



Liverpool  
Arts  
Regeneration  
Consortium

**Liverpool Thrive Programme**

**Final Report**

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## Overview

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### Background

The Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium (LARC) was established in 2007 to foster a new approach to arts in the city. It began as an alliance of eight leading cultural institutions in Liverpool: Bluecoat, FACT, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse, National Museums Liverpool, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tate Liverpool and the Unity Theatre.

Liverpool has one of the greatest concentrations of major cultural institutions in the UK outside London. The city also has a large number of dynamic smaller arts organisations, many working closely with communities in the most deprived areas of Merseyside. There is therefore a lively and dynamic creative industries sector and the 8 LARC organisations shared a fundamental belief in using the power of art and culture to change lives far beyond the confines of galleries, museums, theatres and concert halls.

The LARC organisations considered that regeneration is achieved through releasing the creativity and aspirations of the people of Merseyside. They aimed to enable people of all ages to fulfil their own potential and to play a full role in the social and economic renewal of the City Region. Specifically LARC aimed to:

- Position itself to have a key influence within regeneration agencies and partnerships and within key public services, in order to establish a clear understanding of the role that cultural organisations can play in enhancing the delivery of everything from education and health, to planning and community development.
- Research new opportunities for regeneration through arts and culture, working in partnership with key agencies and with the community and voluntary sectors
- Give people the skills needed to lead, administer and sustain the future development of Merseyside's arts and culture industry
- Take a leading role in projects to regenerate parts of Liverpool that are still experiencing many challenges and high levels of deprivation
- Work together to give both visitors and local people the best possible experience when they take part in the cultural life of the city
- Gain new investment for arts and culture

During 2007 the group worked closely with the Liverpool Culture Company, helping to shape the plans for Liverpool, as the European Capital of Culture in 2008, and to ensure that the arts organisations in the city played their full part, not only in the year, but also in planning a sustainable and creative legacy.

At the same time LARC was developing a business case for submission to the Grants for the Arts Thrive Programme. The business case set out the activity that the Consortium would work collaboratively to deliver and was aimed at testing out a new model for embedding the arts and cultural sectors in the processes of social and economic renewal. In 2008 Arts Council England

offered LARC a Thrive grant of £1.34 million over a 3 year three period. The grant enabled the LARC members to test this new way of working with a particular emphasis on social and economic impact.

### **The Thrive Programme**

The overall aim of Arts Council England's Thrive programme was *"A systematic approach to developing organisational performance in order to build capacity to respond to and influence a rapidly changing environment"*. Within this mission statement there were five programme aims which were being pursued:

- To support the development of arts organisations which are flexible, adaptable and fit for purpose;
- To provide arts organisations with a unique opportunity to develop and change;
- To improve decision making and leadership within the sector;
- To enable the arts infrastructure to continuously improve; and
- To strengthen the arts sector.

The Thrive resource was seen as a major opportunity to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector in Liverpool and to test out a new model for embedding the arts and cultural sectors in the processes of social and economic renewal.

The Thrive programme was developed at a time of major opportunity for the city-region. Liverpool 08, the Capital of Culture programme, had generated a significant level of international interest and LARC was working with the Liverpool Culture Company to build on the achievements of a range of the initiatives that the Culture Company had launched. These included the cross-sector partnerships set up by Creative Communities, the volunteer programme, and the longitudinal research programme commissioned by Liverpool City Council (Impacts 08) which was jointly managed by the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University. Liverpool's economy was also growing with new developments such as Liverpool One, a major new retail and leisure centre, and the Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre.

There were, however, many remaining economic and social challenges, particularly in areas such as North Liverpool. In addition, the cultural sector needed to develop its ability to advocate for the public value of its work, to increase its research capacity in order to provide robust evidence of its achievements, to increase its ability to develop and retain new audiences and participants, and to diversify the range of people entering employment in cultural institutions.

The LARC partnership also believed that the sector must demonstrate its ability to provide leadership that was outside of political and governmental structures, and to prove that a thriving cultural life would be vital to the continuing social and economic health of a city-region. LARC believed that if the cultural sector is strong, well networked and confident in expressing its public value, it will be in a better position to hold its own in a changing economic and political climate.

## **Programme Aims**

The collaborative work programme developed by LARC and resourced through Thrive was intended to demonstrate that cultural institutions could not only add value through collaborative action but also that collaborative working could be used to strengthen individual organisational capacity

With this in mind, the Thrive resources were also intended to develop the capability and capacity of each of its organisations to:

- Be adaptable, flexible and respond to change
- Be efficient, particularly through mutual self-help, sharing information, resources and expertise to the greater good
- Shape and lead in the development of policy, both locally and nationally, rather than just responding to it
- Research and develop new work and ways of working, with the ability to handle and mitigate risk
- Build sustainable business models for the future; and
- Articulate the value of culture.

The Thrive programme in Liverpool was constructed around three key aims. These were:

- To develop the role of the cultural sector in civic leadership
- To create a more audience and people friendly city centre
- To research and develop new models of delivery in arts-led regeneration, with a focus on North Liverpool

Aims 2 and 3 were seen as supporting the achievements of Aim 1. These secondary Aims intended to develop two types of intervention in City-region planning and regeneration and community development, bringing tangible benefits, including new resources, to the partners, their audiences and local communities.

The remainder of this report considers in detail the actions and activities implemented during the Liverpool Thrive programme

## **Management and Delivery**

Overall responsibility for the management of the programme was led by the LARC Chief Executives group, with lead responsibility for delivery of each the three aims assigned to specific partners within LARC. A small central LARC team co-ordinated the operational delivery of the programme, including the Programme Director, Learning and Engagement Co-ordinator and an administrator, supported by the Project Facilitator. In order to ensure long-term sustainability, each LARC partner assigned staff to work on specific projects, so that the ownership and benefits of the programme were directly felt by each organisation. The programme was also supported by the various groups of LARC staff, including the Heads of Marketing and Heads of Education and Community groups. These groups and the Chief Executives met regularly, with staff demonstrating a strong commitment through sustained attendance and active engagement in the discussions at each meeting.

Through the Thrive programme LARC also intended to consolidate existing partnerships and to build new ones in order to deliver the programme of work.

### **Financial Management**

The financial management was led by Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society (RLPS), as the lead partner for the Thrive programme, accountable to Arts Council England on behalf of the LARC partnership. RLPS was also responsible for the employment of the core LARC team. The overall budget for the Thrive programme was projected to be £1.81 million, through to December 2010. This included the support of £1.34 million from Arts Council England, with the balance of the income to be raised from other partners.



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## **Aim 1: Civic Leadership.**

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### **Background**

Through the Thrive programme the LARC partners aimed to test out a new model for embedding the arts and cultural sector in the processes of social and economic renewal. The partners believed that the sector must use the additional resources provided through the Thrive programme demonstrate its ability to provide leadership that was outside of political and governmental structures, and to prove that a thriving cultural life was vital to the continuing social and economic health of a city-region.

### **Ambition**

The ambition of Aim 1 of the Thrive programme was to develop the role of the cultural sector in civic leadership. In many ways Aim 1 was the central plank of the approach set out in the whole Thrive programme and many of the activities designed and delivered through the other Aims were intended to support this overall civic leadership objective.

The ambition would be achieved through three separate, but interrelated strands of action.

Firstly, an advocacy campaign would be developed to win support for, and improve understanding of, the role of culture within regeneration. The campaign would be supported by high quality documentation and research that clearly demonstrated the public value and impact of the cultural sector in the City-region. The communications strategy for this aim would also include a series of influencing seminars, with credible and high profile speakers, aimed at leading figures from the public, community, business and faith sectors. As part of this campaign, the LARC partnership intended to establish and increase dialogue with the higher education institutions, the health sector and housing agencies, with the intention of establishing joint planning mechanisms and securing funds to test out new ways of working together.

Secondly, the programme would initiate a programme of research to support the advocacy campaign, which would include regular updates on key data on the cultural sector, an economic impact study and a series of initiatives to build research capacity in the sector. The overall research programme would initially be supported through a research partnership with Impacts 08 and further developed through the strengthened contacts with the HE sector. In addition to focusing on social and economic value, the research and evaluation programme would also consider how new approaches to assessing artistic quality could be developed.

Thirdly, the Thrive resources and the LARC partnership would be used to develop an integrated approach to continuous professional development across the cultural sector, from addressing issues such as the lack of diversity in the workforce, (e.g. through a national pilot for the Creative Apprenticeships scheme), to courses for emerging leaders and support for senior management. Within this programme, LARC also intended to review the potential for shared services, for example to improve HR management (human resource) within the cultural sector.

The success of this ambitious programme would be demonstrated by:

- An increase in the influence of people from cultural sector within key regional and sub regional agencies
- Culture being seen as an important element within overall planning processes for the city-region
- An increased willingness amongst partners to take a joint approach to enhance organisational effectiveness and reduce costs
- A cultural sector that had a stronger understanding of its own impact and was better placed to secure investment from other sectors
- Senior and emerging leaders in the cultural sector being more highly skilled in terms of understanding the benefits of collaboration both within and outside the cultural sector
- A range of cultural organisations that were better equipped to employ people who are younger, have fewer educational qualifications, or who come from less affluent socio economic backgrounds.
- The philosophy and practice of collective working across LARC being firmly embedded for the future

In addition to this externally focussed work, the LARC partners also intended to use the focus on civic responsibility to develop the capability and capacity of each of the individual consortium organisations to:

- Be adaptable, flexible and respond to change
- Be efficient, particularly through mutual self-help, sharing information, resources and expertise to the greater good
- Shape and lead in the development of policy, both locally and nationally, rather than just responding to it
- Research and develop new work and ways of working, with the ability to handle and mitigate risk
- Build sustainable business models for the future; and
- Articulate the value of culture.

By working and developing the internal strengths of the partnership, the LARC organisations believed that they would be better able to work collaboratively with key sectors such as health, higher education, housing, tourism and regeneration. A stronger partnership could also play a role in linking up the cultural sector by working with the networks of smaller arts organisations in Merseyside, and using its influence to work on behalf of the sector as a whole.

Alongside the greater resources and organisational strength that would result from the activities in Aim 1 LARC partners also believed that the leadership role developed through Aim 1, and an increasing focus on civic responsibility, would leave the sector better placed to influence national and local policy and also bid for major new government initiatives.

## **Implementation**

The action plan that was developed to deliver Aim 1 of the Thrive programme covered 4 strategic areas and specified a number of specific actions

In the strategic area of **advocacy and engagement** the consortium undertook to implement 6 key actions:

- Develop a targeted briefing of key individuals in different sectors supported by a key messages document on contribution of cultural sector to city region, with supporting DVD
- Seminar series on a Creative City for a Creative Century: to include high level international speakers, targeted at key opinion formers & political figures in Merseyside & nationally
- Participate in key strategy developments e.g. Liverpool Cultural Strategy , Merseyside Creative Industries Review
- Secure places for cultural leaders on boards of key development agencies & other influential positions & ensure cultural reps included in all relevant forums
- Establish a partnership with HEIs in the City region to share skills & develop shared approach re mutual resource needs
- Engage with arts & health strategy developments, including commissioning pilot for arts projects by PCT

In the strategic area of research that was to be developed to support the advocacy of the sector LARC undertook to:

- Establish research co-ordination partnership with Impacts 08 at the University of Liverpool as well as an on-going relationship on cultural research with HEIs
- Use existing data from LARC partners (e.g. ACE returns) and others for creation of facts and figures documents on critical economic and social indicators ( e.g. on jobs, income generated etc)
- Implement an Economic Impact Study including the development a joint "toolkit" for future use

In the area of **workforce development** activities were to be focussed on entry level and diversity issues and partners undertook to:

- Establish a joint approach on cultural diversity across LARC partners, sharing good practice and building other partnerships
- Develop a Creative Apprenticeships programme, aimed at diversifying recruitment to the cultural sector
- Review the use of volunteers across the cultural sector and by Liverpool 08 in order to plan for future development and enhanced learning experience for volunteers
- Implement a seminar programme targeted at increased the critical understanding and the skills of people in the cultural sector

In the strategic area of **staff and organisational development** the partners undertook to implement the following actions:

- To share information on training needs and opportunities across cultural sector in order to commission (where demand was established) bespoke courses for staff across several organisations
- Implement a seminar series for LARC and key partners' staff to improve skills development for participants and an increase in mutual support and skill sharing
- Establish a mentoring scheme across the cultural sector (linked to training needs project)
- Organise management "retreats" for CEOs to improve mutual support, skills development and joint planning opportunities
- Commission management development training and support for emerging leaders from LARC and other cultural organisations
- Implement actions designed to strengthened the commitment from the boards of LARC partners to collaborative working and partnership
- Investigate the potential for establishing shared services( e.g. in HR)
- Consider how to enhanced capacity for LARC to deliver joint projects including consideration of establishing a shared company to deliver joint programmes (e.g. Creative Apprenticeships)

## **Implementing Actions: Advocacy and Engagement**

### *Communication and Events*

With the appointment of the Programme Director in October 2008, LARC began developing a suite of documents and interventions to deliver the envisaged advocacy and engagement work.

Initially a series of meetings were held between LARC and key City and regional leaders from local authorities, health services, housing and the private and voluntary sectors. These briefings were supported by the development of a LARC Information Pack that set out the purpose of the consortium, details about the consortium membership and a summary of Thrive business plan. The purpose of the briefings was both to explain the rationale behind collective working and also to build on (and extend) the understanding of the impact that the cultural sector had on social and economic regeneration during the successful Capital of Culture year in 2008

The first of the annual LARC "Data Reports" was also published in 2008 and this was followed by further Annual Reports up until the close of the Thrive programme in 2011. These reports contained key statistics on LARC and the wider sector covering Employment, Education and Social Inclusion, Artistic Development and Finance. These generic reports were supplemented by specific research studies into economic and social impact that are discussed later in this section and in the account of actions undertaken as part of Aims 2 and 3 of the Thrive programme

This collective advocacy work by LARC partners was supported by a detailed Memorandum of Understanding setting out the purpose and values of LARC and a vision statement for the future of culture in the City Region. This shared vision for LARC, was supported by the City Council and shared with other organisations. The document became a useful tool for ensuring that the work of LARC, and the ambitions of the collective, became firmly embedded in City and Regional planning processes. This advocacy role was further strengthened by the publication of the report '*Culture and*

*Civic Leadership in Liverpool* in September 2010 which set out the aspirations of the LARC partners and the actions taken and planned in the realm of civic responsibility

The seminar series for external partners was “launched” in February 2009 with “Tipping Point” which took place at the Bluecoat. The seminar was intended to raise awareness about the impact of climate change and how arts (and other) organisations needed to embark on the journey to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. The aim of Tipping Point was to establish a starting point in Liverpool and the North West to bring together a number of organisations from across the cultural sector to share good practice and to learn more. The event was attended by over 60 organisations from the arts, public and private sectors.

This first seminar was followed up by a session developed and led by Sir Ken Robinson that had the aim of stimulating thinking on creativity and the city region amongst policy and opinion makers across a range of sectors. The intention was to use this seminar as a foundation for building a strong vision for the role of creativity in the regeneration of the Liverpool City Region, that would contribute to significant policy development and planning exercises across all sectors. Attendees at this seminar included Trustees, chairs, chief executives and senior officers from all the LARC organisations and representatives from a range of other bodies in the arts, higher education, public, private and voluntary sectors including both the city council and the PCT

The final seminar in the external series took place in July 2010 and focussed on the issues of inclusion and diversity with speakers from the Equality Trust, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and local organisations and attracted over 60 attendees. The aim of the event was to explore the ways in which organisations could increase their commitment to social inclusion in programming, audiences, employment and training – sharing good practice, and looking at practical ways in which partners could work both collectively and as individual organisations.

This externally focussed series of events was supported by a series of internal capacity building seminars for staff in LARC organisations that are discussed in more detail later in this section of the report. The programme evaluation undertaken by ERS demonstrates that these events did have an impact on thinking and practice in both the cultural and other sectors since the evaluation report concludes:

*The seminars funded through Thrive, both for advocacy and for LARC partners/cultural organisations, have been well received with evidence of direct action being taken as a result of participation*

This organised seminar series was delivered alongside a range of other communication activities and events either organised or attended by representatives from the various LARC organisations. This included attendance at numerous regional and national conferences and a LARC advocacy event held at Tate Liverpool for the Liberal Democrat Conference entitled “Cultural Capital – what is the role of the arts in the regeneration of our cities?”

The Liverpool Thrive programme culminated in a major national conference, organised in partnership with Arts Council England, at the RSA in London in June 2011. “Let’s Work Together” attracted 180 delegates and was designed to:

- Provide a platform for Arts Council England to set out their 10 year vision and how collaboration and collective working can help the sustainability of the sector in the long term

- Present the lessons learnt (both good and bad) from existing collaborative work both within the arts and cultural sector and between the arts and cultural sector and other partners. Some of the lessons will draw on the Arts Councils funded programmes (Thrive, Sustain)
- Consider models of collaborative working, leadership and behaviours applicable to (or replicable in) the sector and their implications for organisational development and the future skills and adaptive capacity of the sector
- Explore the evidence base, and the measurement methodologies, that will be necessary to demonstrate value and secure continued public and private funding of the arts and cultural sector

At the conference members of LARC were able to pass on their learning and experience from the LARC model of collaboration, alongside speakers including Clore Leadership programme director Sue Hoyle, Director General of the English-Speaking Union Michael Lake, Chief Executive of &Co Alison Edbury, Piali Ray the Director of Sampad South Asian Arts, DCMS Head of Research Dr Adam Cooper, Dave Moutrey, Director and Chief Executive of Cornerhouse. The conference looked at models of leadership in collaborative practice, art and artist-led examples of collaborative practice, collaboration in rural settings, how collaboration can unlock new business models, collaboration within the changing public sector landscape plus new methodologies and expectations for demonstrating the case for investment in the arts. The conference was both well attended and well received, 93.5% of those attending expressing themselves either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the programme content, speakers and the discussions that resulted.

The external communication and advocacy work undertaken by LARC was supported by the development and delivery of a website for disseminating not only basic information about the consortium but also to promote the work that LARC was undertaking as a result of the Thrive investment. The LARC website included online forums for a range of groups and the addition of an interactive map showing cultural activity in North Liverpool Develop. A second phase of development resulted in an extranet section for LARC partners' staff and LARC associates to access information, papers and briefings.

#### *Influencing Policy and Strategy – Local Authority*

As a result of the advocacy and communication activity, and the establishment of a robust evidence base that demonstrated the impact of cultural activities on social and economic renewal, LARC became viewed as a significant grouping by senior politicians and managers in local authorities and development agencies. This was demonstrated most clearly by the readiness of external partners to attend the fortnightly LARC Chief Executive meetings. Attendance at CEO meetings has included senior politicians and staff from Liverpool City Council; the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police; The Mersey Partnership; and Merseyside Primary Care Trust.

LARC also became increasingly influential in the strategies that were developed by these external organisations and in the delivery of major regeneration activities. LARC was closely involved in the development of the Liverpool cultural strategy, giving a detailed collective response at both first and second draft stages. A LARC representative also sat on the Culture Task Group established by Liverpool First, the local strategic partnership, overseeing implementation of the strategy. LARC became an influential member of the steering group and partnership bodies that developed the Strategic Regeneration Framework for North Liverpool. LARC representatives have also been

appointed to the Tourism Business group, to the University of Liverpool Arts Committee, The Mersey partnership Visitor Economy panel, Year of Health and Well Being Steering Group, Shanghai Expo Steering Group, the Liverpool Plan Task Force, Cultural Collective, Ropewalks Stakeholder Group, Joint Action Group and the City Centre Safety Group. National discussions have also been held with representatives of DCMS and Arts Council England

The success of this collective input is clearly evidenced in the evaluation report from ERS where specific cross-sector activity referred to by evaluation participants (internal and external) included the following:

- Health – Liverpool Year of Well Being;
- Education – Find Your Talent (also cross-local authority boundaries);
- Transport and Physical Regeneration – City Centre Management Strategy and Night Time Economy work; and
- Economic Regeneration – promoting investor confidence and visitor economy, Waterfront group.

#### *Influencing Policy and Strategy – PCT*

In addition to close links with Local Authorities, LARC has also established significant strategic and development relationships with the PCT. LARC and the PCT collaboratively developed the Arts in Health programme. Working in partnership with community organisations and smaller-scale arts projects the programme was designed to deliver a series of targeted artistic interventions to engage and connect with communities in North Liverpool, promoting a cross-disciplinary and inter-generational approach, and focussing on targeting social exclusion, improved health and environmental awareness, and promoting community cohesion. This programme included:

- Canal Plus led by Liverpool Biennial - an imaginative exploration of North Liverpool focusing on a four-mile stretch of the Leeds-Liverpool canal from Seaforth through Bootle.
- Art Valley Loop Line led by the Bluecoat and Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse – a project designed to empower local residents to make recommendations to use art-based interventions along the disused railway line as a catalyst for increasing usage for healthy walks and cycling by Art Valley residents
- Working with Young People in Vauxhall/Kirkdale led by Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse – a project designed to deliver a range of artistic programmes activities and projects with young people and communities across North Liverpool. The project extended and enhanced the work that was already underway in the area through creating a dedicated performing arts space in Vauxhall, and delivering a community touring show with local young people, on the theme of 'Endz' (territory, gangs, gun and knife crime).
- In the Frame - a project led in collaboration between Mencap, Tate Liverpool and a committee of ten adults with learning difficulties from the city that had been running since 2006. The project explores the barriers that exist to participating in the arts whether as a visitor to a gallery or an artist and in September 2009, delivered a multi-arts late night club style event for adults with disabilities. Coinciding with DaDa Fest and mental health week

and following the Abandon Normal Devices Festival at FACT, this high profile event acted as a celebration of arts, creativity and well-being.

- Abandon Normal Devices (AND) led by FACT as a response to the Cultural Olympiad developed a new festival for the region which takes place in Liverpool and Manchester on alternate years, with an extended programme in Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire. The festival aims to raise debate and give visibility to debates at the heart of the Cultural Olympiad – perfection, excellence, competition, fairness, the health and limits of the body.

