

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

Engagement with Leicester's arts, culture and heritage offer

A Review Report of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission

May 2018

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Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission

Commission Members 2017/18:

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Councillor Deepak Bajaj (Vice-chair)
Councillor Mohammed Dawood
Councillor Bill Shelton
Councillor Elaine Halford
Councillor Aminur Thalukdar
Councillor Paul Newcombe

Chair's Foreword

The topic that this commission has undertaken follows on from the work produced by the previous two task groups, led so ably by Cllr Dr Sue Barton and Cllr Deepak Bajaj. The extensive health benefits the Arts provide made this review of major significance, as we strive to ensure that the greatest number of residents would be able to choose to access the Arts, and identify if there was room to better enable this choice.

This topic undoubtedly has a great scope, and information could continuously be amassed well beyond this project's decided completion time. This review must be read as a snapshot of our current situation of engagement with Leicester's Arts offer; with the recognition this image is continually changing, with the introduction of more inclusive Arts programmes and the dedication of such determined service providers.

In recognition of the work done within this sector, as well as the many who contributed to this review; the Members of this task group and to Members more broadly who volunteered information and pursued enquiry lines, as well as the service leaders, the officers, and the representatives of external agencies, I would like to express how grateful I am of the time that they all gave so generously, to the review. The huge amount of talent, dedication and goodwill demonstrated throughout this review project has provided me confidence in the sector, and was paramount to capturing specifically how Leicester does and does not engage with the Arts.

Broadly speaking, the review found some groups did not feel what was on offer was relevant to them, in addition to also identifying significant barriers to access, including poverty and the lack of affordable arts programmes, and a distrust of 'authority'. These are all factors that must be considered in future Arts projects, from conception, through modelling, to completion and delivery.

Engagement work must not be a mere 'box-ticking' exercise, but have real meaning and be sustainable. There is no exact formula to this, but this review encapsulates the major issues facing Leicester at present, alongside additional examples, both in our authority and others, of how projects have been designed to counteract the explicit barriers facing our disengaged groups.

There is a need in society to maintain this sort of opportunity for people and due to financial circumstances many find themselves in, they are unable to access much of the offer, in spite of efforts made by various involved agencies.

At the time of writing, De Montfort University is commencing their long-term study into the Arts and youth engagement. It is hoped that long-term, this project will contribute to our bank of information on engagement and appropriately benefit Leicester City Council's Arts provision. I am encouraged that multiple agencies have come to realise the value of this work and are taking the issues of disengagement seriously, and I hope this review, brought forward by the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission, demonstrates the real need not just to ensure a vibrant offer, but one that our constituents can truly relate to and access.

I would like to acknowledge the continued investment and support that this council has made to heritage and cultural events and venues, at a time when other local authorities have chosen to make cuts. Recognition of the value of these services is exceptional and as such this review was intended to ensure the benefits of this sector reach as many people as possible.

Councillor Malcolm Unsworth

Chair, Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission 2017/18

1 Executive Summary

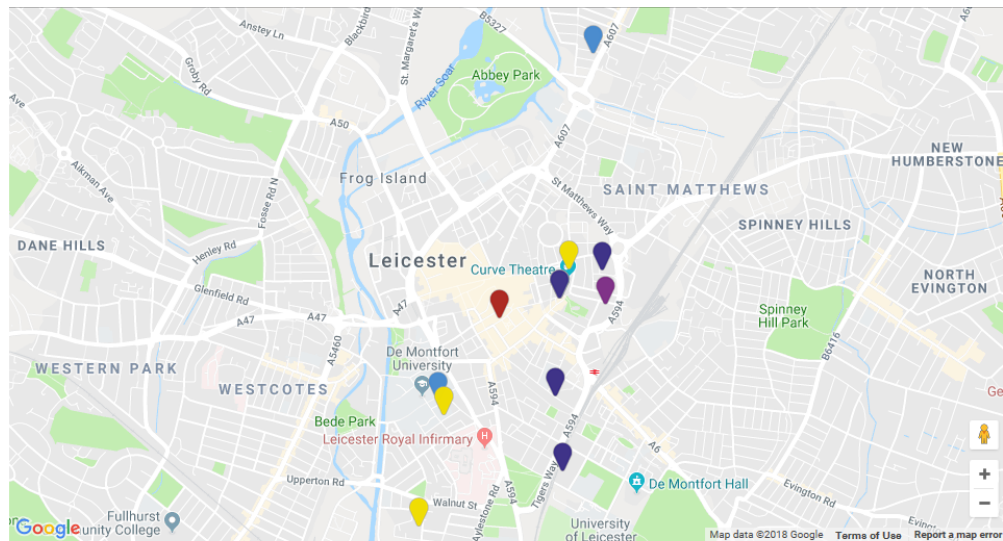
1.1. Background to the Review and Key Findings

- 1.1.1. The country is in a time of considerable austerity, in which the government funding to local authorities has reduced year by year. Leicester City Council's funding has reduced from £289m in 2010/11, to £174m in 2017/18; with a further projection of just £166m in 2019/20¹, requiring the council to make savings across all of its service provision.
- 1.1.2. The impact of these cuts across the council's services may have affected the morale of many of the residents in the city.
- 1.1.3. As a consequence of which, the Arts sector has also been obliged to be 'smarter' and more innovative in how it uses its resources. The Commission acknowledges that considerable work has been undertaken to minimise the potential losses incurred through these funding reductions.
- 1.1.4. "Flexibility in what is delivered demonstrates the agility of Arts organisations to grow and ensure sustainability in a climate of reduced funding"².
- 1.1.5. This review follows on from the Commission's previous review of Arts, Health, and Wellbeing, building upon the gathered knowledge of the ways in which Arts engagement can benefit individuals and communities. In line with the recommendations of that review, it is important to ensure that the city's arts, culture and heritage offer is available to as many people as possible, in order to facilitate positive health and wellbeing outcomes for the many. For the purpose of this review the focus will be on museums and arts organisations, and not on Festivals and Events.
- 1.1.6. The Commission acknowledges Leicester must offer varied content that is consistent in quality and quantity, in the city centre and more broadly across Leicester, for Leicester's Arts offer to be both accessible and relevant to residents, across the city.
- 1.1.7. Local, Council-led Community Centres that ensure Leicester's Arts offer stretches beyond the city centre are increasingly having to be outsourced to private organisations or closed entirely. The former raises concerns over the transition from a council's governance with core goals of promoting equality and diversity, to an outside group who must ensure a sustainable future over fair engagement.
- 1.1.8. Meanwhile, the city's National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), which are companies that receive a share of the £409 million funds from Arts Council England (ACE) between 2018-22, has doubled in the past year to 16

¹ [Leicester City Council \(2017\) General Fund Revenue Budget Report 2017/18 to 2019/20](#)

² [University of Leicester \(2014\) Disabled Children and Young People: Engagement in Arts and Culture in the East Midlands in an environment of restrained resources p.36](#)

organisations, but Leicester's NPOs still remain exclusively within the city centre (see map below).



Map of Leicester's NPOs, 2018³

- 1.1.9. As part of being granted NPO status, organisations must demonstrate that their work reflects the diversity of contemporary England and formulate an equality action plan⁴.
- 1.1.10. This doesn't explicitly require NPOs to conduct community outreach work. However, considering the large pockets of deprivation in Leicester, and the associated difficulties in accessing the city centre, it is logical that inclusive strategies must operate beyond the city centre, to allow for equal opportunities in accessing these ACE organisations.
- 1.1.11. The reduction in the number of community centres and set requirements put upon NPOs has created a situation in which Leicester's major Arts organisations must ensure they 'reach out' and engage the wider community, through partnerships with the remaining community centres.
- 1.1.12. The Arts Service is becoming increasingly invaluable. As other services are put under pressure from increasing numbers of users and cuts, it was found the Arts Service has had to take on a more holistic role, and provide additional support, such as community integration, advice on housing and tax governance, and even acting as a substitute-counselling service⁵.
- 1.1.13. This review aims to identify how, in spite of the increasing financial pressure on services, Leicester's Arts offer is managing to create new links and sustain existing engagement with various communities, in addition to which we hope to identify how this will be continued in the future, with recommendations reflecting how this could be optimised.

³ [Arts Council England](#)

⁴ [Arts Council England \(2017\) NPO 2018-22 Equality Analysis](#)

⁵ Task Group Meeting 3.

