

Date: Wednesday 29 September 2004
Time: 09:00am to 12 Noon
Venue: Committee Room 2, National Assembly Building

POLICY REVIEW: DANCE IN WALES

Purpose

1. To consider the draft terms of reference and proposed review timetable (doc 1) for the forthcoming review of "Dance in Wales", and to note the background paper (doc 2) on the Welsh Assembly Government's current policies and plans in relation to Dance.

Background

2. At its' meeting on 30 June, the Committee agreed that its' next policy review would be on dance. It was suggested that particular focus should be given to:
 - provision in the community
 - classical dance
 - provision in Higher Education.
1. The paper at Doc 2 outlines recent developments including the House of Commons, Culture, Media and Sport Committee's report "Arts Development: Dance" – June 2004. The Government's (UK) response has since been published (September 2004) in which, inter alia, it agrees that there should be a written policy for dance; the Arts Council for England has since been commissioned to produce this.
2. In the light of this, the draft terms of reference have been kept as broad as possible to enable the Committee to review as many ideas as is possible and sensible.
3. The suggested terms of reference and review plan are at Doc 1.

MRCS

September 2004

POLICY REVIEW: DANCE IN WALES

Draft Terms of Reference

To undertake an audit of dance in Wales in order to determine:

- *levels of participation and opportunities both in the various sectors (including education) and forms of dance;*
- *levels of support for dance;*
- *degree of strategic direction;*
- *recommendations for future action by Government and other key players.*

Draft Review Timetable

Draft consultation letter and suggested invitation list for written and oral evidence – Committee 20 October

Written consultation	End October – end January 2005
Oral consultation	January - Easter
Summary of oral and written consultations	Post Easter
Visits	February – Easter
Discussion on issues	Spring/summer term
Draft reports	Summer term
Publication	Summer term

MRCS

September 2004

CWLS(2)-10-04 (p 3) (Doc 2)

BACKGROUND PAPER

POLICY REVIEW: DANCE.

This paper sets out the current Welsh Assembly Government policies and plans in relation to dance.

Creative Future has a key first principle: **culture is not a luxury in our lives, nor a mere embellishment of the material tasks of daily existence. It is the texture of our living.** Creative Future embeds culture in all of our policies and plans. Its 8 Priority Action Plans focus on access, and on access to excellence. These principles apply to all artforms, including dance.

Priority Action Plan 3 "Professional Arts and Artists" contains the action to "develop a new action plan for dance aimed at significantly raising the status and resource available for this artform." Creative Future also maintained that "dance is under – represented in Wales' artistic life..... and that there is no doubt that Wales could and should support a greater range of dance organisations, together with training facilities. The Wales Millennium Centre would provide a home, and a catalyst to dance activity. However we should investigate the prospects for other locations and training provision which can, in time, offer Wales a significant pool of resident dancers."

"Climbing Higher: Sport and Active Recreation in Wales"

"Sport and Active Recreation in Wales: Climbing Higher" sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's aims for the future of sport and active recreation in Wales for the next twenty years. The essence of the Strategy is to maximise the contribution that sport and active recreation can make to well-being in Wales across many dimensions.

A fundamental principle of Climbing Higher is that a daily total of just 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity, **including dance**, undertaken five times a week, is enough to more than halve premature death rates in previously sedentary people. "Climbing Higher" goes on to say that "programmes such as Girls First are telling us that girls, overwhelmingly, want to participate in conditioning and aesthetic activities such as dance, as well as in traditional male sports such as football."

Girls First Programme

The Girls First Programme was introduced by the Sports Council for Wales in April 2001. It is aimed at the 11-16 age group and allows secondary schools in Wales to apply for up to £1,000 to fund a programme of extra curricular sport. Following a one year evaluation of the scheme, it showed that the most popular use of the money has been to provide what have typically been 'non traditional' activities within schools, including dance.

Amongst the recommendations contained in the evaluation document there is reference to the Sports Council for Wales encouraging schools to provide a range of sports and activities that appeal to as wide a range of girls as possible in order to increase participation.

"THE HOUSE OF COMMONS CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT COMMITTEE, SIXTH

REPORT OF SESSION 2003 –04: ARTS DEVELOPMENT: DANCE"

This report acknowledged the growth of dance in England and the vital role of public sector support via the Arts Council of England in developing dance. It highlighted the need for investment in the built environment to include plans for dance, and the need to improve many rehearsal and performance venues. At the same time it urged the industry to work to reduce its dependency on public sector funding.

It recommended that Government investigate how it can increase the numbers of people gaining health benefits through participation in dance, and that research is carried out into the possible benefits of dance in reducing crime rates and increasing social inclusiveness.

Its final recommendation is that "it is imperative that the Government sets out a clear, overarching policy on dance which states how it proposes to achieve 'excellence, access and the contribution to healthy living' that it desires in relation to dance."

The Arts Council of Wales : dance development in Wales

Wales has two professional dance companies which receive core revenue funded from ACW (Diversion Dance – the National Dance Company of Wales - and Earthfall) and four independent non-revenue funded companies (India Dance Wales, Carlson Dance, Independent Ballet Wales and Ballet Russe) as well as internationally recognised dance artists, choreographers and dance filmmakers (examples include Eddie Ladd, Sean Tuan John and Marc Rees) and a group of young freelance dancers (Cai Tomos, Susie Firth, Hannah Prior and others). This part of the sector is supported by the ACW revenue funded umbrella body Welsh Independent Dance, who offer opportunities for work and training.

The community dance sector in Wales is made up of 11 Community Dance Organisations, most of whom are well established, and have been developing grass roots community work for over 10 years. This part of the sector is supported by the umbrella organisation Community Dance Wales who are able to provide training and support, as well as being part of the wider UK network of Community Dance.

The total annual Arts Council funding for dance adds up to around £1m. The dance companies in Wales feel strongly that the sector is underfunded. On average each company, large or small identifies a shortfall of approximately £30-40k per year. The House of Commons report suggested that working conditions for dancers in England have been poor. It said that "evidence suggests that dance is one of those vocational industries in which very talented people are prepared to work for very little money." The Arts Council of Wales view is that the dance workforce in Wales is innovative and creative, presenting a cutting edge and consistent provision both nationally and internationally.

Current ACW Initiatives in dance:

- The development and review of an annual, realistic Action Plan for dance.

- Research to develop and launch a National Dance Strategy .
- The setting up of regular Regional Dance Panel meetings-leading to the establishment of a National Dance Forum.
- Targeting of ACW schemes to encourage individual choreographers/dance artists to develop their professional practise.
- Working with the wider dance community in the UK to improve sustainability and development in Wales.

Sector initiatives:

- 1st full time 3-year dance degree course at UWIC.
- PESS coordinators developing dance through Sports Council Initiatives (e.g. Girls First).
- Umbrella Organisations collaborating on a more national approach, to address the geographical imbalances in the sector.
- Community Dance Wales initiatives on training to develop a stronger bi-lingual workforce.
- Regional initiatives from ACW regional panels to encourage Local Authority support.