The delivery of the Arts in Health programme was supported by a range of other innovative initiatives developed and delivered by LARC partners, including the Health Channel on FACT TV. The whole programme was evaluated using a co-ordinated and cross-discipline approach to research and evaluation, utilising innovative information gathering techniques (including citizen journalism) and evaluation practices.

The success and impact of the Arts in Health programme, alongside a robust evidence base that clearly demonstrated how and why the interventions work, has led to the PCT supporting further phases of artist residency interventions

In 2009 the PCT invested in 8 artist or producer-led projects linking the 2010 Year of Health and Wellbeing to some flagship exhibitions such as Like Love at the Bluecoat or the Biennial's 'In Residence' installation in Anfield. In 2010, nine artists from Grupo Cultural Afro Reggae worked in Everton as part of a residency hosted by the Everyman and Playhouse Theatres and Shrewsbury House Youth Centre. This residency resulted in over 1000 young people engaging in creative, physical activity and many performing in the Out of the Blue festival on Everton Park. Also in 2010 artist Mark Storor, spent 3 months at Liverpool Royal Hospital working in partnership with the Unity Theatre, the Wellcome Trust and Arts Admin. The resulting production engaged with a wide cross-section of NHS staff, children from Matthew Arnold Primary School, received national acclaim and sold out for the 2.5 week site-specific performance.

Based on learning from these programmes, the PCT is proposing to run a further artist residency programme in 2011. This programme is designed to add value to existing festivals or arts projects and existing capacity building initiatives in communities. The PCT have explicitly stated that the first year of this programme will be closely aligned to the North Liverpool Strategic Regeneration Framework in order to build on the existing strong partnerships and to strengthen the legacy of the Thrive investment.

#### *Influencing Policy and Strategy - Higher Education*

LARC had established a significant relationship with the University of Liverpool through Impacts 08, the wide ranging research and evaluation programme set up and delivered to monitor the overall impact of the European Capital of Culture year in 2008. This relationship continued after 2008 with the implementation of a formal support agreement with Impacts 08 and LARC working with the Impacts 08 team to produce the initial data reports and to undertake further analysis of the Impact 08 findings to inform the production of the advocacy and communication materials.

This early work was supplemented with a report that mapped the relationships between Liverpool based arts and cultural organisations, and the higher education sector (HEIs). The report was launched at Culture Campus's conference on 25 June 2009, attended by the Vice Chancellors of all



three Liverpool higher education institutions and one hundred and thirty delegates from the higher education and cultural sectors. The report was based on survey returns from 15 arts and cultural organisations, including the eight members LARC and seven other arts and cultural providers. The research identified that all the major publicly funded cultural organisations in Liverpool, and many smaller providers have ongoing partnerships with higher education institutions, and that there was a clear willingness to develop these further. In particular there appeared to be specific strengths in the visual arts and media, and in museums.

In preparation for the conference, LARC also used Thrive funds to support a workshop with people from each LARC partner who take lead responsibility for higher education. This was led by the consultants who had recently completed a study for ACE and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education on collaboration between cultural organisations and HEIs. The purpose of the workshop was to identify new ideas for future collaborations.

LARC also linked up with Culture Campus and City of Learning to secure funding of £227,000 to develop an on-line portal which lists the entire CPD offer from Liverpool HEIs and cultural organisations. This was based on a model developed by City of Learning already for use in other sectors and is described in more detail in the section on Workforce Development below.

Following 2008 Culture Campus emerged as one of the main strategic links between the various Liverpool Higher Education Institutions and the cultural sector. Culture Campus is a collaboration between the University of Liverpool, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool Hope University, Liverpool Biennial, Tate Liverpool, FACT and the Bluecoat, working with LARC. The Culture Campus vision is to establish Liverpool as an internationally renowned centre for excellence in innovative collaboration between the higher education and cultural sectors, so helping to attract and retain the talent and creativity, vital to the future success of the City Region

Since 2008 the collaborative activities, networks, profile and resources of Culture Campus have included:

- The successful integration of Culture Campus into City of Learning,
- Securing The North West Cultural Observatory for Liverpool, building on the presence of Culture Campus in the city.
- The establishment of the Liverpool Institute of Cultural Capital as a joint ventures between two universities, integrating Impacts08 and North West Cultural Observatory.
- The launch of the Culture Campus identity and its website which functions as means of communication and focal point for students, cultural sector organisations and academics to make linkages. The website is also used to coordinate and publicise a student internships programme based on specific cultural sector theme for placements
- A series of seminars bringing together a wide-range of representatives from different backgrounds, promoting interdisciplinary exchange and networking.
- Collaborative activities between the cultural sector and universities, covering teaching partnerships, knowledge exchange, collaborative research, networking, joint conferences and publications.
- The establishment of new joint courses such as a new MA in Cultural Leadership.

- An increasing number of collaborative Ph.D.s with cultural organisations in Liverpool (e.g. a longitudinal study of Tate's interpretation and education policy; a research and online project with the International Centre for the Study Transatlantic Slavery; a joint research study with the Psychology Department of the University of Liverpool on colour perception). The Art and Design Academy of LJMU has also recently established and funded a number of collaborative PHDs with the Biennial, the Bluecoat, FACT and Tate Liverpool
- A research project assessing the interaction of students with the cultural sector, the perception of the cultural institution by students, and retention and employment destination of graduates in the creative industries.

LARC continues to be an active member of Culture campus and also works closely with the Institute for Cultural Capital scoping joint research proposals

### **Implementing Actions: Research and Publications**

#### *General Approach*

The Thrive business plan recognised that the cultural sector needed to strengthen its ability to demonstrate what it could offer, and also needed to create a stronger and more robust evidence base. The plan also acknowledged that there was a need to increase research capacity. Although all the LARC partners undertook research, only one (National Museums Liverpool) had any significant dedicated research capacity. The plan also recognised that in terms of the existing research activity (e.g. on audience numbers and profile and specific project evaluations) there was no mechanism to share data or to collate findings to the benefit of the wider cultural sector.

The benefits of a wider, more collaborative approach to research and evaluation were twofold. Firstly, it would help LARC partners to better understand the outcomes and impacts of their interventions and thus strengthen the ability to plan and deliver collaboratively. Secondly, it would provide a robust and consistent evidence base that would help the cultural sector to advocate more effectively for the public value of culture to those in positions of influence.

As part of the Thrive programme LARC did undertake some generic, broad based research. This general area of research included a formal agreement with the Impacts 08 team at the University of Liverpool and the production of an annual "Key Facts and Figures" document.

However, the main research programme funded through the Thrive investment was concentrated on a small number of significant collaborative projects integrated throughout the various Aims of the programme. Thus, in addition to the economic impact and intrinsic impacts studies discussed in detail in this section, Thrive also commissioned large-scale studies into audience development (discussed in detail in the Aim 2 section of this report) and into community development (discussed in the Aim 3 section). In addition Thrive also invested in capacity building around research and evaluation for both LARC staff and external partners. It is the breadth and scope of this activity that provides one of the major outcomes of the Thrive programme in Liverpool

#### *Economic Impact Study*

In 2008 LARC, working in partnership with Impacts 08, undertook a scoping study to consider whether or not to commission a study into the year round economic impact of cultural organisations

in Liverpool. This scoping work took place in the context of a substantial amount of previous work in the city both as a consequence of the European Capital of Culture 2008 bidding and delivery process and as the result of individual institutional studies that had been undertaken to determine the value of arts organisations in the context of public investment in capital development projects. Burns Collet was commissioned to undertake the study which included reviews of:

- Work that has taken place to date in this area in Liverpool through Impacts 08, The Mersey Partnership and LARC members (e.g. Impacts 08 Economic Impact of Events; Liverpool Philharmonic Economic Impact Study; Liverpool Everyman Economic Impact Study; NML Economic Impact Study)
- Specific pieces of work that had or were taking place in other city regions (e.g. Birmingham; Newcastle/Gateshead)
- Economic impact work undertaken for other sectors in Liverpool and Merseyside
- Previous work undertaken by Impacts 08 to assess Economic Impacts of the Arts methodologies in order to identify and summarise strong methodologies

In addition to the reviews the scoping study was also intended to develop the parameters for, and define the limitations of what, might be achievable through an Economic Impact of the Arts Study for Liverpool and the wider North West and, if appropriate, to develop a brief for the second stage work. The recommendation from this scoping work was that there would be significant benefits to LARC partners in commissioning an institution-based study that focused around the collective economic impact of the LARC partners.

Roger Tym & Partners (RTP), Burns Collet and NEMS were commissioned in August 2010 to undertake this second stage assessment of economic impact, focusing on the organisations that made up the LARC consortium. The objectives for the study were:

- To develop improved intelligence about the arts sector and its value to the local and regional economy
- To develop a robust methodology for assessing the economic impact of the arts sector that has credibility within both the arts sector and elsewhere.
- To produce a transparent and replicable methodology and primary research processes that will enable comparable studies to be undertaken in the future
- To develop improved market intelligence for the LARC partners through primary research with the consortium partners' audiences and visitors

The methodology for the assessment included the following elements:

- Collection of data from the LARC partners on their employment and their expenditure on goods and services
- Use of survey work to quantify the off-site expenditure from visitors to the LARC partner organisations, and to provide additionality measures
- Development of a model as an analysis tool to provide the estimated impacts
- Analysis of wider arts employment and value data to provide a context for the LARC partners' impacts

- Stakeholder interviews to explore the catalytic impact of the arts in Liverpool

The Final report used the detailed data from the individual LARC organisations to arrive at estimates of the direct and indirect employment supported by spend on staff, goods and services. It used the visitor survey work to determine the quantity and profile of visitor spend, estimate additionality and provide data to identify double counting from multiple visits between the different LARC members.

The final study shows that LARC activities annually support an estimated net additional gross added value (GVA) of £26.3 mn to Liverpool City, £32.0 mn to the Liverpool City Region and £35.2 mn to North West England. This GVA supports a total of 868 full time equivalent (FTEs) jobs in Liverpool City, 1,052 FTE jobs in Liverpool City Region and 1,179 FTE jobs in North West England. In terms of return on investment the study shows that the public sector provides £15 mn of support for LARC per annum, of which £3.4 mn is from local authorities. The return on this investment is £1.75 of GVA generated in Liverpool City for every £1 of public money invested. If the return on investment is narrowed to the £3.4 mn support from local authorities then for every £1 of local public money invested there is £11.14 of GVA generated in Liverpool City.

The results of this study are currently being discussed with Arts Council England as part of their review of approaches to estimating the added value provided by investments in the arts

#### *Intrinsic Impacts Study*

The economic impact study commissioned through the Thrive programme developed a robust method for assessing the instrumental benefits of the LARC partners to Liverpool and the City Region. However, consortium members recognised that measurement of instrumental value covered only part of the impact they were hoping to achieve collaboratively - measuring the intrinsic impacts of LARC activities was equally important for demonstrating the impact of the arts in social and cultural renewal was the need to

LARC partners recognised the difficulty in fully understand how art works on people, because the individual received impact of an arts or cultural experience is inherently idiosyncratic and impossibly complex. The same work of art can have profoundly different impacts on different people, or different impacts on the same person depending on that person's state of mind. Despite this, partners were keen to commission a study that would assist in the understanding of intrinsic impact and how to assess it, in the hope of gaining clarity on the primary value of arts and cultural activities to individuals, families and communities. LARC believed that this work could shed new light on how arts and cultural organisations create public value, and could profoundly influence both policy and practice.

Alan Brown of WolfBrown working with Baker Richards Consulting was commissioned to undertake this study. WolfBrown had pioneered the development of this type of research in the cultural sector in the US and Australia. Baker Richards has worked with over 200 organisations worldwide, on research, data mining, and marketing and pricing.

The final study brief was designed to complement LARC's research on the economic and social impacts of the arts and was intended to help LARC partners understand the true impacts of their work and to develop another way of defining 'success' beyond conventional measures such as income and attendance. More specifically, the study aimed to:

- Reflect deeply on the audience and visitor experience and on how audiences and visitors respond to different types of arts and culture
- Develop a new vocabulary and a shared framework for talking about the transformative experiences that audiences and visitors have at arts and cultural events
- Assist curators and artistic leaders in better understanding the consequences of their programming decisions
- Complement economic studies in order to paint a more complete picture of the public value of the arts and culture
- Provoke funders of cultural organisations to think more broadly about how they define success and create impact indirectly through their funding.

The programme of survey research was launched in autumn 2009, supplemented by an effort to gather anecdotal 'stories of impact' through interviews. Data collection efforts continued into autumn 2010 and concluded with surveying of visitors to the Liverpool Biennial.

To administer the survey a protocol template was devised so that a common set of mandatory questions could be asked across the LARC organisations, whilst allowing each organisation some latitude to customise the protocol. In total, 3,332 surveys were completed by audiences and visitors at 25 different programs using a mix of intercept and in-venue mail-back survey methods.

The results of the survey were provided to the LARC partners in two ways:

- An overall survey report highlighting overall responses and key findings
- An interactive dashboard tool containing survey results for individual organisations that allowed organisations to further investigate responses.

This survey report discussed the range of findings with respect to audiences' 'readiness to receive' the art and the six constructs of intrinsic impact: captivation, emotional resonance, spiritual value, intellectual stimulation, aesthetic growth and social bonding. The diversity of impacts observed across the numerous events illustrates how different program create different impacts and demonstrated:

- Very different impacts are created by different programmes; for example, different visual arts exhibitions prompted different levels of response to aesthetic growth. Similarly, different theatre productions prompted different levels of response to intellectual stimulation.
- Audience members who are really looking forward to an arts event are more likely to report being fully absorbed once they get there. They are also more likely to report higher levels of emotional impact and higher levels of overall satisfaction.
- Those who prepare are significantly more likely to report higher levels of emotional resonance. In other words, higher levels of frequency and context can lead to higher levels of impact.
- An audience which is 'captivated' gets a better 'return' in its investment of time and money, reporting more impactful experiences that bond them to culture and to their community, in turn benefiting that community.

The survey results served to stimulate conversations about artistic programmes, audience engagement and customer service amongst LARC partners. In addition, individual LARC organisations have all used the dashboard to consider the implications of the survey results. At least 3 of the LARC organisations have used the results of the study at senior management meetings to inform and change future practice and business planning. The flexibility provided by the dashboard has also been used to look at the levels of preparation and research, comparing the differences between visits for different types of event

The study has been both useful and informative and has been by LARC partners to both examine and challenge existing practice. The report was highlighted as part of the “Let’s Work Together” conference and has also helped to advance learning about impact assessment methodologies and extend the growing body of work underway in the U.K., U.S. and Australia.

### **Implementing Actions: Workforce Development**

The Thrive Business Plan contained a number of actions designed to develop the leadership and management skills in the cultural sector in order that partners might play a full role in the civic leadership aspirations also set out in the business plan. However partners also recognised that in addition to supporting leadership skills at the senior level and for emerging leaders in the sector, it was also necessary to ensure that the sector workforce was being drawn from the widest possible pool of talent. Through the Thrive programme the LARC partnership therefore also intended to address the issue of diversity in recruitment and, in particular, the need to develop routes into the industry for people who were not graduates.

#### Leadership Development

In 2007, prior to the success of the Thrive grant application, LARC partners, working with Common Purpose, had designed and delivered a custom leadership development programme for the sector support with funds made available through Arts Council England’s Cultural Leadership Programme. The 5-day programme delivered by Common purpose was designed to:

- Build a network of 'next generation' leaders in the arts and culture world in Liverpool
- Develop participants' understanding and awareness of leadership in different contexts
- Develop their own aspirations as leaders in the arts
- Build their awareness of key issues, agencies and leading players influencing the city's development such as regeneration, culture and the political backdrop
- Build the capacity of leaders in the arts to communicate broadly and effectively with leaders operating in other worlds.

The course had places for 25 participants and was heavily oversubscribed. Sixteen of the final participants were drawn from the eight LARC organisations, each putting forward two people, and the remaining nine places went to open recruitment from a range of arts organisations around the city from both the public and voluntary sectors. The course was extremely well received by those who participated

Given the success of this initiative, in 2009 LARC used the Thrive funds to deliver a further course supported through the Thrive Programme and with funds from the “Skills Work” programme run by

the LSC. Twenty two people participated in this second course, 14 from LARC organisations with the remaining eight places going to open recruitment from a range of arts organisations around the city from the public, private and voluntary sectors. This course was also extremely well received and in 2010 LARC used the Thrive funds to run the course again. LARC recruited a group of 24 participants, 19 of whom were from the LARC members and the LARC support team itself with the remaining 5 being from smaller independent arts and culture organisations.

There is no doubt that these development courses were extremely successful. In 2010 all the participants felt that they had developed their understanding of their role as a leader in Liverpool, all had a better appreciation of priorities for Liverpool's regeneration and future success and the vast majority (95%) felt that they now had a better insight into how some other leaders in arts and culture were helping to make change happen. The sessions also proved useful in terms of networking, all participants felt that the course had helped to develop their connections with the other leaders in arts and culture in Liverpool and that they had improved their understanding of how to connect with and learn from leaders in different contexts

### Diversity

Following the Inclusion and Diversity seminar that took place in July 2010 the LARC partners put together a second phase of work on inclusion and diversity issues in the cultural workforce that was designed to create a greater understanding of the issues and the conditions to assist organisations in taking further steps to ensure their practice and programmes embrace equality and diversity principles

This second phase was delivered through a series of exploratory discussions with various LARC groups (Marketing, Education, HR and Programmers) through November 2010 to January 2011, culminating with a discussion with the Chief Executives in late February 2011.

The discussions took the summary recommendations from the seminar and provided an opportunity for each group to share examples of good practice, and to identify common issues for each group. The recommendations produced as a result of this second phase of work are intended to act as a starting point for the creation of a transformative inclusion programme within the LARC partners (and hopefully more widely across the arts' sector in Liverpool) and will be reflected in the LARC post-Thrive business plan.

### Creative Apprentices

The Liverpool Creative Apprenticeship scheme has been one of the successes of the Thrive programme. The programme was initiated in 2007 when Creative Cultural Skills (CCS) approached Tate Liverpool with a view to piloting the proposed national creative apprenticeship programme. After a feasibility study was carried out (with funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation), a Steering Group and Programme Group were established to oversee the development of the programme.

The Thrive funding for the pilot phase of the initiative was supplemented with further funding from Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Liverpool City Council (Working Neighbourhood Fund). The partnership that supported the programme comprised the 8 LARC members, Learning Skills Council, Creative Cultural Skills, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Liverpool Community College and Liverpool City Council. This consortium initially planned and implemented the programme of capacity building, curriculum

development and recruitment leading to the appointment of 10 apprentices aged 16 – 24, all within LARC organisations, in July 2008.

The programme created opportunities for non-graduates to have a paid training experience, for a full year, in each of the LARC partners and had two main strands:

- Capacity building for the creative and cultural organisations that enabled them to develop the skills and expertise to provide high quality training and development for young people
- Apprenticeships for young people assisting them in developing generic skills and aptitudes as well as greater employability and entrepreneurial skills.

Critically, having raised over £250k the programme was initially able to cover the costs of overall project management and the training of mentors and assessors in the host organisations, as well as supporting apprentice wages. This meant that the cost to the host organisations of project management, the capacity building and the apprentice employee was met centrally through external fundraising.

The pilot phase proved very successful. Eight of the ten apprentices achieved the required NVQ2 qualification, with four exceeding expectations and being successful in gaining NVQ3 level. Three of the group were successful in securing employment with their host organisations, another three secured places on related FE courses and one commenced working as a freelance.

The success of this pilot phase, and the fact that, on the basis of the success of the pilot CCS decided to roll the programme out nationally, led to a second phase of apprenticeship recruitment in 2009/10. In this second phase, Thrive continued to fund the capacity building programme to help employers understand what is involved in employing younger and less qualified staff and in managing accredited programmes. Phase 2, which started in January 2010, involved a wider range of employers and was led by Liverpool Community College. This phase also attracted further support of £85,000 from the LSC via North West Vision, to support a Liverpool project manager to manage and implement the programme.

The Liverpool creative apprenticeship programme continues to operate and now runs on a rolling recruitment basis. Since the inception of the programme 24 separate organisations, covering the public, private and voluntary sectors have recruited a total of 34 apprentices. Since 2008 the LARC organisations have invested just under £65,000 from the Thrive programme in training, mentoring and capacity building to support apprentice employment in the sector. As a result of this investment the cultural sector now has:

- A significant number (26) of accredited, trained Mentors for apprentices who can be deployed both within and outside the creative sector to support apprentices in employment.
- A network of accredited Line Managers (19) who can be utilised both to support apprentices in other organisations and a source of help, advice and guidance for new organisations recruiting apprentices
- A group of accredited, trained assessors (10) who can be utilised within the sector to support the apprenticeship programme
- Significant education and training facilities and resources within the various LARC partner organisation to support apprentices in employment, either within one organisation or on a placement basis across organisations.



- Experience of building creative apprenticeships into “non-traditional” areas – in particular schools and educational establishments – which can both enhance and expand the apprentice offer.

The significant commitment of key people within LARC organisations has created an innovative apprenticeship programme in Liverpool. However, as well as Liverpool being viewed as a “trailblazer” in this area, the commitment of partners and the Thrive investment has created a significant customer base of cultural employers developed over a 3 year period that provides a unique resource on which to build future apprenticeship programmes. This existing base is important since the Thrive experience shows, and the programme evaluation results confirm, that peer-to-peer contacts and recommendations between companies have been one of the critical determinants in whether or new companies are prepared to consider recruiting apprentices. This should ensure the sustainability of the apprenticeship programme in the cultural sector

### Volunteers

In 2009, as part of a wider programme of themed research in support of its three strategic priorities for the ‘Thrive’ continuation programme (Civic Leadership; Audience and a People-friendly City Centre; Research and Development in arts-led regeneration), the LARC Executive proposed a comprehensive review of volunteering practices across its partner organisations.