- 1.1.14. It is essential that the Council identifies where there are gaps in the City's Arts offer, and how suitable the offer and the delivery of it is currently, to ensure as many residents as possible are comfortable engaging with it.
- 1.1.15. With these factors identified, the review aimed to:
- Explore how and where arts, culture and heritage is offered to the people of Leicester;
 - Identify who is and who is not engaging with Leicester's arts, culture and heritage offerings; and if they are not, why not;
 - Identify barriers to engagement;
 - Look at how lack of engagement may be addressed, in particular, by identifying examples of good practice in other authorities and agencies;
 - Provide feedback to appropriate services on good practice in relation to community engagement.⁶
- 1.1.16. Sally Norman, Co-Director of Soft Touch Arts, gave evidence to the task group and said of her charity arts organisation:
- "We use the Arts as a tool for people's lives: the vast majority of the Arts we do are all about using the Arts as a life tool"⁷
- 1.1.17. From De Montfort University (DMU), Mark Charlton reported following their literature review for their upcoming study into the arts and youth engagement:
- "If the arts are not locally accessible, i.e. in young people's wards, they experience a *psychological barrier*."⁸
- 1.1.18. In meeting with Joanne Randall, the new manager of New Parks Hub, a practical understanding of how progress can be made with often less than initially co-operative groups was gathered.⁹
- 1.1.19. The situation ward-to-ward is unique, and successful community engagement can only be achieved through a strategy tailored to each ward.
- 1.1.20. Evidence indicated that wards such as Stoneygate are suffering from having too few useful venues accessible in their locality and therefore have very few community groups, whereas in Evington, there are multiple venues, hosting a varied and plentiful offer of community groups, with some in-ward venues such as the Neighbourhood Centre still underused.¹⁰

⁶ [Leicester City Council HCLS Scrutiny Commission \(2017\) Scoping document](#)

⁷ Task Group Meeting 3.

⁸ Task Group Meeting 4.

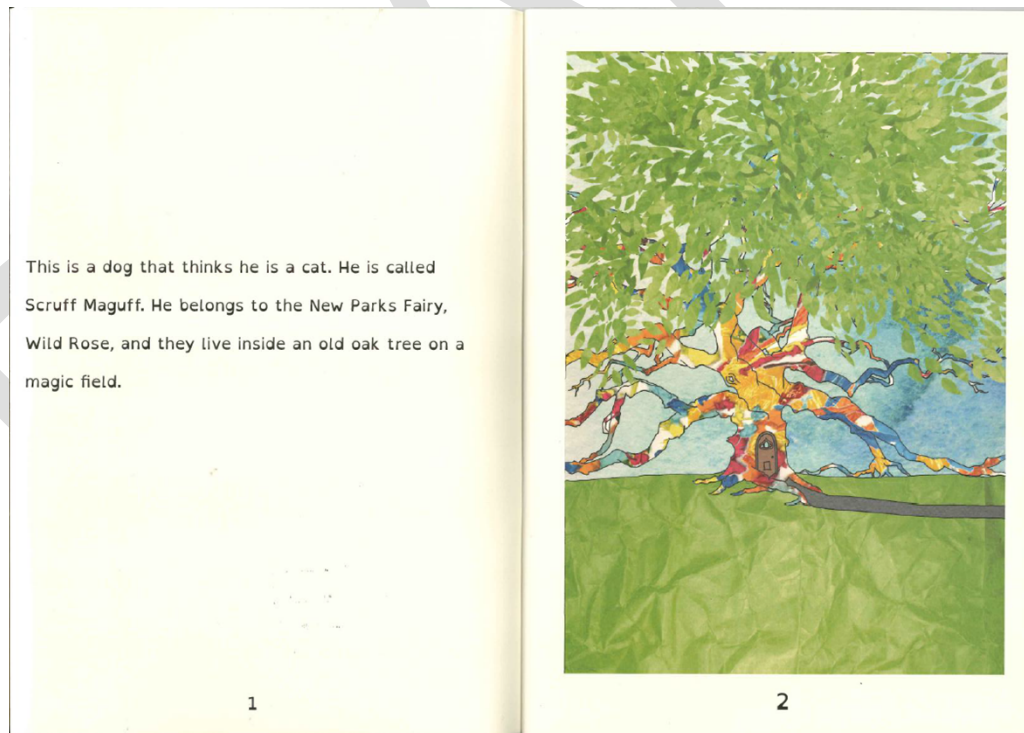
⁹ New Parks Hub Site visit.

¹⁰ Task Group Meeting 3.



Joanne Randall, Manager of New Parks Hub, in front of the Hub's full timetable

- 1.1.21. New Parks has seen a revitalisation under new Management of the New Parks Community Hub and successful partnerships between local community groups with the council's Leicester Arts and Museums Service (LAAM) and Soft Touch Arts.



Excerpt from a book produced collaboratively by the Creative New Parks Group, Soft Touch, writer Alison Dunne, ACE, and Leicester City Council.

- 1.1.22. Fosse has had to downsize in recent years, with Fosse Neighbourhood Centre decreasing the volume of classes significantly. Similarly in Saffron, community centres have been reduced in number, with classes being

directed to the library, which is now set up in the neighbourhood centre/swimming pool area. Westcotes has also had to offer a reduced programme.

ADDRESS LIST			17
NAME OF VENUE	ADDRESS OF VENUE	TEL. NO	
Acorn Montisori School (sessional care)	147 Narborough Rd.	553321	
Association of Ukrainians in G.B. LTD [Leic Branch]	Fosse Rd Central/ Corner Hinckley Rd Junction.	558633	
Bhagini Centre	12 Upperton Rd /Moving to 177/179 Narborough Rd Dec 94.	555767	
Cambridge Day Nursery	131 Cambridge St	541488	
Church of The Martyrs	Westcotes Dr	546182	
Comtech	The Martyrs Hall Shaftsbury Rd	896950	
Daneshill Nursery	1 Daneshill Rd	530856	
Dr Johnson Family Centre	Cateby St	519992	
East/West Community Project	37 Bruce St	542633	
Fosse Rd Day Nursery	Fosse Rd Central	622452	
Independent Order Of Oddfellows. Manchester Unit Friendly Soc	Oddfellows House 35 Westleigh Rd {HALL Available For Hire}	543106	
King Richard Infant School	Andrews St	621905	
Leicester Child Care Information Service	66 Narborough Rd	545404	
Leicester Rowing Club	The Bedehouse Upperton Rd	543203 (eve)	

ADDRESS LIST			18
NAME OF VENUE	ADDRESS OF VENUE	TEL. NO	
Pulse Gym	52 Braunstone Gate.	557511 Or 558273	
Robert Hall Memorial Baptist Church	147 Narborough Rd.	553321	
St Andrews Methodist Church	King Richard Rd.	657407	
Shaftsbury Junior School & Community Centre Have rooms to hire.	Latimer St.	549203	
Westcotes Annex Southfield College Of Further Education	Narborough Rd / Upperton Rd Junction.	653148	
St Peters R.C. Church	West Holme St	519802	
Westcotes Bowls Club	Syke Field Ave	551724 or 553582 after 5pm	
West End Neighbourhood Centre (Rooms Available To Hire)	Andrews St (off Hinckley Rd)	623026	
Westcotes Library	Narborough Rd	548056	
W.E.A. Workers Education Assoc	101 Hinckley Rd	556614	
Westcotes United Reformed Church	Hinckley Rd	890089	

Excerpts from 'What's in Westcotes' (1993) - a LCC distributed leaflet detailing regularly meeting arts groups

- 1.1.23. Aylestone Leisure Centre has now become a relatively successful venture, with increasing attendance and maintaining longer opening hours.
- 1.1.24. There is merit in a range of arts organisations, wishing to include community and VCS groups to work together to provide local projects and programmes, as well as to sustain connections with those successfully engaged. The conclusions, recommendations and report below arise from those findings.

2. Recommendations

The Leicester's Arts and Museums service, the Assistant Mayor for Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport and the Executive are asked to consider the following recommendations:

- 2.1. To request Leicester's arts organisations to revisit their entry pricing strategies, to create more affordable opportunities to participate.
- 2.2. Develop communication methods with communities and organisations to publicise Leicester's Arts offer more widely to those that are currently disengaged with the services offered.

- 2.3.** Generate more productive and long-lasting partnerships, with the aim to create a 'United Leicester' (of the arts), using Coventry's example following their City of Culture Bid¹¹.
- 2.4.** Elected Members are invited to attend and to promote local arts events, and in doing so, are given better understanding of the opportunities/concerns for their constituents.
- 2.5.** Make GPs aware of local arts services and encourage them to recommend and provide referrals for ongoing arts classes to those with conditions that could find such treatment beneficial, i.e. individuals who are experiencing depression, loneliness, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and stress.
- 2.6.** Streamline and integrate communication of Leicester's Arts Offer, by adopting one or more of the following approaches:
- a. Using a single, overarching account on social media, advertising events for all Arts organisations across Leicester;
- OR**
- b. Maintaining social media accounts as independent, but introducing a universal Hashtag e.g. **'#LoveLeicesterArts'** (based on the established 'Love Leicester' app), to be used cross-platform and cross-organisation;
- OR**
- c. Editing the path from the Council website homepage to the 'Visit Leicester' sister website, to simplify access;
- OR**
- d. Introducing a promotional blog on culture in the city, that Leicester students could write for in an intern/volunteer capacity.
- 2.7.** Attendance and the diversity of attendees at Arts events should be tracked using the same methodology to identify how communication changes affect engagement, what is attracting people to attend and to facilitate tracking of future success.
- 2.8.** Conduct a research project on Arts engagement, focusing on the communities' perspective, as opposed to the service providers', to understand what people would like.
- 2.9.** Arts organisations should be encouraged to introduce subsidised tickets for theatre/cinema showings that haven't sold out, for low-income city residents.
- 2.10.** Ensure that new projects introduced to existing groups fit the existing arts routine as closely as possible (ideally using the same day, time and location). This recommendation is dependent on the organisations' ability to formulate a strong partnership.

