Education Services
Ysgol Aberconwy
Conwy
LL32 0ED

Expressive Arts Adviser: Julie Meehan
01492 575086 / 575901 / 575085
julie.meehan@conwy.gov.uk

Theatres and Conferences Services, CCBC
C/o Venue Cymru
Promenade
Llandudno
LL30 1BB

General Manager: Sarah Ecob
sarah.ecob@venuecymru.co.uk

Artistic Programmer: Tim Colegate
timothy.colegate@venuecymru.co.uk

General Enquiries: info@venuecymru.co.uk
01492 879771