This review process was designed to act as a test-bed for future collaborative research models, and it was hoped that emerging recommendations might stimulate a more effective and efficient use of volunteers across the LARC partnership, supporting diversity and engagement objectives, improving learning and development outcomes for volunteers, and enhancing the overall ‘volunteering experience’ for both volunteers and for the organisations involved.

A LARC Volunteering Working Group was established in June 2009, with a membership drawn from across LARC’s eight principal partner organisations. The group was tasked with reviewing, documenting and assessing current volunteering practices across LARC, and as part of that review process to identify key themes and issues for wider investigation, to undertake further research as required

The work undertaken by the Group highlighted a marked disparity between LARC organisations in terms of the formality of volunteering agreements and ‘the offer’ made available to volunteers (expenses, rewards/benefits and training opportunities). The group felt that both organisations and volunteers would benefit from a more consistent approach but recognised that many of the issues currently presenting a barrier to improved volunteer programmes stemmed from limited capacity. The Group put forward the idea of a centralised volunteering resource as a possible solution. The group felt that whilst a shared LARC database holding details of existing and potential volunteers would certainly be a positive step, wider issues around effective recruitment, skills-matching, volunteer orientation and day-to-day task management, could only begin to be addressed through the creation of a shared administrative support.

The work of the group was considered by LARC Chief Executives and a further meeting of Volunteering managers from LARC, the City Council and the PCT was convened in early 2010 to begin to further scope the potential for future collaboration. However, the potential for further work in this area was severely adversely affected by the new challenges presented to the sector by reductions in public funding. Participants in the follow up work were aware of staff fears over job

cuts in partner organisations and the need to ensure that an increased profile for volunteers and volunteering might be perceived as an initiative designed to replace existing staff functions with volunteer capacity. Although discussion continued during 2010, including Liverpool PCT, supported by Liverpool First, organising a seminar to discuss the potential development of a city wide volunteering strategy, progress in this area has been limited.

### Mentoring

To complement the leadership development programme LARC partners commissioned a report into the demand and potential impact of a mentoring scheme for the sector. The report was published in October 2009 and concluded that *"There is clearly a demand for mentoring and there appears to be a good level of understanding about what mentoring can offer in terms of personal development."*

In December 2009 LARC commissioned Business in the Arts: North West (BIA:NW), an organisation that had been running a successful mentoring programme using private sector mentors for almost ten years, to design and deliver the LARC cultural sector mentoring programme. The programme was developed to:

- To promote the scheme to cultural organisations in Liverpool
- To recruit and train up to 20 mentors from the cultural sector both in Liverpool and further afield, plus up to 10 mentors from other sectors
- To select and induct mentees for the scheme, ensuring that up to 24 places are given to LARC organisations
- To deliver 40 mentoring assignments, ensuring that a reasonable proportion of these involve mentors from the cultural sector

The systems and paperwork for the LARC scheme were based on the tried and tested BIA:NW mentoring programme. The induction sessions and mentor and mentee guides were modified to make them appropriate for the LARC programme, particularly the session for cultural sector mentors many of whom were unlikely to have acted as mentors in a formal programme previously.

The programme was promoted to LARC organisations, principally via Chief Executives and Human Resource managers, in January 2010 and was targeted towards the cultural sector's emerging leaders and managers. The wider arts community in Liverpool was approached through Creative Organisations of Liverpool (COoL) acting as the primary focus for recruitment. The programme attracted 45 enquiries but there were eight withdrawals at different stages of the process.

The programme eventually established 33 successful mentoring relationships, 13 of which had been completed at the end of June 2011. The most difficult challenge was to attract sufficient mentees onto the programme, although the context for the programme became increasingly difficult as the uncertainties in relation to funding began to bite and this put increased pressure on both potential mentees and the senior management teams of a number of organisations. These pressures also delayed the involvement of some mentees: for instance, one person was interviewed for the programme in April 2010, but was unable to attend an induction until May 2011.

The programme is still continuing, but on the basis of the results so far the mentoring programme is a success with an extremely high 'overall value' rating of 5.6 out of a possible 6 by the mentees who

have completed. Eleven mentees who are still in a mentoring relationship have returned interim report forms scoring an average of 5.4 out of 6 for the benefits they have received to date.

All of the mentees reporting said that they had achieved their desired objectives/gains and 100% said that all their development issues had been addressed. A number specifically cited increased confidence as a result. Benefits have accrued to both sides of the mentoring relationship, with 100% of cultural sector mentors so far saying they would be interested in a repeat mentoring relationship as long as pressures of work allowed. In the completed relationships all (bar one) of mentees say that they anticipate keeping in touch with their mentors and that they will continue to gain from the relationship

Interestingly, four of the completed mentees have, or intend to, leave their current posts and two are leaving the sector completely. This is not entirely surprising, since experience shows that a proportion of mentees originally apply for support of this nature because they are ready to move on from their current job. Arguably it is a good thing for both the individuals concerned, and their organisations, to discover their ambitions lay elsewhere and the individuals concerned still rated the benefits of the programme highly.

### Training Opportunities

One of the aims of the national Thrive programme was to provide a systematic approach to helping cultural organisations gain the expertise needed to respond to and influence a rapidly changing environment. To reflect this the Liverpool Thrive project included a number of actions related to CPD as core activities in the original business plan with the intention of developing the sector's development and civic leadership capacity.

To support this ambition LARC worked closely with Culture Campus and City of Learning to submit a funding bid to develop an online presence for promoting and advertising CPD opportunities. The Culture Campus Liverpool portal (CCLiP) would be used display the professional development opportunities offered by LJMU, University of Liverpool and Hope, and those of the cultural organisations in the city. Accredited CPD and Post graduate provision would also be displayed, as well as the non-accredited provision and events (e.g. cultural leadership events, seminars, master classes). Offerings from employers in this sector related to helping create a postgraduate and lifelong learning culture in this sector would also be included (e.g. Tate's Research Seminar Series, the lectures before a concert at the Phil)

The CCLiP project was successful in securing £227k of higher education funding from JISC (the Joint Information Systems Committee). The project was intended to build on the lessons learned from the development of the CPD Noticeboard - an online system based on the technology developed by the JISC project 'The Learning Matrix'. One of the main intended impacts of the CCLiP was to improve the automated collection of information from the institutions and cultural organisations involved in the project by means of the use of a common standard (XCRI) for describing the provision offered. It was hoped that this method of automated data collection would lessen the burden on participating organisations and thus ensure the long-term sustainability of both the service and the partnership.

There was considerable commitment from LARC partners to the projects, all participated in the initial XCRI "readiness" survey, although the preparation of these reports turned out to be much more complex than first expected since gaining the necessary information on the different perspectives often involved talking to numerous individuals within a single organisation This

therefore contributed to a delay of several months to these reports being completed. This process also flagged up one of the potential barriers to successful and easy implementation of the XCRI standard - limited technical and practical capacity issues across a number of organisations. To recognise this, a mechanism for enabling organisations to have their opportunities displayed through an initial manual upload were implemented as part of the project since it was accepted that it would be unrealistic for organisations requiring significant technical change to reach full XCRI compliance within the span of the project.

The CCLiP went live in spring 2011 and is used to display the CPD opportunities offered by a number of the LARC organisations along with details about the general cultural offer available.

### Workforce Development Seminars

LARC commissioned a series of seminars and training sessions to develop the evaluation skills both of the organisations directly participating in the programme, and others working in and around North Liverpool. This programme, delivered by François Matarasso, is considered in greater detail in the section covering Aim 3 of the Thrive programme

### **Implementing Actions: Organisational Development**

The original Thrive business plan set out the aspiration of LARC partners that the work of Thrive would not only develop LARC as a consortium, creating and supporting a series of working groups and regular network meetings at different levels in the organisations, but also that the experience of collaborative working would support individual organisational development. The LARC partnership would therefore also be used to develop the capability and capacity of each of its organisations to:

- Be adaptable, flexible and respond to change
- Be efficient, particularly through mutual self-help, sharing information, resources and expertise to the greater good

The organisational development aspiration contained a specific commitment to examine and review the potential for shared services both between LARC partners and more widely in the cultural sector, to increase operational effectiveness and to save money. This specific commitment was supported by others relating to staff development, to be implemented alongside and support the collaborative working arrangements

### Organisational Development Seminars

Staff from LARC partner organisations attended all of the broader workforce development seminars that were implemented as part of the Thrive programme. These events were supplemented by a series of seminars specifically aimed at developing the expertise and capacity of the staff within LARC organisations. This seminar series covered:

- A one day seminar on Trends in Arts Research led by Alan Brown from WolfBrown. This seminar covered the areas of audience research (measuring customer satisfaction and intrinsic impact), customer segmentation, cultural engagement and an exploration of new measurement systems for cultural vitality in communities.

- Marketing Seminar led by DHA Communications looking at ways of defining target markets, spotting “success” and developing simple and effective systems to identify and promote appropriate material without significant operational overheads.

### Operational Linkages

The mechanisms that have been implemented to support collaborative working on the Thrive programme have their foundation in the LARC collaboration that was already in place prior to the advent of Thrive. Put simply, LARC has led as a mechanism for collaborative or co-operative working, and Thrive has operated as a grant programme to support this collaborative approach.

The Thrive Programme has been supported by a Programme Director and a small team to deliver the work required for marketing and promotion, community capacity building and the administration of the grant. In support of this Executive team LARC partners implemented a layered management system to develop the capacity for collaborative working and to ensure that LARC was effective and that the partnership was in a position to take informed decisions on both the future of the collaborative programmes and the discharge of their grant management responsibilities. This structure comprised:

- The LARC Executive Group made up of Chief Executives and senior staff from all partners that had overall responsibility for all joint policy decisions made by LARC. This group had a collective responsibility to support the success of the LARC programmes led by the individual organisations on behalf of LARC. This group has met fortnightly throughout the Programme lifetime and this commitment has been supported by a series of management retreats used by the members to both reflect on progress, success and failures and plan and prioritise future collaborative actions
- Programme Steering Groups to identify issues and oversee the implementation of collaborative LARC programmes such as Creative Apprenticeships or Find Your Talent. Proposals from these groups for decision were taken to the LARC Executive Group for discussion (and in some cases for approval) although the lead LARC partner remained the accountable body for the designated programme.
- Thematic sub groups largely composed of individuals with common job role. Collaborative decision making regarding Thrive Programme activity has been enabled through these sub groups. The subgroup comprising Heads of Marketing has been particularly active, meeting monthly. Other subgroups have included Learning and Participation, Operations and Human Resources (HR).
- The Thrive Steering Group that has managed the Thrive grant programme and has been composed of a subset of LARC Chief Executives and been chaired by Liverpool Philharmonic – the accountable body for the Arts Council grant. This group has had the dual remit of developing LARC as a consortium as well as agreeing and overseeing the delivery of the programme of strategic activities funded through Thrive. This group also oversaw the work of the LARC Thrive Programme Director and the Thrive team and reported to the LARC Executive Group in the same way as the other Programme groups.

The original Thrive Action Plan described an action to convene a further subgroup comprising Chairs of Boards. These meetings have taken place, but have been much less frequent than originally envisaged.

One of the strengths of this layered approach to collective working to deliver the Thrive Programme is that it has offered different ways for organisations to relate to one another; not only as strategic partners but also as colleagues with a common purpose or business objective.

This has supported the development of deeper relationships between organisations. For example, there has been largely consistent representation at each fortnightly meeting of CEOs demonstrating a real commitment by partners to achieve the collaborative objectives of the programme. Feedback from the evaluation indicates that Heads of Marketing had developed a greater willingness to engage in both informal dialogue and formal planning through scheduled meetings. Both this group and the Heads of Education/Participation have expressed the desire to continue to meet and work together as appropriate beyond the Programme end.

The layered management approach has also been successful in addressing the perception held by many partners at the inception of Thrive that there was a gap in communication throughout the cultural sector and therefore a missed opportunity to draw together greater collective strength. The management approach that has been implemented has resulted in improved levels of contact and communication with other cultural organisations within Liverpool, specifically with the Cultural Organisations of Liverpool group (COoL). Regular joint programming meetings have been set up between LARC and COoL and other cross-group meeting attendance has been promoted (a COoL representative attending the CEOs fortnightly meetings and the Thrive Programme Director attending COoL meetings). There has also been broader participation, involving organisations from outside both LARC and the sector in the various Thrive project groups (for example, mentoring scheme and the development training for emerging leaders).

The management arrangements, and the commitment by LARC partners to work in this new way, has had significant, practical impacts in the areas of fund raising and collaborative programming (discussed in more detail below). In addition, the evaluation of the programme by ERS also noted significant changes in the outlook and behaviours of cultural organisations that were involved in the new arrangements. The evaluation highlighted that both internal and external evaluation participants commented that there is much more openness and “relaxation” between cultural organisations and that this has enabled a number of opportunities to share expertise including:

- Supporting the development of the evidence base for the impact of arts and cultural practice within the city;
- ‘Loaning’ staff (for example, secondments/mentoring/skill sharing) between organisations, enabling greater homogeneity;
- Connection between different working groups (LARC and COoL) that are considering the same topics.

The benefits and strengths of the development of this strong “relationship capital” through the Thrive Programme activity were also clearly articulated by evaluation participants in a number of areas including:

- Sustained involvement by a consistent number of people;

- Networking and sharing best practice;
- Sharing information about programming and aspirations;
- Coming together to make sure that the strength of the cultural product is recognised;
- Governance;

It would appear from this and other evaluation feedback that over the last 3 years the LARC collaborative and the Thrive business plan has resulted in a shared vision and action plan for the sector, and clarity around how it is to be delivered and who plays their part. LARC and Thrive have succeeded in establishing a much stronger voice for cultural partners and also acting as a sounding board for cultural opinion. Evaluation feedback also demonstrates that this strategic profile and a “voice” for culture (clearly evident in the vision and values that have been supported through LARC and Thrive) are reinforced in the joint aspiration that partners now have for the cultural direction of the city.

### Fund Raising

One of the practical gains of the collaborative approach developed by LARC and implemented through the Thrive programme has been the success in achieving additional external funds to support the delivery of collaborative projects: Examples of additional investment attracted as a result of Thrive activities are:

- £187,000 from Paul Hamlyn/LSC/WNF for Creative Apprenticeships Phase 1
- £85,000 from LSC via North West Vision for Creative Apprenticeships Phase 2;
- £84,000 from Arts Council England North West Grants for the Arts for the audience development work;
- £224,000 from HEFCE’s JISC fund for the CPD Portal led by City of Learning and Culture Campus;
- Primary Care Trust - £60,000 for a series of “model projects” led by LARC partners;
- £10,000 from LARC partners’ own budgets for marketing activities related to the Long Night and audience development project

These successes have served to further enhance the credibility and impact of LARC and Thrive

### Vision and Programming

The driving rationale behind much of the work undertaken through LARC is the belief that arts and culture organisations have a significant role to play in tackling the economic and social challenges that exist in many of our large towns and cities – arts and cultural activities help shape the identity of cities, provide direct and indirect employment and generate income for communities. LARC believes that in difficult times and in an increasingly competitive world the places that will prosper and become desired locations in which to work, live, play, study and invest are those that can demonstrate a unique combination of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors: combining a robust economic argument with a sense of place, quality of life, creative and cultural opportunities

However, LARC partners also recognise that the strength and impact of collaborative work is built on the quality and reputation of the individual organisations that form part of LARC – the strength of

the partnerships, and the scale and depth of impact on social and cultural renewal, depends on the ability of the LARC organisations, working both individually and collectively, to deliver a quality arts offer

As part of the LARC vision and the Thrive business case, partners therefore made a commitment to continue to work together, and in partnership with others, to develop new ways of realising the programming, funding and delivery of an arts and cultural offer of national and international quality and reach.

LARC and the Thrive funding have therefore facilitated and developed the potential for shared programming, and shared programme delivery, between the various LARC organisations.

This collaborative approach to building excellence has included an annual programme sharing event between the various LARC partners and an annual programme sharing event between LARC and COoL. In addition to raising awareness about future plans, these events have allowed partners to identify common programme themes and begin to forward plan on a collaborative basis. The events have also allowed partners to begin to identify common opportunities for future collaborative event programming (e.g. "themed" years or notable anniversaries). These joint programming events resulted in two specific collaborative initiatives by LARC and COoL members.

The first collaborative "season", in 2010, was "Liverpool and the Black Atlantic" inspired and initiated by the Tate Liverpool exhibition "Afro Modern: Journeys through the Black Atlantic". This exhibition explored the impact of different black cultures from around the Atlantic on art from the early twentieth-century onwards and was used as the foundation for a series of city-wide exhibitions and events that explored the connections between cultures and continents. Between January and April 2010, many art galleries and museums in the city including Bluecoat, Metal, FACT, the Walker Art Gallery, the International Slavery Museum and Sudley House all programmed exhibitions and public events in response to this Black Atlantic theme. Exhibitions included Beyond the Boundary, an exhibition exploring cricket and the legacies of slavery at the International Slavery Museum; Aubrey Williams: Atlantic Fire: at the Walker Art Gallery; and Sonia Boyce: Like Love – Part 2 at the Bluecoat. The University of Liverpool was also closely involved in the season, developing a web-based research and knowledge resource as well as delivering a series of lectures and seminars on the Black Atlantic theme

A second collaborative season is being delivered throughout 2011 around the title "Liverpool City of Radicals" a programme of exhibitions, debates and events looking at radical Liverpool - past, present and future. The programme is built around the centenaries of three very different radical events: The Liverpool Transport Strike (according to some historians, the nearest the UK has come to a revolution); the ground-breaking exhibition at the Bluecoat of paintings by the European avant-garde, including Picasso, Matisse and Cézanne; and the opening of the Liver Building – a controversial, modern edifice and the first major building in the UK to use reinforced concrete in its construction. The wide ranging programme of events includes Art in Revolution at the Walker Art gallery – a restaging of the 1911 Post-Impressionist exhibition; Democratic Promenade at the Bluecoat – a specially curated exhibition drawing on various radical moments in Liverpool and Labour history; and a series of "Policy Provocation" debates organised by the University of Liverpool and supported by the publication of Liverpool City of Radicals, a book looking at one hundred years of radicals and radicalism in Liverpool ranging widely across a century of politics, music, football, theatre, architecture and art,



Thrive funds and LARC collaborative programming has also been used to establish the Liverpool "Late Nights". Promoted variously as Light Night (in spring) and Long Night (in autumn), these are Liverpool's late night arts and culture festivals, when Liverpool 'stays up late' to draw visitors of all ages into the city. LARC instigated the event in 2008 for the Liverpool Biennial utilising Thrive funds. In addition, the Late Night events have to date been supported on an ad hoc basis by Liverpool Business Improvement District (BID), Merseytravel, Liverpool City Centre Management and Culture Liverpool. To date three annual Long Nights have taken place, and the model has been used to add the second Late Night festival to the city's calendar in the form of Light Night - a spring counterpart to winter's Long Night. Liverpool's spring Light Night also coincides with the UK wide weekend of Museums at Night and the Europe-wide celebration, La Nuit des Musées

The Late Nights encourage a wide range of cultural spaces and organisations to open late and work collaboratively to stage special events. The Late Nights and the specific events that are programmed are designed to celebrate Liverpool's shared culture, history and identity as well as foster collaborative working and partnerships and are aimed specifically at:

- Developing audiences and increasing participation in arts and culture, particularly amongst groups who would not normally attend an arts or culture event
- Creating a safer more 'audience friendly' city centre at night

The first Late Night event, in October 2008, included 30 venues and a total of 68 events; by Long Night in November 2010 this had grown to 62 venues and 110 events. Evaluation shows that Late Nights achieve their objective of attracting people into the city centre who wouldn't normally visit - for Long Night 2010, 56% of respondents said that they "rarely" come into the City Centre at night, 66% of respondents said they'd been to a venue they had never been to before and 96% said Long Night has inspired them to visit participating venues again in future.

### Shared Services

The Thrive business plan committed the LARC partners to reviewing how sharing staffing resources across key functions (such as human resource management) might lead to better and more efficient practice. It also committed partners to considering the establishment of a shared company to deliver key collaborative projects and where (or if) it might be necessary to have a separate legal entity to manage and finance these.

In summer 2008 LARC undertook a review of its structure to look at these specific issues. The review was conducted by external consultants and as a result of their report it was decided that LARC should not set up a separate company but, at this stage, should remain as an informal consortium although partners would commission further work to examine specific areas of potential shared services. The review succeeded in that it generated a more fundamental debate about the partnership - its vision, values and aims and as a result LARC developed a clear statement of its vision and values, resulting in the publication of its position statement, and a revision to the Memorandum of Understanding that underpinned the joint working practices between the various partners. The review therefore did reinforce the wish to collaborate and led to a deeper understanding of how one partner can work on behalf of the partnership to deliver programmes that benefit not only the cultural institutions, but the audiences and participants involved across the city-region. The engagement of all CEOs in this process was a clear signal of the importance accorded to this principle.

The commitment to implementing a series of organisational reviews to further examine the potential for shared services was not realised until 2009, given that all the partners were focusing heavily on the European Capital of Culture delivery in 2008. In 2009, the LARC partners commissioned a further scoping study intended identify how LARC partners (and other cultural organisations) could both save money and operate more effectively by sharing services in areas such as IT, HR management, security and building maintenance/cleaning. Following a tendering process, consultants were appointed to:

- Ascertain the current level of shared services between LARC partners
- Identify the level of interest and capacity to share specific services within individual LARC partners
- Identify other organisations outside LARC who would be interested in shared services, both in the cultural sector and beyond (e.g. 3<sup>rd</sup> sector)
- Research and write up examples of shared services to demonstrate the potential benefits and pitfalls of this approach (in the cultural sector and other sectors)

The aim of this study was to look at the potential of increasing effective organisational management by improving the quality of key services through a shared approach and to consider how (or if) LARC partners could save money by sharing services. The external consultancy work was supported by a series of investigations undertaken by the programme executive to document and share detailed information on the experience of shared service implementation in other areas where collaborative working was in operation (e.g. Newcastle Gateshead Culture Venues)

The key points that emerged from this scoping study was that, in general, LARC organisations did not seem to have the motivation to have shared business functions or departments. The main reasons for this conclusion were:

- Organisations had systems that worked for them at the moment; some would welcome the ability to call on expertise when required, but not to relinquish control of business functions.
- There were no clear enough operational benefits at the moment and it was not clear how shared departments would sit with differing priorities.
- There were degrees of shared services taking place already through projects and existing links (e.g. The Bluecoat/Biennial shared IT position) and consideration should be given to how these might be built upon.