¹¹ [Coventry City Council \(2016\) Draft Coventry Cultural Strategy 2017-2027](#)

- 2.11. With the development of new City Centre public spaces, the programme developer should be encouraged to include LAAM-managed activities, in addition to their current private-sector only schedule.
- 2.12. Collaboratively map Leicester's current Arts offer to identify what is on offer and where across the city, as well as clearly demonstrating the gaps, helping LAAM and Leicester's NPOs better target their outreach work.
- 2.13. Consider introducing discounted rates to hire out LCC heritage facilities for non-for-profit organisations or organisations with specific aim to expand Leicester's offer to those hard-to-reach groups in disengaged areas.
- 2.14. Aim to expand in-house audio guides to include the four most common Leicester languages, English (72.5%), Gujarati (11.5% pop.), Panjabi (2.4% pop.), and Polish 2.0% pop.)¹². It is recognised that this may require additional funding.
- 2.15. Request Audience Finder information from Leicester's Audience Finder Clients to be sent directly to LAAM, to enhance visitor monitoring and tracking, and allow for more specific target-setting.
- 2.16. Ensure implementation of the recommendations set out in the internal document 'An Open Future' (2017), in particular to:
 - Provide one-off advice to service providers, which can be made more regular if the clients' activity fits the Leicester Arts and Museums priorities;
 - Ensure relevant contextual factors are shared through the application process for service users with special educational needs (SEN), *if the user wishes*¹³.

3. Report

3.1. Leicester's Current Arts Offer

- 3.1.1. Leicester currently has the broadest and most versatile Arts economy in its modern history. The list of present services providing support for an Arts agenda include:
 - 3 mid-size contemporary art galleries (Leicester University's Attenborough Arts Centre, The Gallery in De Montfort University's Vijay Patel Building and Phoenix Arts Centre)
 - A nationally respected independent gallery (2 Queens)
 - A major craft production centre (Leicester Print Workshop)

¹² Office for National Statistics (2011) Census

¹³ Leicester City Council (2017) An open future, p.4; p.9 (internal document)

- 2 large studio blocks (2 Queens and StudioName)
 - A museum/gallery with outstanding collection of arts and crafts of national repute (New Walk)
 - And 7 theatres (Curve, De Montfort Hall, Phoenix Arts Centre, The Sue Townsend Theatre, The Peepul Centre, The Y and The Little Theatre, which provide excellent support for repertory or amateur dramatics in Leicester.)¹⁴
- 3.1.2. UK Arts organisations source funding from:
- The government, local authority and international bodies (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) direct grant, Cultural Ambition Fund (provided by LAAM), EU funding schemes, ward funding, foreign government and businesses)
 - Charities (ACE, National Lottery, trusts/foundations/private giving)
 - Profit (box office or admission charges, merchandise/sponsorship)
 - Partnerships with local competition¹⁵
- 3.1.3. In recent years, local authority subsidy of the Arts is more commonly used as a lever for 'match funding'. However, the cuts to local authority spending as well as a reduction of ACE grants (and other secondary sources of funding) are causing a 'double whammy' of cuts, threatening the longevity of Arts organisations existing in their current state¹⁶.
- 3.1.4. This review will consider how accessible and relevant Leicester's Arts offer is to those more likely to be facing structural barriers.
- 3.2. Funding and Resources**
- 3.2.1. LAAM'S service has downsized gradually, due to employees leaving the service and their posts not being refilled. Currently the Arts team operates with four members of staff and 90 hours per week of service shared between them. This is inclusive of an Outreach Officer, operating on an 18.5 hour contract.
- 3.2.2. The breakdown of funding sources between the Arts and the museums service is significantly different. The Arts service is funded both by LAAM via grant aid, the Cultural Ambition Fund (CAF) and ward funding, and by independent funding bodies such as ACE for those organisations apart of the NPO, while the museums service is predominantly funded by LAAM.
- 3.2.3. ACE has a commitment to ensuring its organisations are inclusive. As a newly appointed NPO, LAAM's service has the same, if not more, of an obligation to ensure equal opportunities for engagement in the Arts and Museums service.

¹⁴ Leicester City Council (2017) An open future, p.2 (internal document)

¹⁵ [Parliament \(2011\) Funding of the arts](#)

¹⁶ [Parliament \(2011\) Funding of the arts point no.76](#)

- 3.2.4. The expansion of our NPOs in Leicester since June 2017, from eight to 16, is evidence of an improved offer in Leicester, in terms of inclusivity and accessibility, from which hopefully the benefit will soon be evident.
- 3.2.5. LAAM explained to the task group that if there are communities in Leicester that are missing out on our offer, information needs to get to them so that they can better connect arts organisations with local communities, potentially via ward funding¹⁷.
- 3.2.6. Members of the task group felt that much of what is presented in exhibitions to the public may be daunting. The lack of opportunity in schools and the failure to maintain a high profile in the national curriculum do not allow for an appreciation of the arts and culture, which causes a disconnection to occur within vast areas of society.
- 3.2.7. Appreciation of the Arts can only come from gradual exposure, to allow an understanding and confidence to build and the opportunity for greater enjoyment.
- 3.2.8. Concern was voiced to the task group that community centre closures may lead to the disbanding of established, strong communities, which cannot simply be reconstituted at a later time. Evidence provided suggested that in areas of sustained, strong engagement, these centres must be supported to continue in a climate of reduced funding.
- 3.2.9. With a CAF budget of £12,000, LAAM face a difficulty of not wanting to over-publicise this funding; instead disclosing this Offer within direct communications with arts organisations.
- 3.2.10. The task group heard that LAAM support both financially and as advisers. An example of this was given in the case of the ward-funded Aylestone Mural, where they helped the organisers, Aylestone Meadows Appreciation Society, get in touch with a local street-art group, to practically facilitate the project, and provided end-of-the-phone advice.
- 3.2.11. Whilst LAAM is committed to supporting Arts organisations to get stronger, this ability to provide non-financial support is capped by the limited workforce. However LAAM's Outreach Officer can go out into the community and help Arts groups who do not feel comfortable using computers to apply online for various forms of funding giving them relevant information they need to put in their funding bids.

¹⁷ Task Group Meeting 4



Before and after of the Aylestone Road entrance to Aylestone Meadows

3.3. Engaging Communities

Who is 'Hard to Reach'?

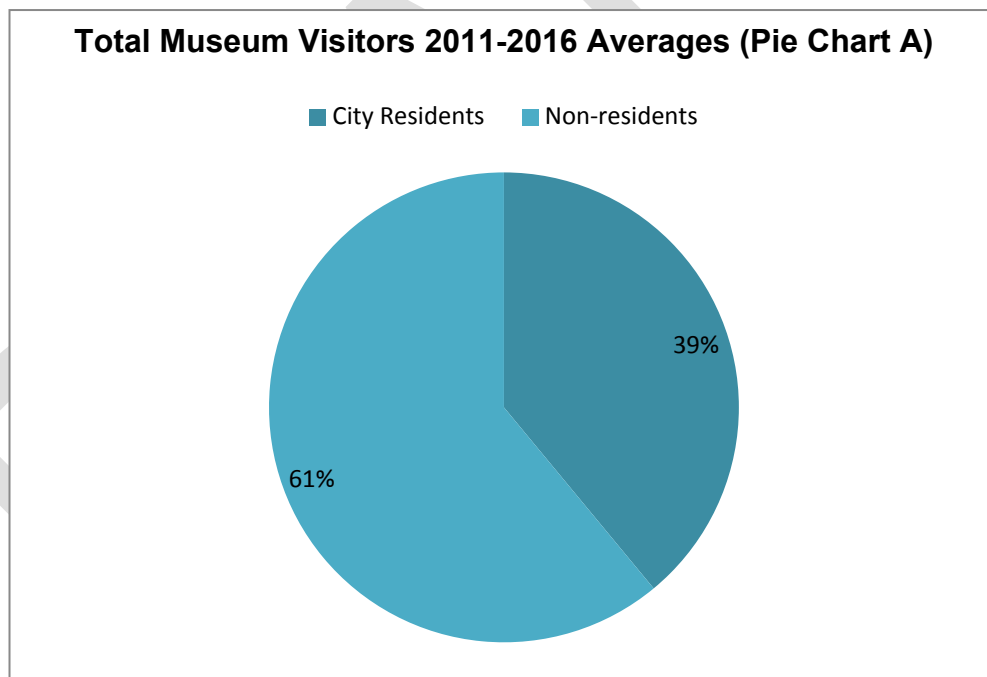
- 3.3.1. Nationally, the higher socio-economic group are disproportionately over-represented in audience breakdown across arts organisations.¹⁸
- 3.3.2. This section will only identify who is and isn't engaging, and not discuss the reasons for why, or how Leicester's Arts Offer is making an effort to address this.
- 3.3.3. It is worth remembering that while there may be demographic-specific barriers, those individuals not engaging may be a part of multiple 'hard to reach' groups, meaning we must reflect on all factors when considering lack of engagement.
- 3.3.4. A vast majority of arts organisations use Audience Finder, a national audience data and development programme, to specifically work out who is and isn't engaging, allowing for a more tailored programme. This service is transparent, allowing signed up organisations to view one another's sales profiles.
- 3.3.5. LCC-funded organisations report to LAAM the demographic breakdown of visitors, for monitoring purposes. Both the transparency of the service and willingness expressed in conversation with NPO Curve Theatre to share data once enough had accrued, suggest Leicester's arts organisations using Audience Finder would have no issue sharing this information with LAAM.

