

# New Dimensions in Dance Towards a Strategy for Investing in Dance Excellence, 2014-16

## Introduction

Hampshire County Council Culture, Communities and Business Services portfolio currently invests in dance excellence via 3 primary mechanisms:

- The Culture and Recreation Investment Fund grant aids Dance Up (formerly Hampshire Dance) and The Point
- Annual Dance Bursaries Scheme, supporting local gifted and talented dancers
- Wessex Dance Academy, targeting young people at risk

These areas of investment partnership have enabled Hampshire County Council to play its part in providing residents and visitors with the opportunity to participate in and experience high quality dance.

The *Arts and Museums Strategic Plan, 2012-15 (Connecting Communities to Excellence)* reaffirmed the strategic importance of Dance to Hampshire County Council, and set the scene for a review to maximise the impact of investment into the future through focusing resources on a centre(s) of excellence approach.

*New Dimensions in Dance* is the outcome of this review and has been informed by consultation with key dance providers and stakeholders operating in the Hampshire area. It provides the strategic framework for CCBS investment in dance 2014-16.

## Background and Context

Dance, as part of the wider arts sector, has an important role in supporting social and economic wellbeing in Hampshire. Research by Arts Council England (ACE) on the economic impact of the arts showed that for every £1 invested in the arts, up to a further £6 is invested in the local economy<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to this, targeted dance development work with young people at risk, such as with the Wessex Dance Academy (WDA)<sup>2</sup>, has shown significant financial benefit from this specific type of preventative engagement. For every £1 invested in the WDA project there has been a return of £11.93 to society, the County Council, the Police and other agencies<sup>3</sup>.

Dance is one of the most popular and fast growing creative activities in the UK, with a wide range of dance genres crossing cultural boundaries. It crosses the boundaries of age, demographics, appealing to both young people (who gain skills and confidence) and older generations (who keep fit and healthy). There is an active dance ecology in Hampshire, with a particular emphasis on participation across a range of classes, dance schools and project activity. There is also a range of opportunities to experience professional dance performance in theatres and arts centres across Hampshire, although there is no dedicated venue for dance.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/advocacy/>

<sup>2</sup> The WDA is managed by Hampshire County Council delivering on Arts and Museums Service and Children's Services priorities.

<sup>3</sup> Independent Social Return in Investment evaluation on Wessex Dance Academy 2009

There are two key organisations in Hampshire supporting professional dance development:

- Dance Up (formerly Hampshire Dance)
- The Point, Eastleigh

ACE supports strategic leads for dance in their regions. The recent change for Hampshire, moving from Arts Council England South East to the South West region, means that a dialogue with South East Dance will continue alongside work to build and develop a relationship with Pavilion Dance South West.

More detailed information on the background, context and current infrastructure is included in the *Background Information and Wider Context* section of this appendix.

## **Aims and Priorities**

Hampshire County Council (CCBS) is keen to use its targeted investment to inspire innovation and creativity in the way dance providers engage with audiences and connect communities with excellence. This interest in supporting dance infrastructure and creating opportunities for sustaining and developing organisations, dance artists and other dance professionals looks to create a county-wide programme of opportunities for residents and visitors to participate in dance experiences.

Hampshire County Council will look to support opportunities to deliver such activity that emphasises the value of collaboration and partnership in terms of delivery. This will not only create an opportunity to share skills and experience across the sector but will also maximise the impact of investment by Hampshire County Council. A collaborative, strategic approach will also help to ensure a joined up approach to dance development across the County.

This desire to support innovative ideas and approaches necessarily means that the strategy is intentionally non-prescriptive. However, within the framework of Hampshire County Council's *Open for Business*, the following priorities are identified:

1. Engage people and encourage new audiences
  - Support new and innovative ways of engaging people with all forms of dance
  - Explore new ways of presenting dance in non-arts and off-site spaces, connecting with new audiences and supporting the destination economy
  - Transform the lives of vulnerable young people through dance, particularly through the work of Wessex Dance Academy
  - Advocate for dance as a health promoting activity, including the health and well being of older residents
2. Develop skills and support professional development
  - Contribute to the development of Hampshire as a resilient creative economy, support skills and professional development in a wide range of dance forms for young people, dance artists and other dance professionals. This includes alternative careers such as dance management and programming, and individuals at different points in their careers, from school students aspiring to the profession to mature practitioners.
3. Make the most efficient use of resources
  - Develop and encourage an increase in partnership working to share skills and maximise the impact of investment
  - Leverage additional funding to add value to existing investment in dance