The Chief Executives considered this report and agreed that the development of shared services would be seen as a gradual, evolving process. It was clear from the scoping study that individual organisations had to understand the need and the practical benefits of sharing and that this could be developed through working together on issues that are impacting individual organisations. The fact was noted that there was already considerable interest in shared knowledge, experience and expertise and that through LARC individual organisations can see the scope for more sharing and learning from each other.

Although the partners remained committed to the exploration of the potential for sharing services, the second phase of this exploration of the shared agenda was therefore based on the principle of developing shared solutions and that if LARC could facilitate more shared working this would lead to the development of shared solutions, which may then lead to the greater use of shared services in

the future. This phase of the work therefore identified four work streams as being critical to helping achieve collaborative goals, to create sustainable organisations, and transform the way LARC partners worked together. These work streams were:

- LARC Shared administrative service centres
- Joint participation programmes
- Joint income generation
- Joint Programming

LARC partners recognised that making progress against these strategic goals whilst meeting operational commitments would be extremely challenging so appointed an external consultancy to facilitate the work programme on behalf of the LARC Executive. The review work commenced with the potential for a shared administrative service centre covering the areas of human resources, finance, IT, buildings and estates, procurement and third party services. The review was aimed at collecting the data which would enable the consortium to create a cross LARC picture of the services provided, the standards expected and what the services cost.

This review reported back in December 2010 and showed that:

- In general, the Chief Executives assessed the current support services they receive as, being very good in terms of quality, responsiveness and value for money - only procurement was seen to be not quite as good as the other four support services that were reviewed.
- The current spend on staffing to provide support services was nearly £1m with a further £600,000 being spent on software costs and licenses, IT equipment etc.
- LARC organisations spend approximately £2.3 in other support services such as utilities, security, marketing, cleaning, maintenance, auditing etc.

With respect to potential savings and benefits from sharing support services the report concluded that it was difficult to be conclusive on the savings that might accrue from sharing all the support services as the output/outcome data did not enable 'good' comparisons from which to extrapolate. The report did however note that:

- There was very little investment in procurement, with no specialist procurement personnel or expertise yet over £2m of support service is being procured
- Support services (e.g. utilities) were being purchased at very different rates and if everyone were to buy these services at the most advantage rates obtained within the 7 organisations savings could be made
- Significant savings were probably not achievable in the short term, but more savings would accrue the more processes and systems are standardised and which could be implemented over a 2-year programme if a unified service was considered
- The 'successful' implementation of shared support services across all 7 organisations would need to be done systematically and in a way that would fit strategically with the direction of the individual organisations and of the collective group. This would present challenges as it would change the relationship between senior managers and their support staff/services

and the expected service standards required for each organisation would need to be specified.

After considering the report in some detail, LARC Chief Executives concluded that the potential benefits of setting up a shared services centre across the 7 organisations were significantly outweighed by the transitional disruption and the loss of direct control that this would create and that, therefore, there was not enough potential benefit identified to warrant moving to the next stage.

However, Chief Executives did realise the potential for implementing shared services in some areas where it might prove to be possible to realise both savings and quality improvements (e.g. procurement). It was also recognised that a “one size fits all” solution would be unlikely to be implementable, and that shared services might need to be agreed between different combinations of partners in the consortium and/or implemented at different pace in individual organisations. The consortium therefore agreed to further examine the potential for quick wins (such as procurement and the purchase of support services at the lowest rates) and to work collectively (but not necessarily at the same pace) to agree the scope and areas of focus for these shared services. This commitment is reflected in the post-Thrive business plan agreed by consortium partners

### **Aim 1: Conclusions and Lessons Learnt**

Aim 1 of the Thrive business plan committed partners to a number of ambitious actions in the areas of civic leadership, evidence building and workforce and organisational development. The evaluation of the programme undertaken by ERS, alongside the evaluations of specific LARC and Thrive projects, demonstrates that in most cases these ambitions have been realised and, in some cases, exceeded.

In respect of civic leadership LARC is now seen as a significant component within the cultural sector in Liverpool. This is partly because it has succeeded in instigating some high profile strategic programmes bringing in new financial resources, but also because of its early close involvement in Liverpool 08. Senior politicians and senior managers from the main development agencies are increasingly recognising that LARC provides a means for a fruitful and intelligent dialogue with a significant part of the city’s cultural sector.

In 2010, a survey of internal evaluation participants asked, with regard to the development of cross-sector networks and partnership working, ‘how engaged’ the cultural sector is with wider agendas in Liverpool - 79% of respondents considered the sector to be ‘very well engaged’ or ‘well engaged’. The majority (64%) of respondents thought the awareness of strategic stakeholders of the cultural sector’s programmes and activities was ‘medium’, with 36% considering it ‘high’.

LARC and Thrive have also succeeded in building on the early collaborative foundations. The evaluation found that the spirit of collaboration is firmly grounded not only at Chief Executive level, but also through the well established LARC marketing and education/participation groups who meet regularly. These groups have developed major programmes of shared activity which have secured additional resources (e.g. Find Your Talent and the Audience Development project). New shared interest groups have also been established and there is now a formal sharing of forward plans by programming staff and Chief Executives. Programming staff have also been brought closer together through working on the collaborative “Long Night” and the “City of Radicals” projects.

Evaluation participants commented that the Thrive Programme has supported the development of deeper relationships between organisations. The evaluation also found that an aspect which has been particularly positive in terms of relationship building has been the improved levels of contact and communication with other cultural organisations within Liverpool, specifically with the Cultural Organisations of Liverpool group (COoL).

Partners surveyed at the inception of the programme saw the development of networks and partnership working between the arts organisations of Liverpool to be one of the key factors in the development of the sector. The surveys conducted as part of the final evaluation work illustrate that LARC/Thrive has gone some considerable way towards achieving this ambition: 58% of internal (LARC) evaluation participants surveyed in 2010 considered the level of collaborative working between organisations as 'high', with 15% stating it was 'very high'. Specific areas where collaboration was seen to be 'very effective' or 'effective' by the majority of survey respondents include:

- Raising external funds;
- Building the capacity of community organisations in North Liverpool to engage with culture;
- Encouraging more co-ordination between cultural organisations working in Liverpool;
- Audience development; and
- Professional development.

The evaluation by ERS shows that Thrive and other LARC activity has supported a strong case being made in respect of the value (both economic and social) of the cultural sector and that strategic partners recognise this – the relationship with the City Council is perceived as having been strengthened, and the fact that Council representatives understand the role that the sector can play in social and economic renewal encourages other partners to listen. The evidence base has been effectively used to improve awareness of the value of culture amongst key partners, and this has resulted in a clear role for culture in key strategies (for example, Business Plan for Liverpool Vision, ONE Plan for Liverpool, Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy 3-Year Action Plan and Destination Management Plan, Liverpool City Region Visitor Economy Strategy to 2020). In the context of recent funding announcements, there was an opinion expressed by some evaluation participants that the cultural sector had received a relatively favourable funding settlement as a result of the strength of the evidence base and the evident impact the sector has made

The impact and research data has also been used for advocacy and case-making purposes, for example, in a response to the DCMS Select Committee, a fringe event at the Liberal Democrat Party Conference and a document summarising the impact on Culture and Civic Responsibility in Liverpool. In addition, The AHRC National Delivery Plan makes reference to the work in Liverpool and the Everyman Playhouse has received the single biggest capital investment by Arts Council England.

The results of the individual project evaluations indicate that the workforce development actions implemented by LARC partners have been well received. In addition the consortium has succeeded in embedding the new ways of working in the plans and activities of individual organisations. Of particular significance is the fact that, as new CEOs have been appointed since the Liverpool Thrive programme began, the requirement to work with and on behalf of the LARC partnership has been included in the job descriptions. Amendments have also been made to the job descriptions of other

senior staff within LARC organisations. There have also been changes in the business plans of individual organisations to include Thrive and LARC activity. These are important changes since one of the operating principles behind the partnership is that initiatives and programmes should be, wherever possible, carried out by the partners, as part of their core activity to ensure programme sustainability.

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## **Aim 2: Audience and People Friendly City Centre**

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### **Background**

Through the Thrive programme the LARC partners aimed to test out a new model for embedding the arts and cultural sector in the processes of social and economic renewal. The partners believed that the sector must use the additional resources provided through the Thrive programme demonstrate its ability to provide leadership that was outside of political and governmental structures, and to prove that a thriving cultural life was vital to the continuing social and economic health of a city-region.

### **Ambition**

The overall ambitions of Aim 2 of the Thrive programme were to create a more strategic approach to audience development and to create a more audience and people friendly city centre

Audience development was an important priority within the overall Liverpool Thrive business case. Audience development benefits were also intended to flow from the programme of work under Aim 3 - exploring new models of cultural regeneration with a focus on North Liverpool. At the commencement of the Thrive programme work already underway by some LARC partners in North Liverpool was already resulting in some growth in audiences from this part of Liverpool, as a result of specific linkages that these organisations were making between their outreach programmes and attendance at the venues. The audience development activity planned for the Thrive programme was designed to address one of the perceived weaknesses of the European Capital of Culture year when, as the Impacts 08 Baseline Report highlighted, the Liverpool Culture Company did not put a particularly strong emphasis on audience development.

The need to address the public perception of the City Centre had been highlighted by a number of studies and reports published prior to the start of the Thrive programme. There was a particular concern about the level and impact of drink driven regeneration. For cultural venues in Liverpool City Centre, particularly FACT in the Ropewalks area, the impact of excessive alcohol consumption was beginning to have a major adverse effect on audiences. Issues of security, street hygiene and safety were also having a negative day-to-day impact on venues, and on potential audiences. In addition, although crime in Liverpool city centre had reduced in recent years, there remained a strong public perception of high levels of crime and poor safety in the City Centre

LARC partners also believed that there was a lack of co-ordination and dialogue on visitor issues and city centre management, meaning that opportunities for joint promotion and particularly for cultural tourism were not therefore being fully realised. Increased dialogue on these issues could also lead to a more coherent integrated approach in regard to other City Centre management issues such as use of public transport and car parking and integrated ticketing

These ambitions for Aim 2 of the programme would be achieved through three separate, but interrelated strands of action.

- Advocacy actions focussing on regular dialogue between the cultural sector and city centre management and visitor services, in partnership with the retail and hospitality sectors.

- A research programme that would prepare the ground for the delivery of a series of audience development projects,
- A series of strategic projects to address key issues identified in existing visitor perception research. These projects would include a major emphasis on encouraging further engagement by new audiences, a shared campaign to counter the health and public order problems posed by excessive alcohol consumption, and a "family friendly" programme;

The success of Aim 2 of the Thrive programme would be primarily demonstrated by the cultural sector being able to influence city centre management functions and related regional strategies (e.g. Tourism) so that these worked more effectively for the needs of the cultural venues and their audiences

### **Implementation**

The action plan that was developed to deliver Aim 2 of the Thrive programme covered the 3 strategic areas set out above and included the following specific actions

In the strategic area of **Advocacy**, 2 specific actions were proposed

- LARC would work closely with an existing Audience Development agency and begin to develop a strategic co-ordinating function for audience development on Merseyside, in both the short and long term. This action was perceived as being urgently needed, given the many opportunities for long-term audience development that arose through the delivery of the Liverpool 08 programme and the closure of the Merseyside audience development agency in June 07.
- Establish regular dialogue between the cultural sector, city centre management, and visitor services. In establishing this dialogue, collaboration with the retail, hotel and restaurant sectors was perceived as critical given the common interests that existed. This action was to be achieved either through securing cultural sector representation on key bodies and/or through establishing a regular cultural sector city-centre management forum

In the strategic area of **Research** the action plan proposed 2 specific actions:

- To undertake a review of current levels of audience research capacity to scope the current state of audience research amongst the LARC partners, and to share good practice across the partnership. This research would serve to identify support needs and feed into the planning for future audience development structures
- Implementation of a series of action-research projects addressing issues that had been identified in the annual/biennial visitor perception surveys undertaken by Liverpool City Council and The Mersey Partnership (TMP)

The Action Plan proposed a series of 5 joint Strategic Projects to test out shared approaches to improving the experiences of audiences coming to Liverpool City Centre. These projects were:

- A shared campaign to counter the alcohol driven night-out culture, including a shared programme of accessible and popular activities aimed at the appropriate demographic groups and including a late/all night opening across several venues.



- A shared approach to family friendly programming and marketing with organisations working together to develop complementary programming and seeking partnerships to support this work, (e.g. with the retail sector where there could be linkages in terms of families coming into town at the weekend for a combination of cultural and shopping activities). These new programming initiatives would be supported by a “family friendly” website
- A programme designed to attract new, “non-traditional” audiences and participants to LARC (and other) venues. A major priority would be to work with Liverpool Culture Company and other partners to secure the longer term engagement of people who attend the arts for the first time during 2008, encouraging them to return for other events. This was seen as a major part of securing a successful legacy for Liverpool 08
- The development of “visitor-welcome” projects to include; shared visitor-welcome training which would build on Liverpool Culture Company and TMP’s visitor training; car parking guides and a joint public transport campaign with Mersey Travel
- A review of how integrated ticketing could be established, in order to improve the ease of purchase for current and potential audiences and to encourage audiences to try a wider range of venues and art forms

### **Implementing Actions: Advocacy**

#### Strategic Co-ordination

Prior to the advent of the LARC Thrive programme, audience development support in Merseyside had been provided by TEAM (The Entertainment and Arts Marketeers). However, TEAM had gone into receivership in 2007 and as a result Merseyside was left without an audience development agency. A major focus of the initial audience development work supported by the Thrive programme and LARC partners was therefore to identify the gaps in provision left by the demise of TEAM and develop appropriate new structures to plug those gaps

Early in 2008 LARC was successful in securing additional funding from Arts Council North West (£84,000) to support the initial development of a strategic co-ordination role around audience development and address any gaps in provision. This grant was supplemented by contributions from all LARC partners (£19,200).

LARC utilised this funding to contract with the audience development agency, Arts About Manchester (AAM) the audience development agency for Greater Manchester, to deliver a programme of work including a review of the strategic co-ordination requirements within the City Region. AAM were also contracted to deliver a number of specific audience development projects that are described in greater detail below

AAM appointed 2 staff to deliver the Merseyside contract who started work in July 2008. During August and September a series of meetings was conducted with LARC partners and the LARC Audience Development Overview was published in the autumn of 2008

The review highlighted the considerable differences between the various LARC organisations in terms of aims and purpose as well as size and resources that made direct comparisons difficult but did draw out some of the common themes across the group. These common themes included:

- None of the LARC organisations had a dedicated staff member with audience development in their title leading to a lack of focus since in many organisations, Marketing and Participation/Learning departments tended to work separately on their own audience development initiatives, often on different priorities potentially leading to missed opportunities for deepening audience engagement.
- Although in general, everyone had a sense that the departments are working towards the same overall aim, there was a need for more robust cross-departmental (and cross organisational) working/communication in order to inform each other's planning, avoid conflicting messages, ensure everyone is pursuing same priorities and maximise on shared opportunities.
- There was a general lack of audience data for non-attenders meaning that few organisations really understood where gaps in audiences existed (or why) resulting in a lack of evidence and strategic thinking behind why organisations wanted to target specific people.
- The lack of an effective lead coming from an external body meant that opportunities for collaborative working were not being fully exploited, although the report also noted that LARC had become sufficiently motivated and aware to form the Heads of Marketing group and were now meeting frequently
- The loss of Merseyside-specific audience development support had been keenly felt and that this (perhaps also in combination with the intense concentration on 2008 as Capital of Culture) had led to a sense of being out of touch with the bigger picture, weakening the ability of LARC to effectively lobby on the regional or national stage.
- The willingness to engage in ongoing communication needed to be reinforced by a willingness to share information, data, knowledge and expertise in order to strengthen the city's cultural offer and therefore support the region's cultural offer – a crucial legacy of 2008

The review resulted in the development and agreement of a LARC Audience Development plan in October 2008. The plan would be supported by the Thrive funds and would be delivered by AAM with the aim of providing strategic support to LARC partners by facilitating and delivering on current audience development priorities in Merseyside and planning a strategy for the future. At the core of the plan were three specific audience development projects:

- Open City: designed to develop a shared scheme across the LARC partners aimed at encouraging new audiences to develop long-term attendance at cultural organisations. Particular emphasis would be placed on audiences who have attended or participated in the arts for the first time as part of Capital of Culture programme.
- Family Friendly: to develop the awareness and effectiveness of the Family Friendly brand and to support the development of a Family Friendly Merseyside website to communicate with families and inspire visits
- DataCulture: close involvement with the regional project that aimed to equip arts organisations across the region with both the infrastructure and reporting mechanisms by which they could benchmark their performance with other venues. As a product of this

activity, the aim was also to generate sufficient attendance data from which to acquire an understanding of audience trends within the City Region.

Each of these projects is considered in greater detail below

### *Dialogue and Joint Planning*

Within Aim 2 the dialogue and joint planning activity undertaken by the LARC partners and supported through the Thrive programme focussed on the issue of City Centre Management. This activity therefore complemented the broader cultural advocacy undertaken by partners through Aim 1 of the programme

The advocacy approach to the issues of city centre safety and planning were developed through enhanced dialogue with the police and by securing a place on the City Centre forum – the body that focussed on City Centre safety issues Merseyside Police attended the LARC CEOs meeting in 2008 and 2009 and meetings were also held, at both strategic and operational level, with Liverpool Vision, the City Council City Centre management team and the transport authority – Mersey travel

Throughout the Thrive Programme FACT has had a role as ‘City Centre Champion’ on behalf of the other LARC partners. The Joint Agency Group, on which FACT sits, is a subgroup of Liverpool’s Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership comprising local authority, police and other public and private sector partners and has focused on the promotion a safer night-time economy for Liverpool City Centre. As a result, culture in general and LARC in particular was referred to throughout the published City Centre Management strategy. LARC also made a significant contribution towards the bid for Purple Flag status - Purple Flag is the new "gold standard" that recognises great entertainment and hospitality areas at night. LARC also participated in the Designing Out Crime project.

LARC has supported this influencing role through the development of shared projects to alter the perception of the City Centre and to bring more people into the city centre at night. The Long Night/Light Night activities have been a critical activity in this respect - contributing to the evening economy of Liverpool’s city centre as well as supporting the development of new audiences. The Light/Late Night activities are discussed in greater detail below but feedback from evaluation participants has been consistently positive about their value and they are a clear demonstration of how the Thrive Programme has initiated events for organisations across the City that could be joined by others in future.

LARC was also closely involved in the “Golden Mile” destination management strategy for the City Centre put forward by the City Council in 2009/10. This approach was designed to achieve more effective management and promotion of the city centre – a (metaphorical) Golden Mile that includes all the major cultural venues – through discussions with all the agencies involved in the management and regeneration of the city and other professionals such as artists, designers and planners. As part of these discussions LARC proposed a series of artist led interventions, addressing “hotspots” where the LARC venues had identified specific issues to do with the way the city centre is used or managed. This “Golden Opportunity” project is discussed in greater detail below

## **Implementing Actions: Research**

### *Audience Data Review: DataCulture*

To address the perceived weaknesses in audience data coverage highlighted in the review of LARC audience development data the LARC partners, led by the Heads of marketing group, became closely involved in the regional DataCulture project being implemented in the North west by Arts About Manchester

The DataCulture project aimed to deliver a North West wide benchmark of arts attendance in the region. It aimed to build on work already undertaken in Greater Manchester and comprised a number of strands designed to develop sub-regional and cross regional reporting mechanisms and outputs. The project hoped to equip arts organisations across the region with both the infrastructure and reporting mechanisms by which they could benchmark their performance with other venues. As a product of this activity, the aim was also to generate sufficient attendance data from which to acquire an understanding of audience trends within the region.

The initial focus of this work in Liverpool was on visual arts and performing arts venues. There were two main project strands, one focussing on implementing the infrastructure to collate and compile performing arts attendance data, and the other focussing on identifying a common framework from which audience data from visual arts organisations could be collated for benchmarking.

In the performing arts the proposed DataCulture infrastructure was based on the Vital Statistics Box Office data extraction system. This system has two key functions: an extraction facility to collate data from existing box office systems and a browser based analysis facility.

Four LARC venues took part in this part of the data culture project: Bluecoat, Everyman and Playhouse, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Unity Theatre. Each identified venue was approached to confirm their specific needs, technical and confidentiality arrangements. AAM also provided ongoing IT support and advice to assist the introduction of the VS software

This part of the data culture project met with limited success. Only one organisation, Everyman and Playhouse, was able to fully install and operate the software. In 2 others – Philharmonic and Bluecoat – the software proved incompatible with existing systems so data had to be extracted manually and the Unity Theatre withdrew from the project due to data confidentiality concerns

To supplement this work, and to compensate for the limited success of the automatic extraction and analysis approach, AAM undertook a manual audience data collection exercise from all the LARC partners and produced, in 2010, a written report Baseline Report of audience data coverage that included:

- Insight profiling for audiences indexed against the base data for the Merseyside population
- ACORN geo-demographic profiling for audiences indexed against the base data for the Merseyside population
- Monthly attendance benchmarked against both a Merseyside and a North West venue average
- Drive time analysis for bookers benchmarked against the Merseyside venue average
- Dispersion map for bookers related to audience drive times

- Market penetration by drive time and by local authority – using Target Group Index data

This report provided the LARC partners with a useful baseline against which to measure future progress

### Action Research

Although an overall action research plan as originally envisaged in the original Thrive business plan was never finalised during the implementation phase of the programme, evaluation and learning was built into all of the strategic projects (see below) delivered with Thrive funding.