¹⁸ [Department for Culture, Media & Sport \(2017\) Taking Part: Engagement with museums and galleries 2015-16](#)

- 3.3.6. Cambridge is looking to encourage more successful data sharing between organisations and the authority, with the introduction of the Cambridgeshire Culture Card. This collaborative scheme will make possible tracking of the impact of cultural engagement on educational attainment¹⁹.
- 3.3.7. It is felt this authority can acquire more detailed data also: through the co-operation of organisations using Audience Finder.
- 3.3.8. **Recommendation: Request Audience Finder information from Leicester’s Audience Finder Clients to be sent directly to LAAM, to enhance visitor monitoring and tracking, and allow for more specific target-setting.**

Exhibition Engagement Breakdown

- 3.3.9. LAAM’s tracking data has been summarised below to demonstrate the engagement of users from the period 2011-2016.



¹⁹ [Parliament \(2017\) Libraries Taskforce: Understanding cultural engagement: Introducing the Cambridgeshire Culture Card](#)

3.3.10. **Table A - Museum Visitors Who Reside in the City 2011-16 Averages (39% of total visitors)**

	Visitation of City Residents	Demographics of City Residents (Census 2011)
Male	43%	49%
Female	57%	51%
BME	28%	49%
Non BME	72%	51%
SEN Users	5%	19%
U16	34%	21%
16-19	5%	6%
20-29	14%	20%
30-59	32%	38%
60+	14%	16%
ABC1	69%	41%
C2DE	31%	59%

(ABC1 refers to middle and upper middle class individuals, whereas C2DE refers to working class/unemployed individuals. BME stands for Black and Minority Ethnicities; NON BME refers to white British individuals.)

3.3.11. It is clear there is a significant difference between city and non-city visitors, with city visitors engaging significantly less. Of the city residents, Table A shows that **under 16s**, **ABC1** and **non BME** visitors are over-represented in Museum visitation, while those with **SEN**, **C2DE** and **BME** visitors are the most under-represented.

3.3.12. **Table B - Arts Organisation Engagement Breakdown (Festivals and Events, Curve, Phoenix and Soft Touch)**

	% Breakdown	Target
Male	42%	
Female	58%	
BME	22%	42%
Non BME	78%	
SEN Users	7%	3%
U16	6%	17%
16-59	78%	
60+	16%	15%
ABC1	56%	
C2DE	44%	42%
City	66%	58%
County	26%	
Other	8%	

- 3.3.13. Table B shows arts organisation breakdown in relation to LAAM set targets. It is clear that inclusion of BME and under 16s is significantly lower than targeted, though Leicester funded arts organisations are surpassing expectation for SEN users, over 60s, C2DE and city residents.
- 3.3.14. The comparison of all three tables and charts demonstrates a difference in demographic engagement between Leicester's Arts and Museums services: where one service does not engage a demographic, the other compensates. That said the Commission feels areas for concern remain to be **BME, C2DE, users with SEN** and **city** residents. Additionally, the significant drop in engagement, when comparing under-16s with 16-19s (as seen in Table A) is a cause for concern.

Further Analysis

- 3.3.15. LAAM offer a lot of family events, to promote inclusivity. These events, affiliated with present exhibitions, are well attended, but LAAM's Lecture Programme and *Heritage Sunday* programme are predominately attended by older people. Scheduling, opportunity, and pride in Leicester may contribute to this.
- 3.3.16. However, within these monthly *Heritage Sundays*, LAAM are very successfully championing partnerships, as they work with the Heritage Centre at De Montfort University, to open up the Castle, among other venues.
- 3.3.17. The Arts' exhibitions (**NOT Arts events**) audience are reflective of the Museum's statistics, with the majority of those in attendance being white British, middle class, and living in the County²⁰.
- 3.3.18. Similarly, University of Leicester's landmark disability-focused service, Attenborough Arts Centre, draws most of its audience from more middle class areas around Victoria Park and Clarendon Park Areas.
- 3.3.19. It is felt the emphasis on Leicester's tourism offer in recent years partially explains the underrepresentation of City visitors.
- 3.3.20. The trends in evidence may demonstrate minority groups in the city feel Leicester's exhibitions are not relevant to them, welcome to them, do not consider them, or that they don't know about them.
- 3.3.21. **Recommendation: Attendance and the diversity of attendees at arts events should be tracked using the same methodology to identify how communication changes affect engagement, what is attracting people to attend and to facilitate tracking of future success.**

²⁰ Task Group Meeting 4

3.4. Barriers to Access

- 3.4.1. The task group recognises the need to acknowledge user issues to access, but also to consider the issues facing providers, in ensuring access.
- 3.4.2. An important aspect of improving access to the Arts is ensuring that engagement initiatives were directed appropriately. For example, ensuring that cheap tickets are bought by the people they are intended for, not those who could afford to pay full price.
- 3.4.3. The commission heard that for many who have had negative experiences educationally, or that aren't 'academics', entering the building itself to engage with the Arts can be imposing.
- 3.4.4. This was a reoccurring issue brought up, specifically in relation to New Walk museum and its grand exterior, and the location of DMU's Vijay Patel Gallery, in the centre of campus.
- 3.4.5. DMU attempted to address this issue through their programming: for their recent *Walker and Bromwich* show, a parade was held through the city, concluding at the Vijay Patel Gallery.
- 3.4.6. LAAM are also in the process of moving their Ancient Egypt gallery upstairs: with New Walk's downstairs known as a 'family' area, and the upstairs known as an 'Arts' area, this switch of exhibitions, requiring nominal expenditure, is expected to encourage families to 'stumble upon' the arts galleries²¹. With the frequent and varied family events held at New Walk, LAAM demonstrates a strategic effort to overcome this barrier of 'appearing intimidating' to accessing their Museums service.

C2DE; The Outer Estates

- 3.4.7. Those living in the outer estates can be restricted by the location of relevant arts projects/exhibitions and might struggle to attend due to travel access, finance and classist preconceptions.
- 3.4.8. "Those in the outer estates, they're the most difficult to engage. The people in those estates, they really do stay there" – Linda Harding, LAAM Outreach Officer.
The commission heard that:
 - Residents in the outer estates are unable to attend evening/Sunday events and performances in the city centre due to a lack of bus service.
 - Many young people in the outer estates are unable to access the city centre, due to parental concerns about safety.
 - In the current financial climate, neither community centres nor Leicester City Council can fund shared transport to city centre organisations.

²¹ Task Group Meeting 4

- Many families are unable to afford the expense of tickets and return bus trips for each family member to the given event. Travel and food costs are further expenses for a trip to an Arts venue.
- If a cultural organisation only has a city centre presence, these people will be unlikely to ever experience it. It is vital for cultural organisations to have a presence in the neighbourhoods of the city as much as possible.

Finance

- 3.4.9. One of the main barriers experienced is a financial one, or *user perception* of a financial barrier.
- 3.4.10. Many of Leicester's wards are within the indices of deprivation. With 40.59% of children in poverty after housing costs in 2017, Leicester has the 8th highest levels of child poverty of local authorities, across the UK²².
- 3.4.11. **Recommendation: Arts organisations should be encouraged to introduce subsidised tickets for theatre/cinema showings that haven't sold out, for low-income city residents.**
- 3.4.12. Using the specific example of the Open Exhibition, an annual art event for those who aren't professional artists to have the experience of showing in a gallery, financial factors such as "the low rate of selection related to entry fee" and the "level of commission charged by the museum"²³, act as major barriers to community groups and amateur artists' getting involved in an event intended to be inclusive.
- 3.4.13. The task group heard that some people stated they might have been happy to pay the fee if selection was assured, but that the submission cost is too much for 'a punt'. The submission cost dropped in 2017, reflecting the exhibition's situation in a smaller, different venue. Fees for this year have returned to 2016s' higher cost.
- 3.4.14. **Recommendation: To request Leicester's arts organisations to revisit their entry pricing strategies, to create more affordable opportunities to participate.**
- 3.4.15. It was heard from LAAM that people still think museums aren't free. Whilst there is a charge for activities at times, the museums are free. This is evidence of a communication-related barrier between the museums and the public.
- 3.4.16. Discussing Curve Theatre specifically, Andy Reeves, Youth and Community Practitioner, acknowledged: "A lot of those who don't engage assume that Curve is out of their price range, because our flagship

²² [Centre for Research in Social Policy, Loughborough University \(2017\) Compilation of child poverty local indicators](#)

²³ Leicester City Council (2017) An open future (internal document)

performances are expensive. A lot of people don't know about financially accessible projects and events: the message is not fully out there.”²⁴

3.4.17. It is apparent there are a range of free activities to engage in, but the communication of this is somewhat ineffective.