- Encourage opportunities to build relationships between schools and local community / arts organisations to increase the diversity of quality opportunities for young people to experience and participate in dance

## **What we will do**

To meet the aims of this strategy Hampshire County Council (CCBS) will:

1. Work with professional partners collectively, to promote dance excellence across the County and leverage additional resource to support both the dance infrastructure in Hampshire and opportunities for participation and engagement.
2. Continue to support the aims of WDA, and look to develop routes into a career in dance for young people graduating from WDA. It is proposed that the impact of investment in WDA's work with many of the County's most vulnerable young people will be evaluated to provide ideas for future development of the project in partnership with Children's Services.
3. Create a new approach to our investment in dance by consolidating the Culture and Recreation Investment Fund and Annual Dance Bursaries Scheme strands. Proposals will be invited through an open competition process for a commissioned grant which delivers on the 3 key priorities previously outlined. Organisations will be able to apply individually or in partnership to deliver a programme of activities and initiatives supporting the aims of this strategy across Hampshire.
4. Support opportunities for people to engage with high quality dance performance and encourage organisations to lever funding from other sources through the Culture and Community Activity Grant funding, as they deliver against the County Council's priorities.
5. Support and broker opportunities to engage people in dance by advocating to colleagues (in Children's and Adult Services and the Health Authority, for example) the benefits of dance in delivering their agendas relating to both older people and children.

## **Measures of Success**

New Dimensions in Dance seeks to encourage innovation, engagement and efficiency of investment within Hampshire's dance sector. Its success will be measured primarily by achievement of the following indicators:

1. Establishing a new strategic commissioned grant with successful external organisation/s, with measures of success agreed against the priorities and aims of this strategy and a monitoring and evaluation framework created.
2. Programme of skills and professional development created to support dancers at different points in their career.
3. New types of partnership working developed that delivers dance activity.
4. Evidence for the economic and social impact of WDA, including the difference made to lives of the young people taking part.
5. Evidence of additional funding secured to add value to the commissioned grant investment.

## Background Information and Wider Context

Dance is one of the most democratic, popular and fast growing creative activities in the UK; but, as in music, there is a wide range of dance genres performed and presented in a huge range of locations. Dance practice and participation is very broad and audiences for dance are eclectic in their tastes. The language of dance crosses boundaries of culture, ethnicity and disability and provides opportunities for exchange and participation across communities and continents. Popular television shows such as *'Strictly Come Dancing'* and *'So you think you can Dance'* have propelled unlikely stars into the limelight and have had an impact on the take up of leisure dance.

In the area of youth dance, across the country, tens of thousands of young people attend private dance schools and progress through structured training programmes, achieving recognised qualifications. There is an increasing number of opportunities (in the network of arts and community centres) to take part in street dance, culturally diverse dance, contemporary dance and less formal dance activity. Historically dominated by girls, increasingly opportunities for boys are being made to encourage them to dance.

The development of dance houses such as Sadlers Wells in London and a range of adventurous regional venues, such as The Point in Eastleigh with both theatre and creation spaces, have transformed the audience for both ballet and a wide range of contemporary dance performance. Increasingly dance is taking to the streets and open air settings.

## Professional Development

Of the 30,000 dance and dance related jobs in the UK only 2,500 of these are performers. The greatest numbers of dance professionals are teachers, some 22,500, the balancing 5,000 being engaged in support professions such as choreography, production and management<sup>4</sup>.

**Performer** jobs in dance companies such as the Royal Ballet are few in number. Most performer contracts tend to be short term, for the run of a West End Show, a contemporary dance tour, pop videos or advertising. Many dance professionals have portfolio careers that embrace performance and teaching, or other employment, to sustain themselves. It is particularly important for performers to have a broad portfolio of skills as a dancer's life can be very short, with the ever present danger of injury which can cut short a performing career.