## **Implementing Actions: Strategic Projects**

### Late/Long Night

Funded through the Thrive programme and contributions from a range of other City partners, (Liverpool Business Improvement District (BID), Merseytravel, Liverpool City Centre Management, and Culture Liverpool) Light Night and Long Night are Liverpool's late night arts and culture festivals, when Liverpool 'stays up late' to draw visitors of all ages into the city. The 'Late Nights' encourage a wide range of cultural spaces and organisations to open late and stage special events, creating a vibrant trail of arts and culture, late night shopping and other events and attractions.

The Late Night festivals were designed by LARC to:

- Develop audiences & increase participation
- Create a safer more 'audience friendly' city centre at night
- Celebrate Liverpool's shared culture, history and identity
- Foster collaborative working and partnerships
- Reinforce the economic & social renewal of the city and city region

Long Night is the longest running of the Late Nights: LARC instigated the event in 2008 for the Liverpool Biennial. The idea originated from the programme team at the Bluecoat, inspired by the European Museums model. The original aim was to "test whether an event of this nature could draw a wider range of people into the city in order to increase a feeling of safety and ownership of the city centre at night". In addition it was seen as a good opportunity to work in partnership with a wide range of visual arts venues and other partners.

To date three annual Long Nights have taken place, and the model has been used to add the second Late Night festival to the city's calendar in the form of Light Night - a spring counterpart to winter's Long Night.

Liverpool's first Light Night event took place in January 2009 in the form of a large-scale event called Transition tied in to the city's 'closing ceremony' of Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008. The following year in 2010 a second Light Night was organised to coincide with national initiatives Museums at Night

The Late Nights have given the local cultural community a platform to create an eclectic programme of arts and culture activities concentrated into a single evening. This collective expression of creativity acts as a celebration of the city's culture, a 'showcase' that draws positive focus locally,

regionally and nationally. It is the only event of its kind in Liverpool. With open access to all, with the only prerequisite being venues organisations have to offer something 'culturally special for the night' which not only allows the festivals to form an honest representation of Liverpool culture, but an open door which fosters collaboration and partnership; strengthening the cultural community as a whole and visitors perception of it.

All the Late Night events have been subject to formal evaluation and these have demonstrated that the economic Impact of these events has been significant The Light Night in 2010 cost £22,900 to stage and attracted 12,500 visits (a cost of £1.83 per visit). Roughly half of the visitors (51%) spent under £10 in the city Centre on the night, but a significant proportion (40%) spent between £10 and with £50 with 9% spending over £50. Although many organisations do not necessarily aim to generate an income from their involvement in the Late Nights, but rather take part in the spirit of celebration and community, seeing it as both a marketing exercise and audience development opportunity, the feedback from participating organisations demonstrates that the Late Nights are profit making for some organisations – one City Centre venue generated a return of 469% on their running costs for the night.

The Late Night's have also had a growing focus on participatory activity, as the involved organisations are aware of how well these creative activities can engage and inspire new audiences. The Late Night producers actively promote participation whilst building the programmes. The potential for attracting (and retaining) new audiences is clearly evident in the Late Night evaluations - 66% of respondents surveyed on Long Night 2010 said they'd been to a venue they had never been to before and 96% said Long Night has inspired them to visit participating venues again in future.

Evaluation also shows that Late Nights have achieved their objective of attracting people into the city centre who wouldn't normally visit - for Long Night 2010, 56% of respondents said that they "rarely" come into the City Centre at night. When Liverpool City Council successfully applied for Purple Flag status in January 2010 The Late Nights were highlighted throughout the application as key to the vibrant, inclusive arts and culture scene that helps to create a safer, people friendly city centre at night.

In addition the Late Nights have developed and fostered a unique range of creative collaborations by allowing creative organisations, artists and commercial organisations across Merseyside without venues to be hosted by city based venues. The nights have also allowed creative industries and commercial organisations working together to profile their work at this popular (non-commercially driven) cultural festival as well as allowing organisations to increase their visibility in the region by staging new content and one-off events in the city

Public and organisational reaction to the nights has been universally positive and the scale of the nights has grown significantly over the lifetime of the programme - the first event in 2008 included 30 participating venues and 68 events, the event held in November 2010 included 62 participating venues and 110 events.

There is no doubt that Long Night/Light Night activities have been a key success of the Thrive Programme, they have supported the development of new audiences as well as contributing to the evening economy of Liverpool's city centre. Feedback from internal and external evaluation participants has been consistently positive about their value and they are a clear demonstration of

the catalytic effect of the Thrive programme since the nights are programmed to continue beyond the end of Thrive

### Family Friendly

The collaborative work on a “family friendly” approach across LARC partners was driven by the recognition of the importance of engaging effectively with families as part of the audience development work, not least because children who engage in cultural activity with their families are far more likely to continue to participate as an adult. In addition, LARC partners recognised that activity aimed at engaging the whole family would be an effective way to widen the range of people currently involved in arts and culture

The work that LARC commenced in 2008 in this area was designed to build on the initiative by Arts Council England around family friendly issues and the existing Family Friendly brand and toolkit (which were initiated by Arts About Manchester). The fact that ACE were planning a major focus on “families and communities” as part of the forthcoming national engagement campaign in 2010 provided an additional spur and an opportunity to work with ACE to on this issue.

The family friendly promotional work by LARC had begun in April 2008, prior to the advent of the Thrive programme, when the LARC Marketing group commissioned the Family Friendly Merseyside website from Arts About Manchester, and secured funds that supported the development of the website through LARC members’ contributions, Grants for the Arts and Liverpool Culture Company.

To support the website development, the Merseyside Arts About Manchester audience development team undertook a range of activities designed to develop the awareness and effectiveness of the Family Friendly brand and Family Friendly Merseyside website and encourage Merseyside arts organisations to improve their communication with families. This activity included:

- Development of e-newsletters and e-mail list
- Production and distribution of promotional print materials at a variety of venues including Surestart children’s centres, libraries, arts venues, tourist offices , cafes, doctor surgeries, sports centres, community centres , Merseyside rail stations and major city centre retail sites.
- A series of promotional stalls at local family events including both local events ( BBC Radio Merseyside, Parklands Library in Speke, West Everton Community Festival) and further afield (Tatton RHS Show, Swarm to Ness at Ness Gardens and Southport Flower Show)
- Promotional stalls at arts venues in Merseyside, including Tate, FACT, Unity, Liverpool Playhouse, World Museum, Southport Arts Centre and Floral Pavilion on the Wirral.

The website was moderately successful with visitor figures increasing month on month throughout 2008 and 2009, overall the site received roughly 11,900 visits (8.164 visitors) between May 08 and August 09, and provided a useful starting point for LARC partners in terms of developing greater collaboration around family friendly promotion. However, whilst there was a general interest from LARC partners to continue supporting the website, with the end of the initial period of funding for development and hosting (and the site therefore becoming a subscription service), resource constraints within partner organisations meant that not enough organisations were able to sign up for full subscriptions to cover the ongoing running costs. AAM agreed to continue to support the website for its long term potential, but without comprehensive content the site has struggled to

increase the number of unique visitors to the site above the 2009 level of c. 800 per month (although the email newsletter has 1400 subscribers).

To build on this initial activity, and to provide a stimulus for further development, in July 2009 LARC commissioned a scoping study to look in more detail at the family friendly cultural offer in Liverpool and the strategic context for development. At the same time there was also a significant focus on family engagement through the Find Your Talent programme, as part of the overall push to engage children and young people in the wider cultural offer of the Liverpool City Region. A number of Find Your Talent projects looked at how parents and family could be involved in supporting their children to access the cultural offer. This was done through a range of pilot action research projects for early years children and their families in the second year of the Find Your Talent programme.

The scoping study reported in August 2009 and concluded:

- There was a considerable amount of Family Friendly programming run by the LARC partners, who generally took a positive view of the quality of the programming, customer care and facilities they offer to families.
- Despite the level and popularity of Family Friendly activity, none of the LARC partners had a specific strategy for this area of work, except in so far as engaging with families was seen as a means to achieve other audience development priorities (e.g. reaching younger children or hard to reach communities). The lack of a coherent strategy also meant that there could be a lack of connection between outreach work with hard to reach families and in-house provision for families
- In some cases this area of programming had a low profile internally within the organisations, not being seen as part of the mainstream of the organisation's artistic programme.
- Although the annual Big Draw project had been a successful joint exercise between visual arts partners, there was little consistent collaboration on the programming of Family Friendly activities between LARC partners.
- While the brand and the toolkit associated with family friendly were perceived to have value, the family friendly brand was inconsistently applied by cultural organisations.
- There was a need to review the consistency of the welcome given to families

The scoping report recognised that there was considerable willingness amongst LARC partners to continue to work together, and that clear benefits could result. The recommendations in the report, including the establishment of a Task Group of family friendly "champions" to oversee future collaborative working, were accepted by the partners

The Champions Task Group met in February and March 2010 to take stock of current activity and develop an action plan and, at the second meeting, agreed to support a collaborative family friendly marketing campaign. It was agreed that the campaign should be targeted at increasing take up from families who do not currently attend in house provision and that it should include an element of research with non-attending families to find out what the barriers are to attendance. A brief for consultants to run the campaign was subsequently drawn up and agreed but in June the LARC partners learnt that the Find Your Talent programme, which had agreed to contribute nearly 50% of the programme costs, would not be continued for a further year. The activity in the brief therefore had to be scaled down and was finally issued for tender in August.



The proposed campaign was supported by an initial programme of research into family audiences and their activity in Liverpool to set priorities for the project. This involved:

- Analysing Arts Council England Area Profile Reports and ACORN segmentation and identifying two key ACORN groups (Secure Families and Struggling Families) that were over-represented in the Liverpool catchment area.
- A review of the available research into family audiences, including information from audience development agencies and the UK arts councils
- A web survey, conducted amongst the existing family attendees at LARC organisations.

Although results from the web survey were disappointing the other pieces of research provided a useful insight into audience profiles in Liverpool. It was decided to focus the campaign on the Secure Families group. Three key geographic 'clusters' were identified within a 60 minutes drive time of Liverpool City Centre where Secure Families represented over 50% of the population. These three 'cluster' areas totalled around 45,000 adults.

The campaign ran during April 2011, with both print and digital elements:

- Voucher books with offers from each of the LARC organisations were distributed door to door to the postcodes in the 3 'clusters'
- The 'Wondrous Weekends' website that gave information about all of the events and offers and was linked to and from each LARC organisation's own website.
- Family information included on the LARC partners' websites

The campaign as a whole had very limited success in reaching large numbers of new family audiences and visitors across Liverpool. The number of vouchers taken up was very low and Google analytics showed that the digital element of the campaign also had less impact than hoped; the collaborative site received only 326 visits (238 visitors) between the end of April and beginning of June

In evaluating the project LARC partners felt that the timing of the campaign was probably the biggest difficulty, since implementation coincided with the period of bank holidays and the Royal Wedding. It was also felt that the low uptake of the voucher books reflected both this timing issue and possibly the quality of some of the offers. There was also some debate about whether vouchers were the right tool to drive this sort of engagement work at all

Although this project did not achieve its original ambition, the positive legacy of this work was that the partners felt that the project, whilst challenging and 'hard work', has had a positive impact on their future collaborative working style. The site itself was also felt to be very valuable and the LARC partners have agreed to maintain the site as an ongoing future resource.

#### *New Audiences: Open City*

The Liverpool Open City project formed part of the overall audience development plan agreed between LARC and AAM and was officially launched in January 2009. The project grew from the research and scoping studies commissioned by LARC in 2008 and 2009, and the realisation of just how many barriers were faced by non-attendees and the steps required over a period of time to overcome these.

The Liverpool Open City project was closely modelled on the successful audience development project that AAM had already run in Manchester. The project involved 3 participating “partners”: community groups, volunteers and art venues/organisations. The approach was to partner up volunteers and for these volunteers to be then allocated community groups to work with. The volunteers were then responsible for putting together a programme of visits or experiences which will engage the group with the LARC partners’ work. The project therefore brought together two strands of work – a volunteer programme developing volunteers’ skills to work within the local creative industries, and an audience development project which engaged new community groups with the arts and aimed to advocate for positive and inclusive changes within the arts organisations involved.

Volunteers were the key to the success of this project. Volunteers acted as the central contact that brokered the relationship between venues and community groups – a difficult and time consuming role. In order to attract suitable candidates detailed job descriptions and person specifications were created. The role was advertised for 3 weeks across a number of networks within the arts and public sector, including Arts Council England, Arts & Culture Network and Art in Liverpool and also widely advertised through the local press. The adverts resulted in 35 applications for the 20 available posts.

Having recruited, a great deal of effort was spent on pairing volunteers, a process that proved successful in terms of providing mutual support with workload and confidence but one which was also intensive in terms of the resource and support required from the audience development team

All volunteers attended at least one of the two half-day Open City training sessions provide a full briefing on the Open City project and its context within the bigger picture of LARC, Liverpool’s cultural scene and of audience development. Volunteers were also given the opportunity to attend venues’ inductions. The aim was to provide volunteers with a more in-depth knowledge of venues’ facilities, history and range of programme, helping them to feel confident in leading a group on a visit, and allowing them to better cater for the needs of their community group. The audience development team also facilitated volunteers’ networking meetings once a month to provide an opportunity to share their concerns and ideas with each other.

Volunteers were also supported via a website for Open City that provided a message board facility as well as making all relevant documents available in a shared online space and also providing a calendar containing details of important dates such as networking meetings and venue inductions,

The aim of the Open City project was to support and encourage non arts-attenders to feel welcome and excited about engaging with the arts. The focal point of the project was therefore the community groups made up of non-attenders. Community Groups were attracted to the project through 10, 000 leaflets distributed around Liverpool, the Wirral and St. Helens. The project also directly targeted, local authorities, children centres and housing associations to promote Open City. Later, when the volunteers had been recruited, they also helped to distribute leaflets in their local area. In addition to this print distribution, a recruitment advert was circulated via relevant networks.

An application pack for community groups was created, containing details of the project and how groups could get involved and this was sent to everyone who expressed an interest. Overall there was a good level of interest for the project, with about 40 different initial contacts although considerable time was spent by the project team converting this interest into engagement.

To support the engagement of venues in the project, the team met with each venue to discuss their engagement with Open City. The aim of these meetings was to clearly align expectations from the project, identify audiences to target through Open City and agree on what venues could offer to encourage groups to visit. This was followed up by an agreement in writing that set out availability, capacity and offers to inform the volunteers how best to work with the individual venues.

The intention of the project was always to keep the venues' involvement to a minimum, so that this collaborative project could run alongside individual initiatives. Each LARC partner was therefore asked to agree to meet certain expectations – a kind of minimum level of involvement – which would ensure volunteers could progress easily with their work without having to get venues 'on side'. All the LARC partners participated in the Open City project

The volunteer and community group recruitment processes were ongoing throughout the lifetime of the project and were formally brought to an end in December 2010 (three months before the project closed). Over the duration of the Open City project, 39 volunteers were successfully recruited as volunteer Community Coordinators and 15 community groups in Merseyside were actively engaged on the Open City project.

Most of the community groups that successfully engaged in the project were support groups for people who tend to live isolated lives or weren't confident and needed further support in accessing public services. They included groups providing support for older people, those with mental health issues, learning disabled young people and for blind or visually impaired people. The community groups on the Open City project achieved a total of 47 visits to Liverpool's cultural venues.

There is no doubt that, although resource intensive, the Open City project can be considered one of the successes of the Thrive programme. Overall, the volunteers viewed the project as a very positive experience both for them and the community groups they worked with.

Almost all the volunteers described the experience as a boost to their confidence and several volunteers reported a sense of achievement and pride in their work when they could see that the visits were having a positive impact on the community group. Three volunteers described gaining skills that could be applied in other contexts.

Feedback from the community groups participating in the project is also almost universally positive. This feedback was collected through the use of "before" and "after" the visit forms and questions covered areas such as enthusiasm, interest, enjoyment, worries, understanding and expected welcome. Although nearly all these areas scored highly prior to the visit, post-visit analysis is universally more positive. For example, expectations regarding how much respondents felt they would enjoy their visits was high prior to the visit, with only 2% of responses scoring expectations for enjoyment at 4 (on a scale of 1-10) or below. In the post-visit feedback almost half (48%) of responses scored the visit at 10 out of 10 in terms of enjoyment, with a total of 83% scoring 8-10.

The feedback also provided an insight into some of the barriers facing members of these community groups that may have previously prevented engagement with the arts and culture - almost 1 in 5 (18%) of respondents expressed feeling a lack of confidence before the visit. Post visit, this figure drops to just 5%.

Feedback from the community group leaders was also extremely positive. The benefits that group leaders described when asked what they felt their group had gained from taking part in Open City included:

- Enjoyment
- Greater awareness of breadth of the cultural offer in Liverpool
- Dispelling anxieties about attending the arts, experiencing the arts as open and accessible to all
- Ability to access free tickets and transport. This is crucial in allowing self funded groups on very tight budgets to access paid-for ticketed arts

The entire group leaders interviewed stated that they planned to continue arranging visits independently after the Open City project finished. Two group leaders felt that the project was particularly helpful in allowing them to identify an art form (in both cases, theatre) that worked well for their groups, and planned to continue these types of visits in the future.

The Open City project was set up by LARC initially as a pilot project but has also delivered legacy materials for LARC (and other potential partners) to continue this work, namely

- Committed Community Volunteers and a clear process to recruit further volunteers
- Volunteer and Community Group Leader Support Packs
- Staff within arts organisations with a greater understanding and actual experience of welcoming and supporting these visits

The challenge for LARC going forward is to maintain this commitment and retain the support of all partners without significant additional resources and the advantage of a dedicated, independent coordination team

### Golden Opportunity

LARC developed the Golden Opportunity programme during the course of the second year of the Thrive programme in order to explore and demonstrate how arts interventions could make a significant contribution to creating a more people friendly city centre. The programme therefore reflected the broader aims of the consortium – being able to demonstrate how arts and cultural interventions can have a wider economic and social impact in the City. The name of the programme was inspired by the idea that the major cultural venues all sit within a “Golden Mile” in the city centre, which contains most of Liverpool’s major attractions.

The work was intended to build on and extend previous City Centre initiatives by LARC members. The programme was designed to support exploratory work already underway by other partners looking at how to sign-post visitors and city centre users along new pathways around the centre, linking up different areas as well as animating the connecting pathways. Other projects included specific development work led by Liverpool Vision in some of the areas in which LARC members were based: the Ropewalks area, where FACT is based and the Hope Street area, where Unity Theatre is based.

It was also intended to reinforce the point made by LARC in the response to the Liverpool Core Strategy Options consultation – that a strategic approach to art in the public realm was required (such as the use of the Percent for Art model) in order that art and artists’ work was embedded in the development process for better and more sustainable effect.

To support the development of the programme Thrive commissioned a short piece of scoping and consultation research which was shared with partners and used to develop the project brief

The call for proposals was issued in February 2010. The brief required that the proposed interventions would identify a particular 'hotspot' through consultation with audiences/visitors/participants and work with a commissioned artist to explore creative approaches to solving the 'issues' raised. These 'hotspot's might be issues relating to transport, to travel, to safety around a localised area in proximity to each organisation which are causing constant concern and anxiety to users and potential users of each venue. Four projects were eventually accepted for funding – details of each of these are below

#### *ArtStreet (National Museums Liverpool)*

The proposal from National Museums Liverpool (NML) was founded on their longer term ambition to create a strong sense of 'Family Friendly' for the UNESCO World Heritage site which in part includes: the Walker Art Gallery, World Museum, Liverpool Lime Street, St. Georges hall, St. Johns Gardens and Central Library.

The Golden Opportunity intervention was a smaller project that provided a free, accessible programme of participatory public workshops and performances. The hope was that the events would draw new and bigger audiences to William Brown Street and raise the profile of the NML as well as being a chance to connect with the Business Development District, City Centre Management Strategy, Culture Liverpool events programme and TMP 'Shaping the Place' strategy.

A local community arts organisation, Greenhouse Project programmed, developed and managed the event over a period of six weeks. Unity Theatre were engaged to manage a 'To do market' of workshops as part of the offer. The promenade performances were 'Magical Mystery History Tours' and were devised with young people over two weeks of creative writing workshops. Young people and professional actors worked together on the performances, which processed from Williamson Square through St John's Garden to William Brown Street to attract audiences to visit. City Central BID, Neptune Development and Liverpool One all provided support to the project

On each day, between 60 and 100 people took part in each of the six workshops offered and up to 200 people engaged in each of the street performances. The information gathered by NML shows the total number of people engaged as 4630.

Approximately 90 feedback questionnaires were completed, with 96% respondents rating ArtStreet as excellent or good. Although a significant proportion of attendees appeared to be regular NML visitors (48% visited the Walker Art Gallery every couple of months or more, and 58% of respondents visited the World Museum Liverpool every couple of months or more) approximately 20% of visitors visited less than once a year, or were new to NML

#### *Upside Down, Wrong Way Around (Unity Theatre)*

Unity Theatre is based on Hope Place, in the Hope Street Cultural Quarter of Liverpool and the key aim of the proposal was to raise the profile of the Theatre as a key cultural asset within the context of the Hope Street Cultural Quarter by putting the building at the very heart of an interactive event over a three day period by creating a street and building based promenade.

Through the project the Unity intended to demonstrate an inclusive, innovative and imaginative approach to addressing city centre issues by involving local companies, artists and producers to animate the Hope Street quarter

The project was developed by a creative team involving local artists and art organisations including, Hope Street Ltd (another Hope St based organisation who are a production company working with emerging artists). The performance took place over three days in September 2010. The show involved a number of one-to-one, surprise and promenade performances, with the audience allowed to navigate their own route through the building, leaving when they wanted to. The performance used almost all of the spaces in the building as well as the fire escape, the front façade, the street outside and a garden across the road.