3.4.18. **Recommendation: Streamline and integrate communication of Leicester's Arts Offer, by adopting one or more of the following approaches:**

a. **Using a single, overarching account on social media, advertising events for all Arts organisations across Leicester;**

OR

b. **Maintaining social media accounts as independent, but introducing a universal Hashtag e.g. '#LoveLeicesterArts' (based on the established 'Love Leicester' app), to be used cross-platform and cross-organisation;**

OR

c. **Editing the path from the Council website homepage to the 'Visit Leicester' sister website, to simplify access;**

OR

d. **Introducing a promotional blog on culture in the city, that Leicester students could write for in an intern/volunteer capacity.**

²⁴ Task Group Meeting 4

Case Study 1: Overcoming Barriers: Curve's *Fashioning a City*

Using Audience Finder, Curve identified 10 communities (defined by postcode) that weren't engaging with the theatre to partake in this free project for 300 participants, over a 10 month period. Within these communities, LCC recommended several suitable community groups.

The areas Curve identified as difficult to engage were:

- LE4 6 Doncaster Rd
- LE5 3 Humberstone Rd
- LE5 5 Spinney Hill Park
- LE4 7 Rushey Fields
- LE3 8 Glenfield
- LE4 4 Birstall, East of Loughborough Rd
- LE4 3 Birstall, West of Loughborough Rd
- LE2 5 Oadby
- LE2 8 Aylestone Park
- LE3 5 Frog Island, city centre
- LE4 2 Thurcaston
- LE3 1 Braunstone Park
- LE3 5 Frog Island, city centre
- LE5 2 Bushby Brook, Willow Brook

Utilising this information, the Youth and Community Practitioner arranged face-to-face meetings in the communities with community partners, who were then utilised to spread the message, supported with central messaging by Curve's communications team. By being *locally* pitched as a *local* project, *Fashioning a City* eradicated the fear of authority.

The value of the project will be found in how well it engages with a range of communities across the city, not on whether a professional-appearing show is produced.

While funding (provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund) is for the project alone, the project manager (Youth and Community Practitioner, Andy Reeves) is not considering *Fashioning a City* as a one-off project. Curve hopes to develop self-sustainability in the groups it works with:

"When we have the relationships in place, we hope we can signpost the groups to funding pots." (Andy Reeves, Youth and Community Practitioner).

Successfully partnered with:

East Midlands Oral History, Leicester University; Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office; Heritage England; Leicester City Libraries; Spark; New Walk Museum; local artists and Lynda Callaghan (Heritage researcher; key informer).

Additionally, LCC Adult Education offered an option of rehearsal and development spaces at adult education schools.

'Classist' Preconceptions

- 3.4.19. The perception for many of the general public is that the Arts offer is 'not for them'.

- 3.4.20. Community centre users and service providers in estates often do not trust figures of authority such as the council, schools and the voluntary and community sector (VCS). This mistrust comes from both perception of having been 'let down', and inadequate support from the authorities.
- 3.4.21. In partnerships between community centres and the local authority, this lack of trust can be overcome through the subtle framing of an event or project as 'locally-ran'. Another subtlety could be labelling it as the community organisation being 'in partnership with [authority]' as opposed to an '[authority] led community project or event'.
- 3.4.22. There is segregation felt within wards, between working class children and middle class families.
- 3.4.23. One service user of the New Parks Hub passed up an opportunity to join a Curve class, because it was organised on the same day as their 'Team Troopers' class (New Parks Hub). Similarly, in case studies 2 and 5, there was a low turnout for the commemorative launch event for both programmes. This demonstrates how much a priority routine is for participants, and that a change from routine can disengage individuals.
- 3.4.24. **Recommendation: Ensure that new projects introduced to existing groups fit the existing arts routine as closely as possible (ideally using the same day, time and location). This recommendation is dependent on the organisations' ability to formulate a strong partnership.**

Case Study 2: LAAMS and New Parks Library 'Life at Work'

In order to identify relevant local groups to work with, LAAMS attended a local community panel meeting, and contacted the local schools, community centres and library.

Having identified the group, the Outreach Officer then attended this group's routine meeting as a guest, bringing with her laminated local industry photos (sourced from Central Library), which she used to share with participants, introduce the 'Life at Work' project and promote discussion.

She then provided a background to the project, explaining that this was an exhibition celebrating their shared, hyper-local history.

During this meeting she also asked if she could gather service users' oral histories, and respecting that none of whom wanted to be in a 1 to 1 interview-type situation, she recorded them in the established group setting, where they felt more comfortable.

Through their direct contribution to the exhibition, it was clear to participants *their history* was important to the museum, and the way they wished to divulge this information respected.

The group setting for information gathering provided users additional mental health benefits by allowing users to share memories; talk to and engage with others in the group.

In total, nine engagement sessions were held in New Parks venues, with a handling session and launch event held at the Library.

This handling session provided an opportunity for the public as well as the New Friends group to engage with the project, integrating the participant group with those who weren't involved originally and otherwise would have been unable to get involved.

The Outreach Officer noted it was particularly challenging to encourage users to engage on different days/times to their regular meeting slot.

Additionally, groups were originally meeting for their own purposes, so there was a need to entice members, requiring personable skills and good background knowledge of the group, in addition to securing a partnership with the original service provider.

New Parks are known for being one of the more difficult outer estates to engage with through the council, so this project was a real breakthrough.

Projects such as this "can connect people with their communities by engaging with local stories, artefacts, and issues on a deeper level by telling the stories of their past and linking those to the present and future developments" (LGiU (2017) Briefing: Place Matters, p.4), demonstrating their value.

- 3.4.25. There were also examples presented of the Outer Estate communities feeling museums aren't interested in their history or forms of artistic expression that may better speak to them. Case studies 2 and 3 demonstrate successful, tailored efforts to counteract these preconceptions.

Case Study 3: Bring the Paint, LAAM, and Youth from the Outer Estates

By successfully engaging young people from the estates, Bring the Paint stands as a great example of how to engage a typical hard-to-reach group who views the Arts as irrelevant for them.

Bring the Paint was peer-led: the community leaders facilitating this project were more likely to be respected and trusted by the target audience.

By transforming eyesores into attractions, this project had also a positive environmental/community benefit, for example, in work with Highcross to decorate the wooden panels surrounding construction work on the Shopping Centre. Such placed-based arts approaches are commended for, "Encouraging a positive sense of place... [fostering] engagement, and a sense of belonging" (LGiU (2017) Briefing: Place Matters p.3). This project provided communities from the outer estates an explicit connection to the city centre, which such communities often are distanced from.

'#FamilyFriendly events': appealing to families while specifically addressing teenagers through effective hashtag-use in marketing.

Successfully partnered with a variety of organisations, including Canteen: LCB Depot; DMU, Soundhouse, as well as DMU students and Graffwerk.

Events were held in city centre based public spaces such as Orton Square and were diverse in content: combining activities such as live music, pop-up exhibitions; skateboarding and BMX demonstrations; children's graffiti workshops and a 'Bambino Disco'.

- 3.4.26. There is a feeling amongst working-class communities that they are not 'entitled' to go to art galleries or the theatre. However it was heard that there is the danger that 'we' decide that people 'should' attend Arts venues such as the Curve. They may not wish to, even if they had a realistic opportunity to do so.
- 3.4.27. Loyalty, conformity and class-based divisions are all linked in hindering opportunities for access.

