
Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

15th June 2011

Report of
Councillor Tony Skipper

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies - Coventry Heritage & Arts Trust 2010/2011

1 Purpose of the Report

At their meeting on 10 May 2005, Cabinet approved a process of reporting back to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the work of those outside bodies appointed to by the City Council. This reports sets out details of the work of Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- i) Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee notes the report and the work undertaken by the body.
- ii) Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommends that Council continues to appoint two councillors to the Coventry Heritage & Arts Trust.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

The Coventry Heritage & Arts Trust (the Trust) was founded in April 2008 in order to manage three key heritage and arts sites in the city – the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, the Lunt Roman Fort and the Priory Visitor Centre. The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum is Coventry's creative media centre and history centre as well as an art gallery and museum, and provides the principal focus of activity.

The Lunt Roman Fort is the only reconstructed Roman wooden fort in Britain. The Lunt Roman Fort dates from around AD60 and is thought to have been built as a result of the battle between Boudicca and the Roman Legions. The Priory Visitor Centre and Undercroft house the remains of Coventry's first Benedictine Monastery, dissolved by Henry VIII, and following a dig from Channel 4's Time Team displays the remains of many of the medieval buildings, finds and excavations.

- 3.1 In 2010/11 overall visitor numbers at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum totalled 306,000, a reduction of 12% on the previous financial year's performance. Across all three sites operationally managed by CHAT, visitor numbers fell by 4%.
- 3.2 The Trust has demonstrated a reduced reliance on Council grant in the past 12 months. Subsidy per visit in 2010/11 was £4.97, over £1.00 less than in 2009/10. Commercial income was increased by 100% in 2010/11, with each visitor spending an average of £0.95 per visit.

- 3.3 In 2010, the Trust introduced a new Development post to the existing structure. This post has generated in excess of £240,000 of external funding to support the Museum's core business.
- 3.4 The Museums Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) provided £9.8 million of funding to the five major museums (HUB museums) in the West Midlands region between April 2009 and March 2011. Of this funding, the Herbert Art Galley and Museum received £1.27 million to fund 20 posts across education, social inclusion, programming, media and marketing and collections development.
- 3.5 The Trust continues to develop significant partnerships with national and regional organisations including Arts Council England, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Contemporary Arts Society. Its exhibition programme has drawn in record audiences and wide critical acclaim for *Street Art* and *Secret Egypt*. The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum has received national recognition for its public offer: it was awarded the Guardian Family Friendly Museum 2010 and was short-listed for the Art Fund Prize 2010. The West Midlands' Best of the West awards recognised the work of the Trust's marketing and exhibition teams with an outstanding individual award to a member of the learning team.
- 3.6 Community and Education work is a major part of the Herbert's work with extensive education & outreach programmes for children and disadvantaged communities, with the media facilities (offering both professional sound and video recording facilities) proving particularly effective in work with young people.
- 3.7 The Trust and the Council continue to work closely to ensure that environmental controls in exhibition and storage areas within the museum are maintained within the parameters specified in the building specification and touring exhibition loan arrangements. Due to flood damage, the History Centre has been closed since December 2010. The Trust has worked closely with preferred contractors to carry out the required refurbishment work, and the History Centre is scheduled to reopen in June 2011.
- 3.8 Follow the comprehensive spending review in October 2010, the Museums Libraries & Archives Council (MLA) have advised HUB museums that Renaissance revenue funding for the coming financial year has been reduced. A full review of Renaissance funding to regional museums, to include the complete re-design of its content and operation, will take place after the full transfer of the MLA to the Arts Council England in October 2011.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

Coventry City Council is a major sponsor of Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust, which is a significant contributor to the cultural life of the city and an important vehicle to deliver educational programmes.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 5.1 Coventry City Council's representatives for Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust for 2010/11 were Councillors John Blundell and Tony Skipper. In the period April 2010 to March 2011, there were four meetings of the Trust Board. Cllr. John Blundell attended all four of the Board meetings, and Cllr. Tony Skipper attended three of the four Board meetings.
- 5.2 There is no remuneration associated with the appointment

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Schedule of City Council Appointments to outside Bodies

Location CH59