In total, 463 people attended the performance, a much larger number than was planned for as the theatre found that 20 people could visit at a time, rather than 8 as initially thought. Despite the success in terms of visitor numbers, the project did not meet all the original aspirations. The logistical challenges of working with a large group of creative partners and developing a project like this were more demanding of time and resources than the team first expected, so contact was not made with businesses in advance to involve them in the performance as planned and very few of the invitations taken out locally were used.

#### *College Lane (the Bluecoat)*

The original proposal submitted by the Bluecoat was a collaborative initiative with Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse. The 'hotspot' that they were seeking to address was the evening use of the urban area between the Playhouse and the Bluecoat, west of Hanover Street. This area is sparsely used in the evening compared to other routes in the more established City Centre cultural spaces like Hope Street area and the Ropewalks area. It was felt that this was due to it not being very attractive and also because it was quiet it was seen as potentially unsafe. The proposed intervention was designed to change the public perception of this route, making it more attractive and thereby increase the profile of the two cultural institutions on the route as welcoming night time venues. The intention was to extend this initial commission to the other Bluecoat entrance in College Lane. This entrance to the venue is through a small alleyway into the garden at the back of the building. This entrance doesn't communicate what the Bluecoat offer is and, with the development of Liverpool One, was at risk of being overshadowed by the shops of that face it. The Bluecoat sought to support this part of the project through some of its own funds and invited artists to respond to both parts of the commission.

Shortly following the Golden Opportunity submission the Everyman and Playhouse learnt that they had been successful in their bid for funds to redevelop the Everyman Theatre and, given limited capacity and resources, were forced to withdraw from project to concentrate on the capital redevelopment. The project was therefore scaled back and re-focused on the proposal to animate and raise the profile of the Bluecoat College Lane entrance.

Nils Norman, an artist with experience of working within regeneration and planning processes, was selected for the commission. The project looked at how to draw people into the Bluecoat by re-establishing its identity, given that it was now situated directly within the main retail district of the city centre. The approach was through consultation with staff and users, to determine a vocabulary associated with the venue, its exhibitions, event and workshops. The words would be hand-painted

in very large-scale lettering on the outside of the building (college street side) and also in clusters inside the building, to echo the hand-painted signs that were applied directly onto buildings in the nineteenth century.

The Bluecoat is a listed, historical building, and the proposal had therefore to be negotiated with the various planning authorities and steered through the planning and conservation process, including the submission of a listed building planning application. Negotiating the conservation conditions proved a lengthy process – conservation approval was given on the condition that the building could be returned to its original state. Specialist paint and painting methods therefore had to be sourced and researched to ensure this condition was met. Planning approval for the project was finally obtained in June 2011 and the works will be completed beyond the lifespan of the Thrive programme

The Bluecoat Golden Opportunity project provided an example of the complexity involved in bringing art into contact with the process through which the built environment in Liverpool is managed. Although the process proved extremely time and resource intensive, the Bluecoat has succeeded in gaining approval for the development of a bold artwork on a listed building and the project has enabled the LARC partners to better understand the boundaries that they can work within in the future.

#### *Ropewalk Square (FACT)*

The Golden Opportunity submission from FACT proposed to develop an artist-led programme for the Ropewalks area that centres on animation, participation and ownership: it therefore concentrated on “reclamation of space”.

The project was focused on the two public squares next to the FACT building and their uses. These areas were poorly lit, with relatively low-levels of cleanliness and hygiene, and were susceptible to inappropriate use. Feedback from FACT’s own customers had noted a rise in poor social behaviour and safety was raised as a major concern by women. These issues were largely the by-product of a successful alcohol-led night time economy.

The original proposal was to engage artists to develop a series of ‘seasonal’ artistic interventions, each creating an authentic and realistic purpose for the space in a particular season around the themes of play, youth, elders and brokers

Two artists were appointed to respond to the brief and to explore the project through their own practice. The first artist, Liverpool born Stanza, worked with FACT between November 2010 and February 2011 to develop a series of small-scale interventions in spaces around FACT and the Ropewalks documented online at the artists website (see: <http://www.stanza.co.uk>).

The development of these ideas and their relation to public experience in the area was discussed at length with staff at FACT and with the wider community. As a result of this, two further ideas have been developed (a playful ‘sculpture’ that would respond to anti-social behaviour and “Regeneration Squares” - a web of meter-squared spaces drawn on streets and pavements which would act as focal points for a variety of activities). These ideas are being pursued by FACT as part of their long-term development work in the locality.

The second artists, Nina Edge, worked with FACT on the project “Under the Influence” from January until the end of March 2011. The project was a chance for local people could have an influence on

their experience in the area and focused on the idea of making change, and creating change through conversation, lobbying and activities. The project centred on a participatory public event within the square outside the FACT to coincide with the launch of the Knowledge Lives Everywhere exhibition. The event encouraged intergenerational relationship building through play-based activities, hopscotch and skipping games were introduced, local bar and shop owners were invited, visitors joined in and the square was given an alternative use.

The event was supported by "The Art of Influence" - a curated programme of talks and activities held in FACT's gallery 2, as part of the Knowledge Lives Everywhere exhibition. 34 different speakers offered visitors their views on how people can make an impact focused on a different ways of making change (e.g. the power of peers, the power of print, the power of play,). The speakers were local and ranged from the Mother to Mother Support Network, workers co-operatives, life-coaches, filmmakers, healers, activists, artists, events managers, ESOL students and FACT staff. There are further plans to develop ways animating the public spaces in the future by bringing in local boxers, table tennis tables and dancers for other events.

The Golden Opportunity programme provided a significant learning opportunity for all those involved. Although a number of challenges meant that the programme and the individual organisation projects did not always deliver what was originally planned within the timeframe, the work served to highlight the complexity of delivering innovative community or public art projects to influence urban development policies and impacts, particularly during a period of review and retrenchment in public resources.

The overriding lesson that the LARC partners took from the Golden Opportunity programme was that strategically planned collaborative working provided an effective way of encouraging city planners and developers to consider and implement innovative solutions to some of the City Centre issues highlighted in the original scoping study,

### **Other Strategic Projects**

The original LARC Business Plan laid about a number of aspirations other areas where the Thrive funding would be used to develop collaborative solutions to some of the issues highlighted by partners – particularly the visitor welcome to the City and the exploration of integrated ticketing operations

Progress on a collaborative programme to address the quality of the visitor welcome to the City has been limited, although some initial discussions were held with the City Council and some of the issues were addressed through the review of volunteering and the follow up work.

LARC partners' aspiration to explore the possibility of an integrated approach to ticket sales was set out in both the original and revised business plans and was intended to build on the collaborative audience development work. Initial scoping work was undertaken with Arts About Manchester (who were developing a similar system for Greater Manchester). The initial scoping work was presented to the Heads of marketing in July 2010 and also formed the basis for a series of conversations with other partners (City Council, The Mersey Partnership, Arena and Conference Centre) about the feasibility of introducing an integrated ticketing service. The overriding conclusion from these discussions, endorsed by the Heads of Marketing, was that the complexity of the issues involved in



developing and implementing such an approach was such that the Thrive resources (both in terms of staff and funding) would be inadequate to develop a solution and the project was not progressed.

An aspiration to develop a “cultural passport” to encourage public transport use in the City was also not progressed for similar reasons – although reduced public transport costs were introduced as part of the Late Night events previously discussed

## **Aim2: Conclusions and Lessons Learnt**

Aim 2 of the Thrive business plan committed partners to a number of ambitious actions in the areas of audience development and better management of the City Centre. The evaluation of the programme undertaken by ERS, alongside the evaluations of specific LARC and Thrive projects, demonstrates that some cases these ambitions have been realised but that there have also been some unrealised aspirations

The combination of activities and actions undertaken by LARC partners, both in advocacy and in terms of the strategic projects, have had an impact on city centre management. The Late Night events have been a significant success, attracting additional funding and new audiences into the City centre at night. The strategic projects implemented through the Golden opportunity programme have served to highlight both the potential and problems associated with using art to address social issues in the City Centre

The evaluation of the Thrive programme undertaken by ERS noted that there continues to be major opportunities in the city to attract visitors and tourists and that it is essential that the cultural offer is developed, modern and well supported, not just in terms of physical infrastructure but also in terms of content and activities. In realising this opportunity one external consultee described LARC as “the fabric of city centre co-ordination”, and in general the Thrive work undertaken by LARC in the City Centre has supported this conclusion - LARC is referred to throughout the City Centre Management strategy and made a significant contribution in the bid for Purple Flag .The evaluation concluded that the working relationship with a number of partners with the focus on City Centre improvements had proved fruitful and beneficial.

The audience development initiatives implemented in Aim 2 have succeeded, through Open City, in attracting new audiences into the LARC venues and the family friendly and DataCulture projects have extended the LARC partners understanding of their audiences and the resources required to monitor and manage a wider, collaborative audience development initiative. A consultation undertaken in 2009 as part of the ERS evaluation showed that engagement with the residents of North Liverpool, family audiences and visitors from elsewhere was seen to be consistently positive with over 90% of stakeholders stating it was ‘medium’ or ‘high’.

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## **Aim 3: Arts-led Regeneration in North Liverpool**

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### **Background**

Aim 3 of the Thrive programme was developed to support the work required to “*research and develop new models of delivery in arts-led regeneration, with a focus on North Liverpool*” (business plan ref). This work would be delivered through a co-ordinated planning approach, aimed at establishing a new model for cultural organisations to work together in contributing to the regeneration of a specific geographic area.

The ambition of Aim 3 was to:

- Maintain regular dialogue with key agencies operating in North Liverpool to ensure a clear understanding of their priorities and how the cultural sector can address these
- Deliver a series of capacity building initiatives with cultural and community practitioners working in the area alongside the creation of a skills development programme for local people, through cultural activity. This work would be supported by a shared evaluation programme, aimed at providing useful evidence on the social impact of cultural engagement, and also to develop evaluation skills within the cultural sector.
- Implement a research programme to draw together key findings from existing social and economic research, and to map current cultural activity in North Liverpool.

In parallel with the Aim 3 work supported through Thrive, LARC also undertook to explore new opportunities for collaborative approaches to culturally led regeneration and learning initiatives, such as the recently launched Find Your Talent scheme to offer every child 5 hours of culture each week

The Thrive Aim 3 work was to be supported by the engagement of a “Learning and Engagement Co-ordinator” who would work across the LARC partnership and with other cultural organisations working in North Liverpool, to deliver the programme objectives.

In developing this approach in North Liverpool, LARC recognised the need to add value to existing activity rather than to jeopardise current provision and relationships.

Further details of the rationale behind the development of Aim 3, along with a copy of the original Action Plan for the Aim, can be found in the Thrive Business case included at Annex X

### **Geographical Focus**

The Thrive work in North Liverpool was to be concentrated upon the four wards covered by the North Liverpool Economic Development Plan being drawn up by Liverpool City Council These were Anfield, County, Everton and Kirkdale. However, administrative boundaries in urban areas rarely reflect the nature of the communities in those areas and as a result many of the Thrive funded initiatives also included wards adjoining these that were focus of the City Council plan.

The purpose of the Thrive projects in North Liverpool was to demonstrate how cultural activity can enhance and increase the impact of traditional physical regeneration and community development,

actions, bringing tangible benefits, including new resources, to the partners, their audiences and local communities.

North Liverpool contains some of the most deprived wards in the UK, including one that has the highest levels of deprivation nationally on all indicators. In addition, cultural organisations have historically not focused strongly on North Liverpool. This lack of engagement was due partly to a disparate community infrastructure and fewer schools in the area being interested in the arts.

At the genesis of the Thrive work it was accepted by many organisations working in the area that there was both a lack of co-ordination and a fragility of existing structures: There was some successful cultural activity, particularly focused around the Rotunda Community College, but a lack of co-ordination and mutual awareness between cultural practitioners. In order to address these issues the Rotunda had set up a North Liverpool Cultural Committee. However, the Committee was not formally linked into the existing regeneration or neighbourhood management structures and also suffered from some of the sectarian problems of the area.

The development and implementation of Aim 3 fully recognised that, where cultural activity was being successfully delivered by community-led organisations, it was essential to ensure that this activity was not swamped or displaced by larger cultural organisations developing new initiatives in the area. The business case for Aim 3 therefore acknowledged the Rotunda as a key focus for cultural development in North Liverpool, not only because it had been set up by local people to support community learning but also because it was already working in partnership with several of the LARC partners, including the Liverpool Biennial and the Everyman & Playhouse theatres.

The North Liverpool Cultural Committee established by the Rotunda encompassed approximately 20 local organisations. LARC also made an early commitment to work closely with the Cultural Committee to deliver the objectives of Aim 3, seeing the Committee as a valuable resource and a credible tool for engaging with the local area.

### **Developing the Business Plan**

The Thrive Business Case was submitted to Arts Council England in March 2008 and the Learning and Engagement Co-ordinator for Aim 3 was appointed in June (with a start date of 1st September).

Almost simultaneously In July 2008) the LARC partnership learned that they had been successful in their bid to be one of the 10 national pathfinders of a 'cultural offer' pilot programme for young people created under the name 'Find Your Talent'. The consortium that had been developed to deliver the Find Your Talent programme covered not just LARC organisations but also three local authorities – Liverpool, Knowsley and St Helens – along with Curious Minds, the local area delivery organisation for the Creative Partnerships programme.

The grant award for this programme - £4.3M – represented a significant resource and (similar to the Thrive award) constituted the largest and most ambitious programme within the national funding scheme. The programme targeted young people who were disengaged from culture and even from Liverpool city centre. It focused on disadvantaged communities facing real and difficult challenges. It offered young people experiences in a wide range of art forms (music, drama, museums, heritage, visual arts, graffiti, digital media, fashion, literature, public art). It also looked at the participation of young people in shaping the cultural offer and how things could change to support better delivery.

The programme was delivered through close links with early years providers, primary schools, youth service provision, and agencies supporting NEET (those not in employment, education or training). It was launched in September 2008 and in the two years of operation offered more than 20,000 young people opportunity to participate in high quality arts and heritage projects as audience members, participants and producers, and involved over 14,000 community members and 100 cultural organisations in over 200 learning settings

The Find Your talent programme was a significant early success for the LARC partnership, but it also presented the Thrive programme with a significant challenge given that the original Aim 3 Business Case and Action Plan had been developed to deliver many of the actions that were now being developed, funded and delivered through this alternative, national scheme. In addition, the scale, scope and ambition of the Find Your Talent programme, along with the need to mobilise the programme within a very short time scale, absorbed a considerable proportion of the available resource within LARC organisations for delivering learning and engagement activity.

### Aim 3 Review

The Learning and Engagement Co-ordinator for Aim 3 commenced work in September 2008. Given the existence of the Find Your Talent programme the first, and most critical, piece of work that was required was to re-visit and, where necessary, to re-focus the purpose of the Aim and the activities to be supported by the Thrive grant

Between September 2008 and February 2009 an extensive 6-month research and consultation process was undertaken. The research was designed to:

- Gain an introductory overview of the overall education and participatory work carried out by LARC organisations and other major cultural organisations In North Liverpool
- Catalogue the programmes of cultural activity that were currently being delivered in the area
- Identify possible gaps in service delivery, in order to develop a more coordinated approach to working with and across the North Liverpool communities.

The consultation process involved both desk research (covering telephone conversations, online information, reports and publications) and interviews. During the 6 month period 47 separate face-to-face interviews were conducted, involving representatives of a range of organisations from across the city split into three groups: LARC partners, cultural organisations and community/other organisations. The interview questions focussed on 4 areas: the work undertaken by the organisation; who the organisation worked with; funding sources and aspirations, and; approach to research and evaluation

The result of the research was the North Liverpool Mapping Report published in May 2009 covering:

- A description of LARC and a summary of existing cultural activity
- An overview of the partnership programmes in North Liverpool
- An analysis of the organisational partnerships (and community engagement) in North Liverpool,
- A section related to key findings from the research,

- A series of recommendations for future action

A copy of the Report is available (at Annex X, via website?). The key findings of the research were that:

- The scope and success of projects based in North Liverpool are directly linked to the strength of relationships with key local organisations and support workers, and to the degree of understanding of the history and context of the area.
- There was a growing critical mass of cultural activity in North Liverpool, but some of this is quite fragile and inadequately resourced. Community organisations would welcome support to develop their expertise and fundraising capacity if they are to increase their cultural programmes.
- North Liverpool Cultural Committee is a valuable network, but could benefit from a closer connection to the neighbourhood management service so that it can link into strategic programmes for the area.
- Relationships between community organisations have improved in recent times, and there is now greater potential for joint initiatives and partnership working.
- Relationships between cultural organisations, including the LARC partners, are developing strongly but there is still room for more co-ordination and improved awareness of what other organisations are doing in the area.
- There is the potential to encourage artists and independent arts groups to move into the area, and to draw those already based in the area more effectively into community networks.
- Most groups undertake evaluation and recognise its value, but there is significant variation in capacity and expertise in this area.

Given these findings, and the ongoing implementation of a wide range of learning and engagement activity through the Find Your Talent programme, the original Action Plan for Aim 3 was substantially revised to focus on community development and engagement and the post created to support delivery was re-designated as a Partnerships and Development Co-ordinator.

### Aim 3 Action Plan

The final Thrive Action Plan for Aim 3 was structured around 4 strategic areas and included 13 separate work strands.

In the strategic area of **Advocacy** the LARC partners undertook to:

- Develop links at all levels with strategic regeneration organisations
- Research new areas or themes for LARC to apply the model developed in North Liverpool

In the area of Arts Development, Structures and Support, Partners undertook to:

- Develop neighbourhood representation models to link into the Local Strategic Partnership agenda.
- Secure a post of Arts Development Manager for City and North Neighbourhood, managed by a cultural organisation but working from Neighbourhood Management office

The strategic approach to Information Sharing was to be delivered by actions designed to:

- Develop the LARC website to include an “associates” section for North Liverpool groups to share information both with each other and with LARC partners
- Further develop the functionality of the LARC website to provide an interactive map of activity that can be updated by LARC members and associates
- Produce documentation and reports highlighting cultural programmes in North Liverpool

The final and most ambitious of the strategic areas was aimed at developing the capacity of cultural organisations and institutions in North Liverpool through a series of initiatives delivering Programme and Skills Development covering:

- The development of partnership projects, e.g. addressing health issues or employability skills
- Support for community organisations to increase their cultural programming expertise and capacity, through running a series of programme development events
- Increased fundraising capacity within community organisations working in North Liverpool, to support an increase in cultural programming
- Development of evaluation capacity within cultural and community organisations working in and around North Liverpool, so they can better demonstrate the social value of their work
- Development of partnership action plans between cultural and community organisations, to cover immediate commitments (e.g. group ticket discounts, training in use of equipment) and longer term aims (e.g. development of new programme with disaffected young people)
- Linking community organisations with volunteer schemes in the universities to support cultural programming

### **Implementing Actions: Advocacy**

More effective advocacy (based on a credible evidence base) for the potential impact and value of arts and cultural activities in economic and social regeneration programmes was perhaps the central driver for the LARC collaboration. Although the city was in the middle of delivering what is now widely acknowledged the most successful European Capital of Culture year ever, and despite the fact that there were clear links being made in the City between the cultural sector and the city's regeneration, the need 'prove' the worth of collaborating both with and within the arts and cultural sector still prevailed in many areas.

The main purpose of the advocacy work under Aim 3 was to ensure that cultural organisations, and their associated programmes of work, were viewed as significant and credible partners in regeneration programmes in North Liverpool. Thrive resources were not therefore utilised to develop or implement specific projects in North Liverpool, but instead the programme was aimed at providing strategic input to other projects in the area (e.g. Everton Library, the Rotunda's joint HLF bid, Out of the Blue, Everton Park developments and the work done to create the North Liverpool SRF) in order to ensure that

- the cultural dimension was fully integrated into these regeneration projects
- projects were developed in a collaborative and co-ordinated manner

To this end LARC became a representative on a number of influencing bodies and committees in the area (e.g. Chamber of Commerce Culture Committee, North Liverpool Culture Committee, North Liverpool SRF Stakeholder's Group, Year of Health & Wellbeing Steering Group) and provided these organisations and other partners with the information that was required to develop a credible case for the inclusion and impact of arts and cultural activities in their regeneration plans. This work, allied with the general advocacy activity delivered through Aim 1, was successful in a number of areas:

- In 2009 Liverpool PCT formally announced that they were planning to run a 'Year of Health and Wellbeing' (YHW) in 2010. Much like the Capital of Culture themed years, the YHW would involve partners from across the city, but would focus on promoting the '5 Ways to Wellbeing' as developed by the New Economics Foundation. LARC, through the Community Development Co-ordinator, was a member of the citywide steering group for the YHW and LARC partners, working through the Heads of Education and Learning, also developed a package of projects that were supported and delivered under the YHW banner.
- In 2010 LARC partners submitted a formal response to the Local Authority Scrutiny Panel looking at North Liverpool Regeneration. The report highlighted the breadth of regeneration-supporting activity LARC partners were currently undertaking in the area, and resulted in the North Liverpool, South Sefton Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) being restructured to reflect the importance of promoting culture (including sport & heritage) as part of the physical regeneration of the area. The SRF notes that arts and cultural intervention is 'so important that it could feature in all three Frameworks...'

### **Implementing Actions: Arts Development, Structures and Support**

#### *Neighbourhood Structures*

Activity in this area was directly informed by the results of the consultation exercise undertaken to re-focus the Aim 3 Action Plan

Firstly, while there were several initiatives being implemented in North Liverpool that involved creative or cultural interventions (largely around anti-social behaviour such as drug-taking, bullying, littering and gang culture), there was uncertainty amongst partners as to whether or not this type of activity was taken seriously during discussions around neighbourhood renewal and regeneration budget allocations.