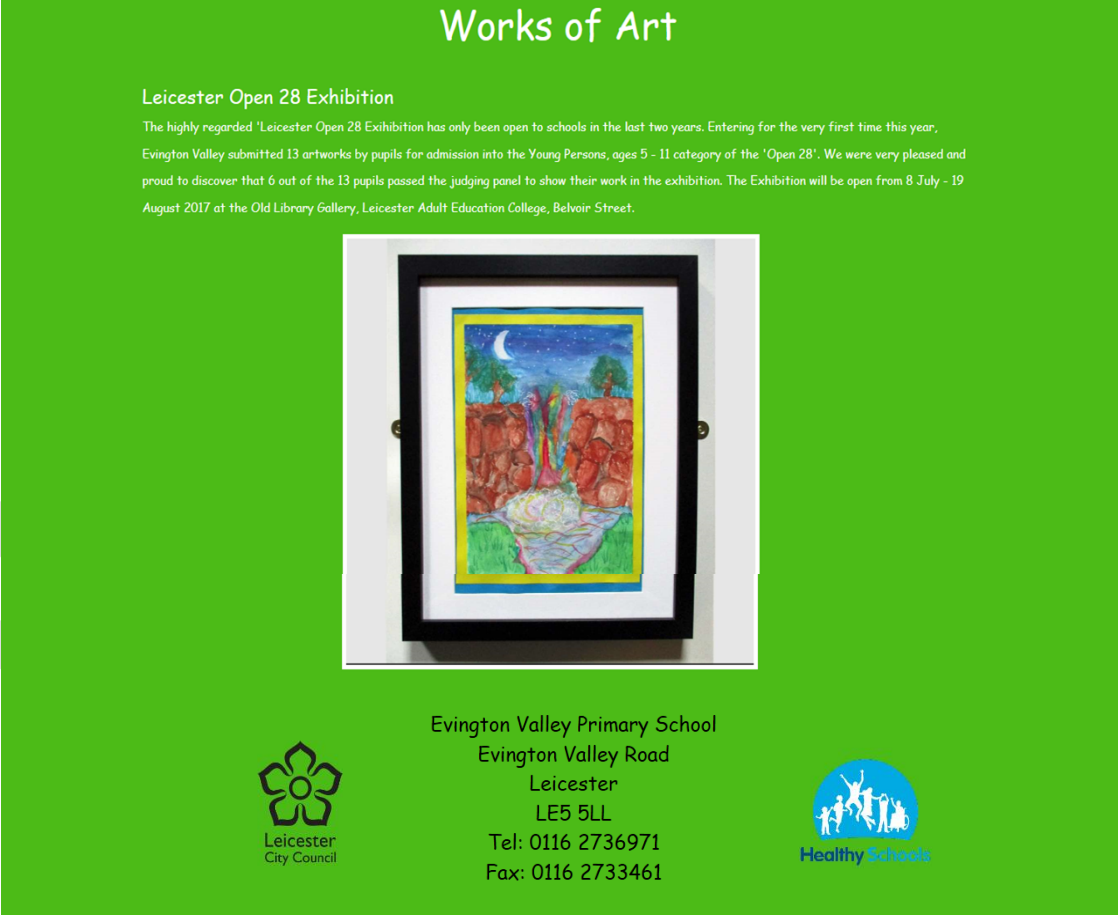
Adolescents and young people

- 3.4.28. Schools, especially secondary schools, are difficult to work with, because they already operate on a filled timetable. Fitting in extra activity is difficult.
- 3.4.29. Additionally, external visits can be difficult because of transport costs, health and safety considerations and the need to maintain adult/student ratios off site.

- 3.4.30. Pudding Bag Productions stated that the difficulty resides with contacting the right person and persuading them to find time within their schedules. It is also important to offer schools something which they see as relevant to their curriculum and as something they would like to do for themselves. Schools operate as predominantly closed systems.

Case Study 4: Overcoming School Barriers

By forming partnerships with organisations such as LCC Century of Stories (who have a track record of successful work with schools) and in the case of Grace Dieu Manor School, making contact with the 'Friends of Grace Dieu Priory', Pudding Bag Productions managed to successfully access school-age children. Both expertise and trust with the targeted group gained through partnership were essential to facilitating this.



Works of Art

Leicester Open 28 Exhibition

The highly regarded 'Leicester Open 28 Exhibition has only been open to schools in the last two years. Entering for the very first time this year, Evington Valley submitted 13 artworks by pupils for admission into the Young Persons, ages 5 - 11 category of the 'Open 28'. We were very pleased and proud to discover that 6 out of the 13 pupils passed the judging panel to show their work in the exhibition. The Exhibition will be open from 8 July - 19 August 2017 at the Old Library Gallery, Leicester Adult Education College, Belvoir Street.



Leicester City Council

Evington Valley Primary School
Evington Valley Road
Leicester
LE5 5LL
Tel: 0116 2736971
Fax: 0116 2733461

Healthy Schools

Excerpt from Evington Valley Primary School's website, detailing the school had 13 submissions for 2017's Open 28

- 3.4.31. However, in the case of Leicester's Annual Open Arts Exhibition, the children and young people's category clearly attracts a more diverse

audience and supports the council's priorities around engaging audiences from excluded backgrounds²⁵.

- 3.4.32. This may largely be due to both the lifting of entry fees and the successful word of mouth marketing by teachers in schools or the schools integration of this exhibition with the curriculum.

Users with SEN

- 3.4.33. "The cuts to Arts Council funding and the restructuring of National Portfolio Organisation funding have had a disproportionate effect on disabled-led organisations... disability-led organisations now make up just over one percent of the total portfolio, while their share of funding is less than 0.5%"²⁶.
- 3.4.34. Compared to the England average, it is important to note Leicester has a considerably greater prevalence of children with moderate learning disabilities. Additionally, individuals with SEN and their families are more likely to be in poverty and as a result, experience intersectional barriers to access²⁷.
- 3.4.35. "Mainstream arts have not confronted disability... *developing their own art, in environments controlled by themselves*, is seen as critical if disabled people are to develop as creative producers, and compete with artists in the mainstream"²⁸.
- 3.4.36. This is about crafting SEN-focused activities and acknowledging all abilities.
- 3.4.37. Referring back to the previously mentioned Open Exhibition, it was discovered SEN artists are unlikely to be selected, as there is no marker on the application form to establish the SEN context for these artists.
- 3.4.38. **Recommendation: Ensure implementation of the recommendations set out in the internal document 'An Open Future' (2017), in particular to:**
- **Ensure relevant contextual factors are shared through the application process for service users with SEN, if the user wishes²⁹.**
- 3.4.39. Overall LAAM's access programme is extensive, varied and user-orientated. However, it still could be made more accessible, simply by dispelling assumptions held by service providers via disabilities and access training.

²⁵ Leicester City Council (2017) An open future (internal document)

²⁶ [Pring \(2014\) cited in: The Mighty Creatives \(2014\) Disabled Children and Young People: Engagement in arts and culture in the East Midlands in an environment of restrained resources p.29](#)

²⁷ Public Health England (2013) Learning Disabilities profiles

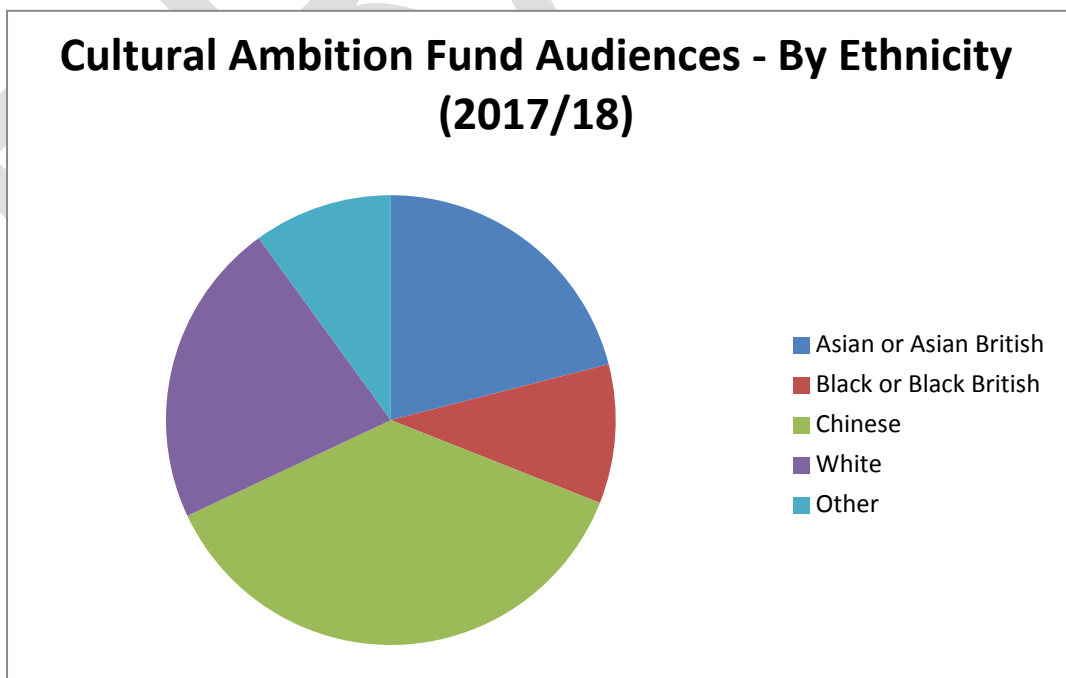
²⁸ Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (2003) Effecting change: Disability, culture and art? p.9.