A career in **dance teaching** can take place in many settings. In the schools sector dance is often taught with another subject, such as PE or Drama, although students can take GCSE and BTEC qualifications. For post 16 students there is also the potential to study at A Level. There are a wide range of Community Dance practitioners who work in a range of settings such as arts organisations, private dance schools and tertiary institutions. In the Hampshire area three universities, Chichester, Surrey (Guildford) and Winchester, all have well regarded dance degrees at undergraduate and post graduate level. Dance Up, The Point, Pavilion Dance South West in Bournemouth, Swindon Dance and South East Dance (based in Brighton) also engage teachers and performers. In a small number of locations across the UK dance practitioners work within the Youth Justice System pioneering the use of dance as a tool of social engagement with some of our most vulnerable young people.

**Dance production** and presentation, in whichever dance genre, requires a range of professionals in its creation, presentation and touring. Management, administration, choreography, lighting, costume design and technical management are required to realise the work on stage. In the last decade an increasing number of dance professionals are working with dance film (making work for the screen),

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Susanne Burns - Mapping Dance.

collaborating with visual artists and animators. This work is often seen in dance screenings however much of the work is suited for a gallery setting.

The physical demands of dance require professionals to be careful of their **health** and many develop skills and teaching practice in exercise such as Pilates or Yoga or train as physiotherapists or nutritionists. In a wide range of settings dance participation is used as part of a portfolio of activity that maintains or promotes a healthy lifestyle.

In developing a strategy for dance excellence in the County, a holistic view of the dance ecology needs to be taken into consideration. The scale and geography of the County has to be factored in alongside the need to understand the entry points and motivations for dance participants, audiences, leisure dancers or aspiring professionals. As an economic sector in its own right with both its direct delivery and extended supply chain it makes an identifiable contribution to the cultural economy of the County.

## **The Regional Context**

Over the last year a number of changes have taken place which have had an impact on the regional and therefore Hampshire dance context. In the review of its national Funding Portfolio Arts Council England made a number of strategic funding decisions. Neither Hampshire Dance nor Youth Dance England were included in the new portfolio. The network of Audience Development agencies, which provide support to independent organisations, has also been reduced.

As part of this review, Arts Council England identified a national network of 'Bridge' organisations, to ensure all children and young people experience the richness of the arts both in and outside of school. These organisations will provide a direct 'bridge' between the work of arts and cultural organisations, schools and communities. Artswork, based in Southampton, has been selected as one of **10** Bridge Organisations across England.

In addition to this, in April 2013 the Arts Council regions were revised. The impact for Hampshire is that it has moved from the South East to the South West region. This will mean new relationships will need to be made with Arts Council South West and organisations in the South West region and may also present new opportunities for linking up and developing new approaches to arts development. Dance Up and The Point have been invited to join the south west network Dance Matters as part of a group of key organisations working on dance development in the region and both organisations remain members of the South East Dance Strategy Group.

## **Hampshire Context**

In terms of **participation**, arts centres and theatres in Aldershot, Andover, Basingstoke, Bordon, Eastleigh, Fareham, Havant, New Milton and Winchester programme a wide range of classes, mostly with an emphasis on youth participation but also including adult leisure classes, are available on a regular basis. Holiday activities for young people also often include dance project activity. The range of dance styles is varied including classes for young people with special needs and this complements the provisions made by the estimated 200 private dance schools across the County.

Professional dance **performance** is less well represented across the County's venues. **The Point** in Eastleigh has carved out for itself a role in the presentation of contemporary dance, bringing some of the best in Britain to its stage. A concerted audience development strategy has resulted in a loyal following for a range of cutting edge performances. The purpose built creation space also enables the Point to attract dancers and choreographers of national and international standing to Eastleigh and also to support emerging companies in their development. **The Anvil**, with its large stage, has the capacity to host large scale popular dance performances with ballet, street and ballroom performances

featuring in the Spring 2012 season. **The Haymarket** also hosts dance performance. The **Theatre Royal in Winchester** presents dance performance from time to time with regular visits by a number of companies. The programme is focused on dance with a theatrical slant and complements the programmes in other venues and they host the Wessex Dance Academy graduation performances. For the **small and medium scale arts centres**, programming dance presents challenges in terms of available product, cost and the nature of their stage spaces, which are often not suitable for dance. However most of the venues host community performances in a range of scales. Hampshire has a well developed infrastructure for outdoor work and organisations such as **Hat Fair** have included dance as part of their programme in both 2012 and 2013 in partnership with Dance Up and Big Dance 2012.