To counteract this, it was perceived as important by community and cultural organisations that the Local Authority structures provided a mechanism for organisations to put forward creative alternatives to achieving wider neighbourhood management goals. However, the research and further work with local organisations clearly identified that there was no formal way in which cultural programmes could be fed into the neighbourhood planning processes.

This strand of work therefore aimed to directly address this gap, seeking to support community organisations to develop a structure that would allow for arts and cultural activity to be brought forward as effective social and economic regeneration interventions.

Secondly, one of the important issues that came out of the North Liverpool report was that of preserving and strengthening the structures that were already in place in the area. The North

Liverpool Culture Committee already provided a forum to discuss new project ideas and to talk about artists & exhibitions/shows that may be available. However the Committee did have weaknesses: some of the community organisations in the area did not engage with the Committee and the committee did not have direct links to the Neighbourhood Management structures that could help to ensure greater input on cultural issues to neighbourhood management and facilitate access to new strategic programmes and associated funding.

This provided an opportunity to work with both neighbourhood management services and the North Liverpool Culture Committee in a new and exciting way – to create a community-based cultural forum that fed information into the decision-making processes of the Local Authority. In effect, setting the NLCC up as a consultation network that could be used by the local authority to direct cultural development and delivery of regeneration-focussed activity.

Members of the NLCC were also actively engaged in a number of organisational development programmes being run by Aim 3 of Thrive. Utilising the support available through one of these programmes, participants revised the Terms of Reference of their committee and proceeded to look at ways in which they could develop into a more credible 'body-representative', recognised by the Local Authority.

The research and development work took a total of 8 months and included a number of consultation exercises with members and outside partners who could either work with or benefit from the new structure. The result was a Terms of Reference which included a wider membership (with protocols for co-option of new members) and a clear line of reporting that could facilitate the management of collaborative projects. These were all backed up by set of clear goals, with the advocacy being led by a Chair and newly-elected Vice-Chair. Having gone through this process (which ended in March 2011), the NLCC is now in a better position to face the challenges ahead – including responding to agendas such as the Big Society and the potential for new commissioning opportunities with both the Local Authority, Social Housing Providers and the Primary Care Trust.

### Arts Development Worker

In addition to the extra developmental work with the NLCC, the consultation exercises undertaken at various times during the Thrive programme also uncovered a need for an Arts Development Manager. As well as enabling local communities and organisations to participate more effectively in the outreach programmes being run by the various LARC partners, the post would support the NLCC in facilitating grassroots arts programming, based on local agendas and run by the community groups – contributing to a more sustainable model of working in an area.

As part of the support offered to the NLCC, LARC developed a strong case for localised Arts Development officers. Research (locally and nationally) was conducted into the various ways in which a Development Manager may be engaged. Liaison with a range of organisations created a job description (including person specification, budget and activity plan) and then linked desired outcomes to Local Authority and PCT regeneration goals.

Although, in principle all partners were in favour of an Arts Development Manager, it proved extremely difficult to secure financial commitments to proceed with the establishment of the post. However, in Liverpool East, a consortium including the Neighbourhood Manager, a Jobcentre Plus advisor and a Primary Care Trust representative looked at how to maximise local engagement in the 2010 Year of Health and Wellbeing. The groundwork for the Arts Development Manager post in



North Liverpool was then modified to fit their needs, and 6 short-term engagement officers (funded through central government) were recruited to support arts engagement and employment initiatives in the area.

### **Implementing Actions: Information Sharing**

#### Newsletters

North Liverpool is both a diverse and complicated cultural and social environment with a wealth of often uncoordinated regeneration and cultural activity taking place.

The initial research indicated that Information sharing was patchy, although various groups and organisations would put together newsletters and information-shots these would often be time-limited and concentrated on a small readership. LARC partners often attended the North Liverpool Culture Committee as a means to share their individual programmes with community organisations but regular attendance was not always possible due to capacity issues (both across LARC partners and North Liverpool organisations). Information-sharing was also often done between sub clusters of organisations, and there had not been a concerted effort to present a full cultural programme for all partners in the neighbourhood to share and inform.

The first attempts at coordinating information came in the format of a newsletter. This document initially consisted of information on the development programmes that LARC partners were running (such as Thrive, Find Your Talent and Open City). There was also a space available for community organisations and other partners to highlight the various projects that they were running.

During the development of the 'Other North Liverpool News' section there were numerous debates across partner organisations as to what that should and should not include as the potential was there to create something that was either so specific as to need tailoring for every ward, or so large and generic that it would be difficult for people to pick up and read.

#### Website

The newsletter had demonstrated that there was a clear need for a new way of programme-sharing, a way in which people could personalise their searches while also being able to access more general information.

This set in motion a series of consultations aimed at finding the best way to approach this problem. The Programme Sharing Events (outlined in the next section) provided the background information needed to be able to come up with a structure for the online resource. In addition, partners expressed a need for an online forum, whereby they could share relevant information, make connections and even develop new projects together without the burden of having to attend endless meetings. This was particularly necessary for organisations that either had a low capacity or were currently unable to attend certain meetings because the times were inconvenient.

After creating a detailed design brief for the website developers, a development site was put up that enabled a small group of users to test usability of the site. The site provided the ability to search a map of the whole city, interrogating it in a number of ways to find and filter information on organisations and their cultural activities. If you were a registered user, it was then possible to log in, upload and share information across a range of networks.

This launch of this functional tool (with similar features to other social/business networking programs), was supported by a series of training events but it became apparent that different levels of computer literacy (and the time implications inherent in learning to use new systems) made the forum functionality less user-friendly than the interactive map.

### **Implementing Actions: Programme and Skills Development**

The purposes of this area of work were to build the capacity of community organisations to deliver cultural projects themselves and to increase access by local people to the cultural offer of Liverpool. The projects delivered in this area included seminars and capacity building interventions around funding, evaluation and project development and management.

#### *Awareness Raising*

To commence this capacity building work LARC worked with Curious Minds to deliver a series of training events/seminars in the May and June 2009. There were three events covering a series of interconnected themes

- How can a collaborative, creative process support the Arts and Cultural Sector and Creative Agents to diagnose and respond to community needs?
- What can Arts and Cultural organisations and Curious Minds, offer together in response to the community's needs?
- What resources can we commit to respond to the community needs?

Each event lasted a half-day and the sequence of events was held in relatively quick succession. Attendance therefore represented a significant commitment for officers and community members.

One of the main conclusions to come out of the events and the subsequent evaluation report was that the idea of semi-formal "partnership agreements" to underpin collaborative and joint working and information sharing between partners would be a useful tool to not only to inform but also to guarantee commitment from partners.

The Partnership Agreements (later called Partnership Action Plans) were intended to provide an overview of LARC and other partners' opportunities and offers. Content was personalised for each organisation and split into various categories including; LARC city Centre Offer, Community Development & Outreach, Organisational Development, Other Partnerships & Support and Discussion/Exploration Points. The format was diverse enough to include free tickets offers alongside funding opportunities and was the first time that LARC partners had ever tried to coordinate the communication of their offers and intentions of support/partnership.

While Partnership Action Plans represented a new model of working for LARC and community partners, they were also problematic and highlighted the, not insignificant, problems inherent in trying to coordinate activity across so many stakeholders. Although in principle LARC partners understood the benefits of having someone else advocate for your programme, cohering the approach did not come easy. Trying to secure commitment to the structure and format for sharing information presented an array of problems (not all of LARC partners' making) to the point where only one Ward managed to hold regular meetings.

It is fair to say that the issue of over-capacity played a significant role here and this was in large part due to coordinated delivery on the Find Your Talent Programme. The need for information-sharing was still there, however it became apparent that a different approach was needed, one that did not entail endless meetings and recreation of work. Although it also had its problems, the Cultural Partners Sharing Site was seen as an alternative way to upload and share information in an online forum instead.

### Capacity Building

In order to support an increase in cultural programming the Thrive programme funded a number of specific projects in North Liverpool aimed at developing the fundraising and financial management capacity of cultural organisations

In order to support an increase in the volume of local cultural programming, as well as improving both the quality and impact of arts and cultural interventions, the Thrive programme funded a number of specific project in North Liverpool aimed at developing the fundraising, financial management and delivery capacity of cultural organisations

In January 2010 Thrive commissioned The Hamilton Project, a team of creative consultants, to undertake a 12 month capacity building programme for community and arts organisations based in North Liverpool. The aim of the capacity building programme was to support organisations to develop arts and cultural projects in collaboration with each other and also apply for funding to deliver those projects.

The initial objectives of the programme were to:

- Support community programme managers in developing viable project ideas for using culture to address regeneration objectives
- Identify current levels of funding knowledge and activity in participating organisations.
- Develop understand of basic fundraising skills for project managers and long term volunteers
- Identify funding sources relevant to cultural programming that the organisations are not accessing and provide practical support for community project managers and community organisation directors in applying for them

The programme consisted of a capacity needs analysis (leading to an action/development plan) a tailored training programme, mentoring support and the development of a "toolkit" to support future collaborative working and fundraising

Initially, the programme had a strong focus on developing funding application capacity but following the completion of the Capacity Analysis, the one to one sessions with the participating organisations and the production of the associated Development Plans, the team recognised that collaboration and capacity building through partnership and organisational development was an important identified development need, and would be more effective and sustainable in increasing capacity for the participating organisations, rather than short term funding applications.

The mentoring and training programmes were therefore modified to focus on this area of perceived development needs. The final training session workshops covered:

- From Idea to Project – designed to help generate ideas, identify which ideas are viable and what needs to be included in a project proposal. Participants met artists, project managers and other community organisations working in North Liverpool.
- Meet the Funders – designed to enable organisations to properly plan and realistically cost out a proposal, then meet a range of funders to see how their proposal fit with their priorities.
- Stand and Deliver – designed to show organisations how to plan the delivery of a project, outlining all the practical considerations and how to manage the artists delivering on their behalf.
- Big Society: Why Arts and Creativity? – Looked at ways in which the organisations can use evidence to promote their work and successfully fundraise, and how the arts can support working with other sectors such as health, regeneration and transport to benefit the work they do with their communities.
- Get Onboard – Invitation for all participants in the CBP to join North Liverpool Culture Committee. Working through the Memorandum of Understanding, what short term and long term goals should be and further development work identified.

In total, 10 Capacity Analysis Development plans were completed by the arts and community organisations involved in the project. Five training sessions and 2 development sessions were delivered over a 12 month period with 47 individuals from 12 arts and community organisations participating in the sessions. Eleven arts and community organisations took part in the mentoring programme.

The work undertaken by the Hamilton project was supported by a second project commissioned by Thrive that focussed specifically on developing and supporting the capacity of arts and cultural organisations in the sphere of project evaluation. This project was delivered by a team led by François Matarasso and provided evaluation support to a group of arts and community organizations working to support regeneration in North Liverpool, by:

- Producing written evaluation material appropriate to community-based arts activity for use by the participating organisations in Liverpool;
- Providing formal and informal evaluation training for the core group and others;
- Guiding, supporting and reviewing the evaluation of the core projects;
- Analysing and testing evaluation data and writing reports on the results;
- Producing a final evaluation toolkit and project report.

It was intended that at the end of the process there would be a set of documentation demonstrating how the cultural projects had addressed local and national governmental priorities. The project would also help to create a system of evaluation that could eventually be adapted and used by a range of organisations to record and analyse impacts of cultural programming after the completion of the programme.

This programme did have a substantial effect on the evaluation skills and knowledge of those who took part. Several organisations produced written evaluation reports that were a real step forward on what they had done in the past, both in terms of rigour and the knowledge produced. The

programme also helped in creating a network of cultural organisations working in North Liverpool, enabling small and voluntary groups to participate alongside staff from the major institutions.

However, the programme only partly achieved its objectives, although this outcome must be considered alongside the high ambitions set for the work. The major shortfall in project outputs was the failure to produce the body of evidence of impact as originally envisaged by LARC.

Once it became clear that the evaluation work of the participating organisations was not going to achieve the goal set by LARC of producing a new body of evidence, a second piece of work was commissioned to deliver a report on Arts Culture and Wellbeing in North Liverpool, based on interviews with participants in arts projects in the North Liverpool area. This work, delivered by Francois Matarasso, ultimately became the "Telling Stories" report launched by LARC on xxxxx

The Telling Stories project reflected an innovative and complementary approach to looking at the unique role that art and culture can play in building stronger communities with good quality of life. The project recognised that statistical and sociological research tells stories from the perspectives and interpretations of researchers. It does not always convey the meaning or feeling of what it was like to be involved. The project therefore tried to tell another side of the story, simply by listening to what people say about their own experiences in the arts.

Telling Stories drew on conversations with North Liverpool people who had been involved in arts projects over recent years. They included children in primary school and people in their eighth decade, women and men, people of different ethnic, social, educational and religious backgrounds. It also contained an account of the cultural ecology of the area's artistic life, touching on the work of different organisations and how they work together to support people's participation.

Telling Stories is therefore not an evaluation or a report on the work of arts organisations in North Liverpool. It is a story about wellbeing and the role that art can play in sustaining it, a story told through the voices of those who are best able to tell it. Despite the subjective nature of those experiences, they are nonetheless valid accounts of how people feel, and wellbeing is inseparable from feeling.

The main purpose of the Thrive activity in North Liverpool was to demonstrate how cultural activity can enhance and increase the impact of traditional physical regeneration and community development, actions, bringing tangible benefits, including new resources, to the partners, their audiences and local communities. The engagement activity and capacity building support that was provided through Aim 3 of the Thrive programme was designed to promote the idea that, through collaboration, communities can take a more central role in art and culture programming and therefore in regeneration delivery.

A perfect example of this capacity, and also of the potential impact of arts and culture on community regeneration is to be found in the "Out of the Blue" festival - an Arts and Cultural Festival in West Everton, centred on Everton Park, designed, developed and delivered by the local community that ran for the whole summer of 2010. The festival was both a community response to the tragic death of Joseph Lappin in October 2008 and an exploration and exhibition of the unrealised potential of this historic park. The festival was delivered by a range of community organisations working in collaboration, many of whom had participated, or were participating, in the capacity building interventions funded through Thrive. The Thrive partnership and Development Co-ordinator was also very closely involved in both the design and delivery of the event. The strong community

element also drew in funding and support from both LARC organisations and other public sector bodies, to deliver what is now being explored as a sustainable, regular event.

### **Aim3: Conclusions and Lessons Learnt**

On balance, the ambitions of the LARC partners that were set out in Aim 3 of the Thrive programme were partly achieved. The overall evaluation of the programme undertaken by ERS concluded that *"there has been value added by the activity within Aim 3 of the Thrive Programme"* and that there have been some undoubted successes:

- The advocacy work succeeded in embedding arts and culture activity as part of the physical regeneration of North Liverpool
- Through developing the structures for engagement in North Liverpool, community organisations have become more open to partnership working so that they will be able to develop independent collaborations with culture and other sectors and, potentially, enable them to draw in more funding.
- 65% of respondents attending the capacity building seminar series rated improvement in their understanding of what arts/cultural/creative organisations can offer to communities in North Liverpool as a result of the seminar series as '7' or higher (on a scale of 1 to 10).
- 59% of respondents to the workshop on building evaluation capacity rated improvement in their understanding of evaluation as a result of the initial Workshop as '8' or higher, illustrating that the Workshop had, to a large extent, improved the understanding of the purpose and value of evaluation of the majority of respondents.
- Participants in the programme of evaluation support reported to have found it very beneficial, particularly in terms of using it to strengthen future funding applications.

Those interviewed by ERS during the programme evaluation (both LARC consultees and external partners) felt that there has been a lot of positive activity going on in North Liverpool but they considered another LARC project, Find Your Talent, to be the prominent programme of delivery in the area of work.

There is no doubt that Find Your Talent demanded a lot of time and resource input from the LARC organisations, and that this meant that the time of some LARC organisations was taken away from the Thrive Programme. Whilst it is acknowledged that Find Your Talent would never have come to Liverpool were it not for LARC (and the Thrive programme), it is accepted that it would have been beneficial to have had a full-scale review of Thrive Aim 3 and its activities in the context of the Find Your Talent award and the other projects and activities already being delivered by LARC organisations in this area.

All the four strands of the work implemented through Aim 3 succeeded in bringing together groups of like-minded people to build supportive networks and collaborative delivery mechanisms, an outcome that the various evaluation reveal was valued by all those involved. However, it was also difficult to secure sustained attendance at these meetings and workshops. Feedback from the capacity building project indicates that a number of participants were under pressure and were making a big effort to maintain their attendance at workshops. A similar issue was raised in respect of the evaluation support workshops. To some extent, this fact simply reflects the everyday reality

that over-worked and under-resourced arts and community workers deal with all the time. However, it also provides an opportunity to reflect on the expectations that were built into the Aim 3 programme and whether or not there is a need for LARC to rethink the basis of its approach to engagement, learning and evaluation.

The challenge of delivering the scope and complexity of the strategic advocacy and collaborative work in North Liverpool was also complicated by the impact of non-congruent administrative boundaries. The 4 wards that were the focus of much of the LARC/Thrive activity under Aim 3 crossed three different City Council neighbourhood management areas and these three Local Authority boundaries were, in turn, different to the operational areas recognised by other regeneration partners such as the Police, Primary Care Trust and the Fire Service. The practical problems created by geography were not insurmountable, but the problems of working within this geography were sometimes compounded by the fact the goodwill and expressed by leaders to collaborative and co-operative working did not always translate into concrete action (in terms of a tangible collaboration) when work across different, organisations, different departments and different geographies. Given this, it is debatable whether the resource devoted to Aim 3 (and in particular the staffing resource) was sufficient to deliver the ambitions of the programme.

Of particular interest to LARC organisations are the reflections from Francois Matarasso on the successes of the evaluation support project. His final report on this project recognises that there is a strong desire to learn about evaluation among arts practitioners working at a community level. Practitioners understand the need to account for their work, especially when the funding comes from non-arts sources like a housing association or a primary care trust. They see good reporting as a necessary and potentially valuable part of the grant-making process. They also mostly see the creative potential of evaluation, recognising that it is a way of introducing rigour into the reflection on practice that is central to any creative work.

Despite this, the report concludes that:

*"Expectations of what evaluation can do, how and in what ways, are significantly misplaced in the arts sector, where the combination of low public investment and high self-belief creates a culture distorted by the desire to prove worth. ... Where (this) becomes problematic is in leading to confusion about the purpose and methods of evaluation and of the difference between monitoring, evaluation and advocacy. In all this, the learning that might produce better practice, suffers."*

However, Francois also argues that any criticism probably falls properly "to an arts funding system which gives a relatively low priority to community and participatory practice whilst simultaneously expecting high political returns from it and therefore imposing unrealistic and inappropriate management systems in the hope of demonstrating, by association, the wider value of the arts."

A second, and perhaps more important, conclusion is that, in developing the project, the project team overestimated the nature and extent of project planning in participating organisations. The report notes that:

*"In practice, it appears that much participatory art activity happens with rudimentary planning...and that even this is quite easily sidelined as people focus on delivery, often with limited resources and facing the not always compatible expectations of many stakeholders"*

This is a finding that all partners in these projects will take on board in future work. If projects do not have clear, if simple, plans that set out their aims and objectives and how the proposed activities will

enable these to be achieved, and if these plans do not actually guide the delivery of activities, then it is inevitable that evaluation should be something of an afterthought.



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## Conclusion and Reflections

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Although LARC existed and had operated effectively prior to the granting of the Thrive resources, there is no doubt that those resources have provided a significant boost to the collaborative working potential of LARC. The Thrive programme has been subject to a full external evaluation, a copy of which can be downloaded from the Thrive legacy site (see appendix xx). This chapter contains a brief reflection on the impact of the Thrive programme in Liverpool and the challenges that still remain

The impact on collaborative working began even before the Thrive business case had been accepted by Arts Council England since, as the programme evaluation shows, even the process of creating the business case gave LARC a clearer sense of objectives, structure and purpose. Thrive funding allowed the consortium partners to adopt a “layered” approach to collective working with the LARC CEOs operating as an overarching collective to support thematic interventions based on common functions (e.g. marketing, participation) within LARC. This has enabled different ways for organisations to relate to one another; both as strategic enablers and as colleagues with a common purpose.

Within the LARC group, the regularity of the CEO meetings (and the commitment of the CEOs to LARC/Thrive) has been a significant, positive factor in supporting the delivery of programme and project objectives. The largely consistent representation at each fortnightly meeting of CEOs and the annual business planning sessions demonstrated a willingness at a senior organisational level to devote time to the collective agenda but also indicates the value that consortium partners felt that they got out of the regular meetings. From a thematic perspective the programme evaluation also concludes that, for example, Heads of Marketing developed a greater willingness to engage in informal as well as formal dialogue.

Critical to the successful delivery of a collective, collaborative agenda has been the fact that this agenda has not been developed and delivered at the expense of individual organisational objectives, but instead has been designed to add value and extend individual partner organisations strengths. By building on individual organisational strengths the Thrive Programme has enabled the strength, durability and flexibility of relationships to be established, tested and adapted and has therefore supported the development of deeper relationships between organisations.

Working collaboratively has been very effective in advocating on behalf of the sector and engaging with key stakeholders as it has allowed LARC to ‘speak with one voice’. The fact that there has been sustained involvement by a consistent number of people has allowed strong networking, the sharing of information about programming aspirations and best practice which has supported the creation and articulation of not just a joint aspiration for the cultural direction of the city but also a shared vision and action plan – how it is to be delivered and who plays their part. The Thrive programme has therefore supported the development of a strategic profile and voice for culture and the strengthening of the relationships and influence with non-cultural strategic partners (e.g. Liverpool City Council, Primary Care Trust, Universities) despite changing political contexts during the Thrive Programme provides one example of the success of this collaborative approach.