²⁹ Leicester City Council (2017) An open future (internal document)

- 3.4.40. Training for service providers on impairment disabilities and access exists commonly as an opt-in choice, but many choose not to³⁰. (The Mighty Creatives 2014 p.26).
- 3.4.41. The task group noted that there is perception that inclusive delivery (including the relevant training) is more challenging, costly and in some cases requires specific expertise, as potential reasoning for why our arts services reflect below target visitation of individuals with SEN.
- 3.4.42. Service providers with SEN also experience barriers in providing accessible arts. The task group were informed, in one case of direct discrimination, an arts centre worker was told due to their dyslexia and lack of experience, a VCS organisation would not provide her support in taking over management of the community centre.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Communities

- 3.4.43. There is little representation of the diverse communities of Leicester through participating artists.
- 3.4.44. In light of the earlier displayed under-target BME figures, LAAM has worked this past year to ensure Leicester’s Arts offer is more culturally inclusive and broadly appealing, through designated outreach work. For instance with predominantly BME women’s group Krafty Women, and through selection of CAF awarded organisations.
- 3.4.45. In 2017/18, the audience of CAF-supported projects was as follows:



³⁰ [The Mighty Creatives \(2014\) Disabled Children and Young People: Engagement in arts and culture in the East Midlands in an environment of restrained resources p.26](#)

- 3.4.46. Similarly, Phoenix Arts Theatre has successfully raised their participation of BME individuals by 5.1% since last year, to 22.7% of their total audience. Curve identified approximately 65% of people attending the theatre over the last year were from black and minority ethnic communities and that approximately 35% were first-time attendees.
- 3.4.47. BME engagement work from Phoenix includes offering diverse cultural perspectives and on-screen representations of people, places, narratives and themes, with a programme that is locally and culturally relevant.
- 3.4.48. **Recommendation: Aim to expand in-house audio guides to include the four most common Leicester languages, English (72.5%), Gujarati (11.5% pop.), Panjabi (2.4% pop.), and Polish 2.0% pop.)³¹. It is recognised that this may require additional funding.**
- 3.4.49. Phoenix Arts Centre has successfully engaged more BME people through recently adopting a new community outreach approach, which involves working more intensively and directly with several neighbourhoods, including St. Matthews Estate, Belgrave and Highfields, to develop an understanding of each community's specific needs. Community outreach work has included community cinemas, creative workshops, film-making projects and arts and creative media events.

³¹ Office for National Statistics (2011) Census

Case Study 5: Krafty Women's Group

A similar approach to New Parks 'Life at Work' was taken with a group in Highfields, the 'Krafty Women's Group'. The Outreach Officer gave the group objects to handle; the group were taken on a museum tour and were able to contribute to the exhibition via object selection, and writing the text for the accompanying exhibition book. This exhibition was also marked with a celebratory launch event.

This project shared the struggles of the aforementioned example in that it was challenging to maintain engagement over differing meeting days/times, and the need for a gradual introduction to the project from a personable figure, as this group was already meeting for a different purpose.

Following the project, the group collectively visited a related exhibition, with service users then visiting the museum independently, demonstrating that this project successfully opened up this cultural space for these women.

Of both projects, the Outreach Officer stated:

"You must build relationships with hard-to-reach groups in their home environment. When you have established a rapport, you can then get them to come into a museum, and show them, *'this is a welcome place for everyone, including you'*".



Krafty Women's Group, Highfields

3.5. Barriers for Service Providers

- 3.5.1. Voiced across the service, by representatives of independent community centres in the outer estates, major city centre organisations such as Curve Theatre and Phoenix Arts Centre lack suitable venue space.
- 3.5.2. "Our strategic analysis identifies venue capacity as a major constraint on further growth in audiences, earned income and our ability to involve new communities" – John Rance, CEO, Phoenix Arts Centre³².

³² Phoenix Arts Centre (2018) Written submission

- 3.5.3. In regard to the annual Open Arts Exhibition, LAAM stated that the exhibition has been inconsistent for the past 5 years in terms of dates and location, so it's assumed that a stable home and timetabling in New Walk Museum will support increased artist uptake.
- 3.5.4. **Recommendation: Ensure that new projects introduced to existing groups fit the existing arts routine as closely as possible (ideally using the same day, time and location). This recommendation is dependent on the organisations' ability to formulate a strong partnership.**
- 3.5.5. LAAM also expressed concern over a lack of local usable venues across Leicester, stating the collapse of infrastructure of existing youth groups and youth arts groups is a major barrier to engagement.
- 3.5.6. The commission felt that with the necessary closure of many community centres, making better use of Leicester's public spaces and buildings should be a priority.
- 3.5.7. As part of their 2017-2027 Cultural Strategy, Coventry intends "greater use of enhanced city-centre architecture, heritage assets, parks and neighbourhood public spaces for performances and showcasing the cities"³³
- 3.5.8. **Recommendation: With the development of new City Centre public spaces, the programme developer should be encouraged to include LAAM-managed activities, in addition to their current private-sector only schedule.**
- **The better utilisation of the city's open space facilities will also remove the intimidation felt by some towards having to enter an Arts building, to engage with the arts (see: 3.4.3.).**
 - **While the Animation of Public Spaces strategy doesn't have a specific budget attached to it, facilitating a percentage of internal-led activities alongside the private-led activities also has the potential to make this project less costly.**
- 3.5.9. **Recommendation: Consider introducing discounted rates to hire out LCC heritage facilities for non-for-profit organisations or organisations with specific aim to expand Leicester's offer to those hard-to-reach groups in disengaged areas.**

3.6. Staffing

- 3.6.1. To maintain quality, community arts service staff are frequently forced to work unpaid overtime and pay for resources themselves (The Mighty Creatives 2014 p.42).

³³ [Coventry City Council \(2016\) Draft Coventry Cultural Strategy 2017-2027 p.33](#)

- 3.6.2. Under tighter budgets, short-term solutions are becoming increasingly more common, which has brought about an increase of freelance workers with insufficient training³⁴.
- 3.6.3. While it is often economical to opt for freelancers over permanent staff, without proper training and accountability, this method of cost reduction threatens the service's consistent quality and access to necessary care for users with additional needs.
- 3.6.4. Due to cost, arts organisations are also opting to use amateurs instead of professional teachers, again, threatening the service's consistent quality.

3.7. Income Generation Targets

- 3.7.1. With tough income generation targets to hit, LAAM acknowledged income generation targets mean ensuring diverse engagement, representative of Leicester, can be difficult.
- 3.7.2. This was echoed by De Montfort Hall, who stated that operators who provided these shows were financially driven, so were not interested in where their audiences came from³⁵.
- 3.7.3. While income generation targets can hinder comprehensive engagement, it was felt any recommendations to expand equalities plans within the LAAM could detract from the service's overall good engagement work. Research suggests developing addendums to equality policies does not guarantee any better provision.
- 3.7.4. National Portfolio Organisations are criteria-led and the few criteria determining NPO status are broad enough that they capture a culture of good practice, but do not impose specific targets that can damage an organisations' ethos. Leicester's expansion of our NPOs demonstrate both the income targets at present and equalities targets placed upon these NPOs by ACE are no doubt conflicting, but attainable simultaneously for the LAAM and Leicester's other NPOs.

3.8. Partnership Working

- 3.8.1. "For a City of its size, Leicester has a huge amount on offer, but it's not always well co-ordinated" – Ben Carpenter, Chair of the Contemporary Visual Arts Network, East Midlands.
- 3.8.2. LAAM has recognised there are opportunities for partnership, such as unifying the Open Exhibition's subsidiary exhibitions at LCB Depot and 2 Queens. Attenborough Arts Centre is interested in collaboration and

³⁴ [The Mighty Creatives \(2014\) Disabled Children and Young People: Engagement in arts and culture in the East Midlands in an environment of restrained resources p.44](#)

³⁵ [Leicester City Council: Heritage, Culture, Leisure & Sport Scrutiny Commission Meeting, 14th November 2017](#)

Leicester Print Workshop already runs an open submission exhibition for print work that also presents an opportunity to work together. The commission strongly support this integration.

