

## FESTIVALS REVIEW – PROGRESS REPORT

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

### Wards Affected

County-wide.

### Purpose

1. To update Members of the progress on the recommendations of the Festival Review.

### Financial Implications

2. Advance payment and loan to Ross-on-Wye International Festival.

### Considerations

3. At its meeting on 27th November 2003 this Committee considered the report from the Festivals Review Panel and accepted the key finding and recommendations contained in the report. The report was then submitted to the Cabinet Member (Community and Social Development) for consideration who accepted that all the recommendations should be pursued. The progress to date in pursuing the recommendations is itemized below.
  - 3.1. Subject to scaling down of the Ross-on-Wye International Festival to ensure its long term viability, with specific concentration of its production and management costs, that an appropriate amount of funding should be considered for its survival. That could be combined with exploring alternative ways of managing the Festival.

Progress: An interest free loan of £30,000 was made to the festival to be paid back over three years. Half of the 2004/5 Service Level Agreement was paid in January 2004 as an advance payment (£10,000). Councillor H. Bramer was nominated as a voting member of the Festival Board of Trustees to oversee the key recommendation of scaling down the Festival.

- 3.2. Encourage Town Council involvement and support for festivals, specifically in Ross-on-Wye.

Progress: Ross-on-Wye Town Council has committed additional funding to the Festival. Leominster/Bromyard Market Towns Officer is working with Bromyard Town Council and festival co-ordinators on how to support festivals in the town. Leominster Town Council and Ledbury Town Council continue to be supportive of their festivals.

- 3.2 That formal, regular meetings between the festivals are facilitated by Cultural Services to address options of shared resources in areas such as marketing, box office and administration, and to exchange ideas and share good practice – including extended invitation to Hay Literature Festival.

Progress: First meeting scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> May. Hay Literature Festival invited and interested, but unable to attend due to the time (the Festival is taking place).

- 3.3 To establish with the festivals common performance indicators and measures of success based on qualitative and quantitative data, to enable benchmarking and ability to assess impact of the festivals.

Progress: A set of indicators created for the revised Cultural Strategy has formed the basis of indicators for all arts organisations receiving a Service Level Agreement (including Ross-on-Wye International Festival and The Three Choirs Festival).

- 3.4 All of the festivals under review to be funded by the local authority on three-year service level agreements, as opposed to annual community grant funding.

Progress: Being considered as part of the Best Value Review of Community Grants.

- 3.5 That advancement is made to the Cabinet Members for Economic Development and Environment to support the infrastructure on which festivals depend – e.g. a direct rail link from Birmingham Airport to Hereford, increase public transport schemes to support festivals.

Progress: Copy of review sent to Cabinet Members.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the report is noted and a further progress report be presented after the festival period (November 2004).**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Festivals Review Report November 2003.