The Thrive programme has also provided the LARC partners with the resources to build a collective research and evidence base to demonstrate their collaborative and individual organisational activity, an evidence base that has given credibility to the arguments about the scope and impact of cultural

activity within the City. The large scale research studies supported through the Thrive programme (e.g. economic and intrinsic impact) would not have been affordable or deliverable by a single LARC organisation and, perhaps more importantly, would not have been credible without the participation and involvement of a wide range of arts and cultural organisations in the City.

The external evaluation of the programme acknowledges that the research work supported through Thrive allowed a strong case being made for the value of the sector and that strategic partners now see the importance of the sector to the continued economic and social growth of the City. As a result cultural leaders (from both within and outside LARC) have become members of influential groups, agencies and forums in areas as diverse as health and wellbeing, education, transport, physical and economic regeneration, promoting investor confidence and the visitor economy. This presence, and a better awareness of the impact of culture, has meant that artistic and cultural activity has become an acknowledged, and sometimes key, driver in the business plans of these strategic partners (e.g. Liverpool Vision Business Plan, the Liverpool Plan and the Liverpool City Region Destination Management Plan)

The work of LARC within the Thrive programme has also supported the development of the wider arts and cultural sector within the City. At the inception of Thrive, the baseline evaluation study identified a feeling that there was a gap in communication across the cultural sector and therefore a missed opportunity to draw together greater collective strength. The Thrive programme has allowed partners to review the mechanisms for cascading information within the sector and as the programme has been delivered, there have been joint programming meetings between LARC and COoL and other cross-group meeting attendance has been promoted as well as broader participation in Thrive projects beyond LARC organisations (e.g. mentoring scheme and the development training for emerging leaders). The Thrive Programme has also boosted cross sector working, with the result that expertise of non-LARC organisations in terms of connecting with communities has been maximised and shared. The work that Thrive has supported to build the capacity of community organisations in North Liverpool to engage with culture is perceived as one of the successes of the programme.

There is no doubt that the two primary aims of the Thrive programme (that senior and emerging leaders in the cultural sector are more highly skilled in terms of understanding the benefits of collaboration both within and outside the cultural sector and that those in the non-cultural sector better appreciate the transformative impacts of exposure to arts and culture) have been largely achieved. This achievement reflects the important function of the Thrive programme in facilitating the definition of focused aims, vision, purpose and direction and providing partners with clarity of process (e.g. frequency, purpose and agenda of meetings) and a rationale for communication between and within organisations. The Thrive programme has also demonstrated that developing successful partnerships takes time, perseverance and hard work; and that successful collaboration requires a clear shared understanding to be developed between diverse organisations, agendas and ways of working.

Partners recognise that the most significant risk facing the future delivery of collaborative actions was a lack of resources. Given public funding constraints, and without the direct Thrive resources, collaborative actions need to be focussed on fewer and deeper activities in order to prevent time and resources being spread too thinly with the risk of ineffectual levels of impact. However, the fact that collaboration through Thrive has also enhanced individual organisational delivery amongst LARC

partners has ensured that the consortium is committed to continue to continue and build on the significant successes of the Thrive programme.

## Annex 1 Thrive Programme Accounts

Table 1: Thrive Programme Expenditure

Aim 1	Financial Year					Grand Total
	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	
<b>Research and Publications</b>						
Research	8,200	14,000	-	11,000	4,000	37,200
Economic Impact	-	-	3,500	16,343	15,697	35,540
Intrinsic Impact	-	-	17,628	16,597	2,500	36,725
Evaluation	-	10,266	1,241	12,950	5,500	29,957
<b>Advocacy and Engagement</b>						
Core Communications	-	-	9,783	4,548	2,000	16,331
Advocacy: Seminars and Conference	-	1,645	-	10,444	28,426	40,515
LARC website	-	3,260	11,614	1,481	520	16,875
PR Support	1,554	17,666	12,601	23,208	6,711	61,739
<b>Workforce and Organisational Development</b>						
Mentoring and Leadership	-	-	8,985	33,900	1,450	44,335
Creative Apprenticeships	-	37,500	24,576	12,507	166	74,749
Shared Services	-	-	8,550	33,037	7,160	48,746
Higher Education	-	-	12,000	3,000	-	15,000
Cultural Diversity	-	-	-	9,607	-	9,607
Seminar Series	-	11,390	9,760	-	-	21,150
<b>Aim 1 Total Expenditure</b>	<b>9,754</b>	<b>95,727</b>	<b>120,237</b>	<b>188,620</b>	<b>74,130</b>	<b>488,469</b>
<b>Aim 2</b>						
Golden Opportunity	-	-	2,500	47,250	1,875	51,625
Long/Late Night	-	10,269	8,195	57,354	12,163	87,981
Family Friendly Campaign	-	-	-	8,650	18,334	26,984
Audiences Development	-	-	35,812	22,000	6,371	64,183
City of Radicals	-	-	-	-	5,000	5,000
<b>Aim 2 Total Expenditure</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>10,269</b>	<b>46,506</b>	<b>135,254</b>	<b>43,743</b>	<b>235,773</b>
<b>Aim 3</b>						
North Liverpool	-	-	3,825	31,774	-	35,599
Capacity Building	-	-	16,400	10,640	-	27,040
Evaluation Skills Development	-	-	25,592	8,723	8,250	42,565
<b>Aim 3 Total Expenditure</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>45,817</b>	<b>51,137</b>	<b>8,250</b>	<b>105,204</b>
<b>Partnership Support</b>						
Staffing	26,989	62,733	109,282	113,346	28,139	340,489
Staff development	500	-	2,790	1,600	-	4,890
Recruitment	1,787	2,749	-	-	-	4,536
Staff expenses	1,949	3,118	2,944	2,366	1,615	11,993
Programme Support	13,500	9,409	3,250	8,500	-	34,659
Chief Executives Support	-	-	4,782	250	1,764	6,796
Consultancy	-	1,200	1,564	1,500	-	4,264
Office and Overheads	3,974	23,718	28,135	16,094	2,250	74,171
VAT	460	-	17,500	29,202	6,808	53,969
<b>Support Total Expenditure</b>	<b>49,159</b>	<b>102,927</b>	<b>170,247</b>	<b>172,858</b>	<b>40,576</b>	<b>535,766</b>
<b>Programme Totals</b>	<b>58,913</b>	<b>208,923</b>	<b>382,807</b>	<b>547,869</b>	<b>166,700</b>	<b>1,365,212</b>

Table 2: Thrive Programme Income

	Year 07-08	Year 08-09	Year 09-10	Year 10-11	Year 11-12	Totals
<b>Expenditure</b>	58,913	208,923	382,807	547,869	166,700	1,365,212
<b>Income</b>						
Carried Forward	-	209,087	240,164	331,144	224,262	
Thrive Grant	268,000	235,000	400,000	410,000	27,000	1,340,000
Heritage Lottery Fund	-	5,000	-	-	-	5,000
Cultural Vision (LCC)	-	-	7,000	-	-	7,000
Light Night	-	-	18,000	21,500	-	39,500
Scoping study (NWDA)	-	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Conference Funds (ACE)	-	-	-	-	20,000	20,000
Grant Repayment	-	-	38,637	3,436	-	42,073
Misc	-	-	150	6,051	-	6,201
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>268,000</b>	<b>449,087</b>	<b>713,951</b>	<b>772,131</b>	<b>271,262</b>	<b>1,469,774</b>

The role of Accountable Body for the financial management of the Thrive programme was undertaken by Liverpool Philharmonic. Tables 1 and 2 show Thrive related expenditure and income as recoded in the Philharmonic accounts. A balance of £104,000 remains in these accounts to fund activities identified in the post-Thrive LARC business plan.

In addition to the income shown in these accounts the Thrive investment attracted £640,000 of additional resource from other sources to support a range of LARC projects:

- £187,000 from Paul Hamlyn/Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Liverpool City Council Working Neighbourhood Fund for Creative Apprenticeships Phase 1 (managed by Tate Liverpool on behalf of LARC)
- £85,000 from LSC via North West Vision for Creative Apprenticeships Phase 2 Managed by Tate Liverpool on behalf of LARC);
- £84,000 from Arts Council England North West Grants for the Arts for the audience development work (managed by Unity Theatre)
- £224,000 from HEFCE's JISC fund for the CPD Portal led by City of Learning and Culture Campus (managed by University of Liverpool)
- Primary Care Trust - £60,000 for a series of "model projects" led by LARC partners (managed by individual LARC partners).

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## Annex 2: Report Web Links

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### Thrive Business Case (Executive Summary)

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/LARC-Executive-Summary.pdf>

### Thrive Business Case (Full Report)

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/LARC-Business-Case.pdf>

### Thrive Business Case: Review

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Thrive-Business-Case-Review.pdf>

### LARC Data Report 2008

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Data-Report-September-2008.pdf>

### LARC Data Report 2009

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Data-Report-September-2009.pdf>

### LARC Data Report 2010

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Data-Report-December-2010.pdf>

### LARC CPD Needs Analysis

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/CPD-Needs-Analysis.pdf>

### Economic Impact – Scoping Study (Executive Summary)

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/LARC-Economic-Impact-Scoping-Executive-Summary.pdf>

### Economic Impact – Scoping Study (Full Report)

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/LARC-Economic-Impact-Scoping-Final-Report.pdf>

### Economic Impact Study: Final Report

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/LARC-Economic-Impact-Final-Report.pdf>

### Open City Final Report:

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Open-City-Final-Report-May-2011.pdf>

### Audience Benchmark Report:

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Merseyside-Benchmark-Report.pdf>

### Long Night Report 2008

<http://www.larc.uk.com/uploads/news-downloads/LongNight08Report497KB.pdf>

### North Liverpool Evaluation Support Programme

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/LARC-Evaluation-Support-Final-Report.pdf>

### North Liverpool Capacity Building Final Report

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/LARC-Capacity-Building-Final-Report.pdf>

### Telling Stories: Final Report

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/LARCTellingstorieswebjob.pdf>

### Let's Work Together: Conference Feedback

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Conference-Feedback.pdf>

Let's Work Together: Conference Note

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Final-Conference-Note.pdf>

Culture and Civic Responsibility: LARC Publication

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/LARCCultureandCivicResponsibilityweb1.pdf>

Thrive Final Evaluation Report

<http://www.larc.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Final-Thrive-Evaluation-Report.pdf>

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## **Annex 3: Thrive Succession Plan**

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### **LARC Transition Business Plan: June 2011- March 2012**

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#### **Background**

The 9 month period between June 2011 and March 2012 represents a transition period for LARC. The Thrive programme that has provided the resources to support collaborative working and deliver specific collaborative projects has come to an end and LARC needs to find new ways of working that are sustainable in the long term

LARC will use the next 9 months to take stock of what has (and hasn't) worked over the last 3 years and define the key priority areas for future collaborative action. It is accepted that the consortium will have fewer resources in the future and will therefore need to do less and be more focussed on those areas that are both transformational and achievable. LARC is committed to continue collaborative working and will use this transition period to consider the future business model, develop the long-term succession plan and identify potential resources to support collaborative organisational development.

This document therefore sets out the development actions that LARC will implement over the next 9 months as a first step towards realising the long term ambitions set out in "Our Visions and Values 2011-2014" published in 2010. These short term actions have been designed to ensure that LARC remains sustainable in the long term

#### **Introduction**

LARC is a consortium and is the mechanism through which seven of the major cultural organisations in Liverpool operate collaboratively to help ensure that the cultural sector contributes more effectively to the social and economic renewal of the city region. LARC includes the Bluecoat, FACT, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse theatres, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tate Liverpool and the Unity Theatre.

LARC was established in 2007 to foster a new approach to arts in the city. Collectively it aims to harness the power of the arts and culture to inspire, engage and involve the people of the Liverpool City Region, in order to create a confident, prosperous and healthy city that is open to ideas, globally connected and constantly learning.

#### **LARC Purpose and Values**

LARC exists to provide added value through collaborative working and to provide a meeting point for support and learning thereby strengthening individual organisations, both within and outside the consortium. Through collaboration based on mutual respect, trust and integrity LARC demonstrates civic leadership and aims to support the sector to be more successful in a rapidly changing environment.

LARC exists for the art and the audiences and the collaborative vision for the future is for a city in which you see truly great art in a diverse range of professionally-run institutions, that manage and deliver collections and programmes that compare and compete on the national and international



stage. But LARC also exists because arts, culture and heritage organisations have a significant role to play in tackling the economic and social challenges that exist in many of our large towns and cities – arts and culture can shape the identity of cities, provide direct and indirect employment and generate income for communities. In difficult times and in an increasingly competitive world the places that will prosper and become desired locations in which to work, live, play, study and invest are those that can demonstrate a unique combination of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ factors: combining a robust economic argument with a sense of place, quality of life, creative and cultural opportunities.

### **Long Term Ambitions**

The long term ambition of the consortium is to create a sustainable method of working together, and in partnership with others, to:

- Develop new ways of realising the programming, funding and delivery of an arts and cultural offer of national and international quality and reach.
- Enable and support the diverse range of arts and cultural organisations and activities that exist in the City-region as well as programming the very best in international culture
- Implement new models of partnership engagement to ensure both the sustainability of the sector and to grow and develop future practitioners and audiences
- Ensure that all audiences are engaged with and benefit from expertise and excellence by exploring a collaborative and coherent learning and participation offer.
- Assess how the sector currently does business and to explore how things could be done differently and more efficiently in order to prioritise investment and put more resources into the arts and cultural programmes

LARC will work and operate collaboratively outside the consortium membership when such collaboration reflects and advances the shared aims and vision and will contribute to the social and economic renewal of the city region. The collaborative solutions and operations developed will be designed to enhance and expand the diversity or uniqueness of partners’ individual offers

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### **Work Programme: July 2011-April 2012**

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#### **Collaborative Programming**

LARC has already supported the successful development and delivery of joint and collaborative programming, including the Long Night, the 2010 Black Atlantic season and in 2011, the Year of Radicals. All LARC partners recognise that the strength and impact of collaborative programmes have to be built on the quality and reputation of the individual organisations that form part of LARC – the strength of the partnership will continue to depend on the ability of the individual LARC organisations to deliver an arts and cultural offer of national and international quality and reach.

LARC is committed to developing the mechanisms through which the major arts organisations in the City can programme together and with other partners in a truly integrated and collegiate way – thus making the most of their unique individual strengths, and creating greater added value through collaboration.

LARC also recognises that alongside a strong infrastructure of internationally recognised cultural organisations there exists a strong and diverse ecology of small and medium cultural organisations and individual artists who have been encouraged and nurtured, creating new work in Liverpool and

around the country. New collaborative programming proposals will need to recognise the breadth and depth of this ecology

To deliver the long term artistic ambition LARC will, over the next 9 months:

- review the existing opportunities for collaborative programming and the networks that can support this to identify the potential for new models of collaborative working, including new consortium membership that might be required for future delivery
- continue collaborative work and project delivery between LARC and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) covering strategic alignment, development of an agreed evaluation framework and programming of the proposed Artists in Residency programme
- continue collaborative work and project delivery between LARC and the City Council in respect of programming and in development and implementation of transformational actions such as City of Music
- Continue to support and programme collaboratively to deliver the revised Liverpool "Late Night"

### **Civic Leadership**

The LARC partners accept their civic leadership responsibilities. Through the collaborative work resourced from the Thrive programme LARC has provided leadership that is outside of political and governmental structures and has demonstrated that a thriving cultural life is vital to the continuing social and economic health of a city-region.

LARC believes that the collaborative work undertaken to date clearly demonstrates that if the cultural sector is strong, well networked and confident in expressing its public value, it is in a better position to hold its own in a changing economic and political climate. LARC therefore wishes to continue shape and lead in the development of policy, both locally and nationally, rather than just responding to it

To develop the role of the cultural sector in civic leadership and advocacy LARC will support and deliver the following short term actions:

- Implementation of a programme of research to understand what works and what doesn't and establish the evidence base for the value of culture. In addition to focusing on social and economic value, the research programme will also consider how new approaches to assessing the added value of collaboration and the impacts of artistic quality can be developed.
- Development and implementation of an Engagement Plan for LARC covering both national and local organisations and institutions
- Continued advocacy to demonstrate the public value and impact of the cultural sector in the City Region and to improve understanding of the role of culture within regeneration,

### **Research Programme**

LARC partners have a long history of engaging in collaborative and innovative research and evaluation work pioneered during the successful European Capital of Culture year with "Impacts 08". This foundation has been built on during the Thrive programme with LARC undertaking:

- A robust economic impact study analysing the overall impact of the arts and cultural activity in the City Region
- An innovative intrinsic impacts study, among the first of its kind to be conducted in the UK. The study builds on groundbreaking work from the USA and explores the personal, emotional, social and intellectual impact that engaging with a live performance or work of art might have
- A qualitative study on culture and wellbeing in North Liverpool, published as "Telling Stories" in October 2010
- A wide ranging investigation into audience development focussing on non-traditional attendees, family friendly approaches and overall audience mapping to address the strategic gap in audience development support in Merseyside
- An overall economic and social impact evaluation of the Thrive Programme and the various projects that have been funded via Thrive

This work has been supported through partnerships with Higher Education Institutions (Impacts 08, Culture Campus and the recently established Institute for Cultural Capital at the University of Liverpool) and with other partners, most notably the City Council and the PCT.

LARC agrees with John Knell and Matthew Taylor that the arts sector needs to "*work much harder at disentangling the various arguments made for public investment in the arts*". As arts practitioners, LARC partners understand the need to demonstrate the differences that they make, not just in economic terms but also to the well being and health of citizens. LARC also realises that delivering an excellent product is dependent on a full understanding of audiences and what works and why. The consortium is therefore keen to explore how it can work together to further enhance the existing evidence base for policy making and demonstrating public value.

To develop the research programme LARC will support and deliver the following short term actions:

- Disseminate the methodological approach that underpins the LARC Economic Impact study in order to promote the possibility of establishing a common approach to measuring impact and added value in the arts sector
- Management and support of the research project that uses Liverpool as a pilot area for one of the "practical studies" proposed in recommendation 2 of the Measuring the Value of Culture report by Dr Dave O'Brien.
- Explore how to better understand "excellence" in the arts and the nature of the relationship between perceived excellence and measures of value
- Explore how the added value of this collaborative approach might be measured in areas where cost reduction is not the primary business driver, for example how the added value of joint programming across a varied arts ecology might be measured.

### **Audience Development**

Through the Thrive resources LARC has been able to provide support for collaborative audience development and marketing activities and LARC partners have worked collaboratively to, in particular, develop a shared approach to family friendly programming and marketing.

Developing new audiences and increasing the quality of participation for existing audiences remains a major priority for LARC. LARC will work to secure the longer term engagement of people who attend the arts for the first time, encouraging them to return for other events. LARC will also continue to work on improving ease of access for current and potential audiences and to encourage audiences to try a wider range of venues and art forms

This work will build on existing audience information and established relationship with audience development agencies. It will be supported by the innovative work that Thrive has supported on audience development and attracting non-traditional audiences to venues through the Open City project and by the detailed insights that have been gained through the intrinsic impacts work. This work has already investigated differences between producer and consumer attitudes towards, and expectations of, a varied range of art forms. LARC will use the next 9 methods to develop mechanisms to take this investigation to the next stage and attempt to answer the question “why?”

To further develop the audience development programme LARC will support and deliver the following short term actions:

- Review existing audience and marketing data and knowledge (including intrinsic impacts) to identify strengths and weaknesses and gaps in coverage
- Consider the potential and, if appropriate, develop a proposal for future, long-term collaborative audience development work
- Work collaboratively to improve the cultural input in the “City welcome”, in particular aimed at attracting and retaining non-traditional student populations in the City

### **New Media**

One of the major changes that will impact on the arts over the next few years is change in people’s behaviour and expectations about how they access arts experiences and information. Social media look set to play a major role in the future growth, or even survival, of arts organisations and a recent report from the National Endowment for the Arts shows that Americans who participate through electronic media are three times more likely to go to a gallery, theatre or concert than those who never go online or use an electronic device.

LARC recognises that this change in audience behaviour and expectations represents both a major challenge and a great opportunity. The LARC partners also recognise that they are not yet taking full advantage of new technology and the potential that it brings to both experiment artistically and build collaborative relationships

To further develop and exploit this area LARC will support and deliver the following short term actions to investigate the potential for collaboration on new media and the development of a collaborative New Media strategy:

- Investigate and arrange a digital “round table” with LARC and other partners to agree a number of potential “first stage” digital actions
- Review the means by which arts and cultural organisations deliver on-line information about their collaborative offer and, if appropriate, improve both the scope and quality of the service

- Work collaboratively to define areas of communality and the potential for building consistent systems within an agreed digital investment strategy and approach
- Investigation, development and implementation of revised business processes digital/IT support systems to support possible revised membership and new ways of collaborative working across LARC

### **Operations and Project Management**

In addition to the five areas of external focus outlined above, LARC will continue to provide on-going project management for a small number of specific projects including:

- Investigation, development and implementation of a new LARC business model covering new ways of collaborative working, potential new membership and an outline plan of the development steps that individual organisations need to take to ensure sustainability of the collaborative approach:
- Development of a briefing service to improve and develop information exchange for LARC members
- support for the Heads of Marketing "City Welcome" work to investigate building joint procurement into proposed project
- support the Heads of Participation to further develop the collaborative research proposal
- support for a further phase of the Creative Apprentices programme in partnership with the City Council
- Interim logistical support (agendas, papers, minutes, etc.)
- Development and submission of a Grants for the Arts application to support organisational development and future collaborative working

### **Outcomes**

The short term interventions proposed in this Plan will deliver:

- An artistic product of national and international quality and reach that has added value through collaborative working
- A new organisational engagement and development model with an effective and efficient future infrastructure for sustaining and supporting continued collaborative working that is sustainable in the long term
- A sector and a City strongly positioned for next spending round (both local and national) with clarity about the amount, focus and stability of funding required to deliver against a variety of agendas
- A greater understanding both locally and nationally of the drivers of change in the arts and culture sector - what happens and why
- A clear plan for widening audience participation and deepening engagement
- An increased positive national perception of Liverpool as a place to visit, work, live, invest and study