**The Wessex Dance Academy** is a new initiative undertaken in partnership with Dance United, which uses contemporary dance training to transform the lives of our most vulnerable young people. A number of pilots took place across the County in 2009 and 2010 demonstrating the impact of this work. The Wessex Dance Academy currently has its own base in Winchester and is running three, ten week cohorts each year. This is currently funded up until 2015/16. The Academy is a partnership between HCC Culture Community and Business Services and Children's Services and works with University of Winchester, Theatre Royal Winchester, and with the active support of the Youth Justice system (including Youth Offending Team and Magistrates). The quality of the Academy studio lends itself to the development of a wider programme that aims to raise the aspiration of young people associated with the Academy through extended dance activity, such as Wessex Boys Group.

Fifty-five young people from Hampshire who are young offenders, excluded from school or in care have already been through the Wessex Dance Academy programme. Participants attend for 12 weeks intensive dance tuition leading to performances in some of the county's best venues. During the programme, they learn the physical and mental disciplines required by a demanding dance programme and develop skills for successful team work with other people.

Independent Social Return on Investment evaluation that tracked young people attending an Academy pilot project used Home Office data to conclude that for every £1 invested in the project, there had been a return of £11.93 to society, the County Council, the Police and other agencies.

The research further showed an 89% reduction in the number of offences committed by the young people and a reduction in the seriousness of offences committed by the young people. Property offences reduced by 41%, violent offences reduced by 66% and drug offences reduced to zero.

Those who work with the young people who have been through the Academy programme regularly report improvements in participants' motivation and behaviours and exit strategies for each participant have resulted in many of these young people re-gaining momentum in education, training or employment.

The Academy completes its initial 3 year phase in summer 2014. Full independent evaluation of the programme is currently under consideration. This will provide evidence of the programme's performance to inform planning for the Academy's future.

Support for **professional development, dance making and leadership** in the County is provided by two organisations; Dance Up and The Point who link up with South East Dance and moving forward, Pavilion Dance South West, as the strategic dance agencies for the regions.

**Dance Up** is the new working name for The Hampshire Dance Trust. Its mission is 'to initiate high quality opportunities for participants, audiences and artists to enjoy and excel in dance. To do this Dance Up will:

- Commission great dance to happen in unusual places, in collaboration with a wide range of partners
- Create innovative opportunities for young people and adults to take part in dance
- Provide targeted support for dancers, dance makers and dance leaders in achieving their full potential through involvement in commissions and projects
- Develop creative use of digital media as a means of communication, engagement and distribution

**The Point** is a hub for the development of artists and includes a dedicated dance studio, rehearsal and performance space. It has four key strands of activity which are interlinked:

- Developing opportunities for the community to participate in high quality dance experiences
- Offering training opportunities and developing the skills of dance artists, practitioners and the community
- Commissioning and presenting work of national and international significance, which develops new audiences through the Creation Space Residency model
- Helping emerging talent into sustainable careers through an associate artist scheme, gifted and talented programme and career internships

In the Hampshire area there are three universities, Chichester, Surrey (Guildford) and Winchester with well regarded dance degrees at undergraduate and post graduate level. Although some of these graduates stay in the area, in order to grow the dance community in Hampshire there is a need to find ways to support graduates to stay in the area, as well as encourage professionals to re-locate to Hampshire.

Combining the approximately 200 private dance schools in the County with the independent dance practitioners and companies, the performance opportunities in venues, specialist facilities (The Point) and agencies (Dance Up) plus teaching staff across schools and academic institutions, the Dance sector makes an important contribution to the cultural economy of the county.