- 3.8.3. While this is an example of Leicester Arts organisations wanting to work together, some arts organisations may be less inclined to instigate partnerships, due to increasingly depleting funding pots which, in turn, cause greater competition.
- 3.8.4. It was suggested many organisations would rather maintain ownership than reach greater success collaboratively. Conversations around funding development and bid writing suggested that there was a gap in resourcing here, but the institutions would prefer authorship to remain internal.
- 3.8.5. However, many artist-led groups have relied on LAAM for non-financial support. LAAM works as a partner to groups such Silver Vine Arts, Tetrad, the Eye Gallery and Leicester Sketch Club.
- 3.8.6. Due to both funding cuts and mismanagement, numbers of community artists and arts groups in Leicester are decreasing. Such advisory services must be recognised as integral to the sustainability of community arts groups. Many started as arts evening classes and formed as groups to exhibit their work together.
- 3.8.7. **Recommendation: Ensure implementation of the recommendations set out in the internal document 'An Open Future' (2017), particularly:**
- **Provide one-off advice to service providers, which can be made more regular if the clients' activity fits the Leicester Arts and Museums priorities;**
- 3.8.8. It must be acknowledged that not all artists want to be 'community' artists and lose autonomy over their work. Some artists may therefore also wish to charge an extortionate fee for 'community arts' hire, or as mentioned earlier, frequently have to utilise amateurs to deliver projects.
- 3.8.9. Aforementioned projects such as Curve's 'Fashioning a City' and LAAM's 'Life at Work' demonstrate exemplary partnership work, as these organisations have outsourced their resources of trained professionals and artefacts to existing community groups, providing for disengaged individuals the opportunity to experience a high quality arts programme, in a group setting they are already comfortable in.
- 3.8.10. **Recommendation: Collaboratively map Leicester's current Arts offer to identify what is on offer and where across the city, as well as clearly demonstrating the gaps, helping LAAM and Leicester's NPOs better target their outreach work.**

- 3.8.11. Coventry, City of Culture 2021, has curated a 2017-2027 Cultural Strategy consisting of five goals for cultural growth;
1. Partnership
 2. Lifelong Learning
 3. Diversity
 4. Health and Well-being
 5. Economic Growth³⁶
- 3.8.12. Focusing on the first goal, Coventry is prepared to nurture a more open relationship between the Arts, both professional and amateur, the city council, communities, universities, local businesses and charities, with aim to maximise resources, infrastructure, innovation and investment³⁷.
- 3.8.13. While many organisations may wish to remain autonomous, for the Arts offer to remain at its present quantity in Leicester without sacrificing quality, it is essential that partnerships are encouraged.
- 3.8.14. Additionally, through a lack of clear communication with other organisations, some arts organisations have been offset in the line of other agencies' work.
- 3.8.15. In the case of Soft Touch, the task group were informed that when this arts organisation had gone out into the community to hold their street-based creative activities (as part of stage 1 of their *UpSTart* project), police officer arrival and suspicion often disbands harder-to-reach young adolescents willing to engage. The police presence leads to targeted potential users experiencing feelings of fear, especially for those who may have had a negative police experience.³⁸
- 3.8.16. **Recommendation: Generate more productive and long-lasting partnerships, with the aim to create a 'United Leicester' (of the arts), using Coventry's example following their City of Culture Bid:**
- **Arts organisations require establishing better relations with the Ward councillors, GPs, police, and other arts providers, to ensure these services are working cohesively to support each organisation.**
 - **Encourage arts organisations to share practical resources (i.e. objects suitable for exhibitions, venues, experiences of particular successes/concerning factors and databases of information) with one another. The necessary provisions to protect valuable items should be in place.**
 - **Lead by example by working to improve relationships with related organisations across Leicester, to ensure a stronger Offer.**

³⁶ [Coventry City Council \(2016\) Draft Coventry Cultural Strategy 2017-2027](#)

³⁷ [Coventry City Council \(2016\) Draft Coventry Cultural Strategy 2017-2027 p.30-2](#)

³⁸ Task Group Meeting 3

- 3.8.17. **Recommendation: Make GPs aware of local arts services and encourage them to recommend and provide referrals for ongoing arts classes to those with conditions that could find such treatment beneficial, i.e. individuals who are experiencing depression, loneliness, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety and stress.**

3.9. Communicating the Offer

Users

- 3.9.1. While Leicester Arts Week stands as an example of continued partnership work, the East Midlands Contemporary Visual Arts Network suggested that for the purpose of sharing audiences between organisations, this work was somewhat inefficient, and could in the future be better supported through online communication.

- 3.9.2. **Recommendation: Streamline and integrate communication of Leicester's Arts Offer, by adopting one or more of the following approaches:**

a. **Using a single, overarching account on social media, advertising events for all arts organisations across Leicester;**

OR

b. **Maintaining social media accounts as independent, but introducing a universal Hashtag e.g. '#LoveLeicesterArts' (based on the established 'Love Leicester' app), to be used cross-platform and cross-organisation;**

OR

c. **Editing the path from the Council website homepage to the 'Visit Leicester' sister website, to simplify access;**

OR

d. **Introducing a promotional blog on culture in the city, that Leicester students could write for in an intern/volunteer capacity.**

- 3.9.3. That considered, for some groups, such as older people, people with a disability or multiple disabilities, and those for whom English is a second language, traditional forms of marketing should not be overlooked in their necessity to achieving effective communication.

- 3.9.4. **Recommendation: Develop communication methods with communities and organisations to publicise Leicester's arts offer more widely to those that are currently disengaged with the services offered.**

Service Providers

- 3.9.5. Following its year as City of Culture, Liverpool City Council compiled a guidebook, 'Open City – Arts for Everyone', describing all the city's venues

and organisations, providing key contacts and details, and what the organisations can offer community groups.

- 3.9.6. This guidebook was designed *specifically* for community groups with the intention of supporting them, acknowledging the lack of uptake in available opportunities and how these groups' priority is fulfilling their aims and objectives; there often not being the time for such groups to do substantive research, plan out trips or arrange tickets.³⁹
- 3.9.7. Likewise, Manchester recognised that good communication is essential to engagement and actions must be taken to ensure those who generally do not participate in cultural activity are aware of what is taking place. After finding out many local councillors were not aware of what was happening across the city, the 'In MCR' guide was distributed to all members, to keep their constituents informed.

Ward Members

- 3.9.8. In gathering information from Curve, it was discussed that long term there is a hope to sustain and build the relationships with communities and Councillor engagement is key to this.
- 3.9.9. As part of this review, Councillors were encouraged to go into their ward and feedback the local Arts offer, to capture the varied situation across Leicester, as well as to offer insight into how in tune Councillors are with the Arts offer in their ward. Many came back demonstrating passion for both the successes and concerning gaps in their ward's offer.
- 3.9.10. **Recommendation: Elected Members are invited to attend and to promote local arts events, and in doing so, are given better understanding of the opportunities/concerns for their constituents.**

3.10. Conclusions

- 3.10.1. Undoubtedly a lot of excellent work is happening to ensure as many people as possible are engaging with the arts and cultural offer in the city. However, the commission have found that there are still gaps with certain communities, either unable to or unwilling to engage.
- 3.10.2. There has been substantial evidence given on the barriers facing people's engagement with the city's offer which has been compiled into this report but what was obvious to the commission members is that communication still needs to be improved and more needs to be done to encourage those that have an interest to engage.
- 3.10.3. It has to be acknowledged that we are in a difficult climate and much of the city's resident's face a time of uncertainty with finances and face difficult decisions to ensure that their families have food on their plate and a roof

³⁹ [Liverpool City Council \(2011\) Open City – Arts for Everyone: The Open City Guidebook](#)

over their head. This makes spending further money on an arts or cultural events very challenging for them, but we need to ensure that the wellbeing benefits of these events are open to them without adding extra pressure where possible, and allow for the enjoyment of arts and culture to be shared with all, regardless of background.

4. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

4.1. Financial Implications

There are no directly quantifiable implications, although additional activity usually represents a call on the time of staff in the Council and elsewhere, and sometimes requires additional funding. Therefore before particular recommendations are implemented, any specific implications should be identified and addressed. – Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, Ext 374081

4.2. Legal Implications

There are limited legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. In relation to recommendation 2.15 it should be noted that there may be issues arising in relation to Data Protection due to the transfer of data. It is advised that prior to the Council receiving or sharing any information that this is checked with Information Governance.

In relation to some of the other recommendations which are LCC based then advice should be sought to ensure that, once detailed plans are established, there are no legal issues, for example recommendation 2.6 may need the Council to secure third party agreement or in relation to 2.16 we need to assess what advice is being provided and on what basis.

Emma Horton, Head of Law (Commercial, Property & Planning), Ext 371426

4.3. Climate Change Implications

There are no significant climate change implications associated with this report.

Mark Jeffcote, Environment Team, Ext 37 2251

4.4. Equality Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The report reviews engagement with Leicester's arts, culture and heritage offer and specifically examines barriers to engagement with the offer by some protected groups, with a particular focus on race, age, sex and disability. The report also examines geographical and socioeconomic barriers which widens the approach to inclusion.

The recommendations of the report will support the council in meeting its equalities duties by seeking to remove or reduce disadvantages experienced by people in relation to a protected characteristic or in relation to their socioeconomic status, and by encouraging people who are underrepresented to participate in arts, culture and heritage activities.

One of the key recommendations which will support the council in meeting its equalities objectives is to engage with communities and individuals living in Leicester to find out what they would like from the offer. Consideration could also be paid to whether there is merit in widening out the approach to also consider whether there are barriers to access for people from across all protected characteristics, including the protected characteristics of sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Although the recommendations of this report will aid the council in meeting the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, there should be on-going consideration of the equalities implications as the approach is refined. There may be future projects, arising from the report and its recommendations, which would benefit from further consideration of the equalities implications and possibly a full equality impact assessment in certain circumstances. Whether an Equalities Impact Assessment is required will be dependent upon how work develops and whether the changes are likely to have a disproportionate impact on any protected group; this is usually the case where there are significant changes or a reduction in provision. Advice can be sought from the Corporate Equalities team on whether an Equalities Impact Assessment is required for specific projects, as appropriate.

Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager, Ext 375811

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24. Tony Spittle, Admin & Business Support Officer, LCC
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