

Agenda Item No: 4

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 23rd April 2013

Report Title: "Stour Valley Arts - Investing in Ashford" - A 12-month review and presentation to O&S Committee

Report Author: Chris Dixon, Arts and Cultural Industries Manager



Summary:

Stour Valley Arts (SVA) is a significantly important arts organisation based both in Ashford Town Centre and Kings Wood Challock, which aims to increase awareness and enjoyment of contemporary art while encouraging greater interest in the environment through arts commissions, school education projects, public exhibitions, publications and international collaborations.

Councillors are reminded that last year (2011/12) Ashford Borough Council Cultural Services (ABC) together in close partnership with the Arts Council England (ACE) and Kent County Council (KCC) responded constructively and quickly to support SVA with their Recovery and Stabilisation Strategy, to ensure they continue to deliver top quality arts development in the Borough whilst improving their administration and operational arrangements.

Since our commitment last year, SVA have made significant strides to ensure they become the UK's leading arts and environment organisation as well as meet the Council's expectations over the next three years, in return for our agreed investment, including:

- Appointing new Director, Huttson Lo (formerly Arts Council)
- Appointing new Chairman of the Trust, Martin Hall (Director of Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway)
- Completing a full skills set review of SVA Trustees including replacing and recruiting personnel
- Approving with partners their 3-year Business and Fund Raising Plan
- Succeeding in becoming one of only a select number of Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs), along with Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company
- Planning to secure an additional £1m of external investment and sponsorship this financial year (13/14) with £300k worth of applications already submitted
- Participating actively with Ashford Borough Council's Public Art Working Group, Portas Pilot Agenda, and Grow the Arts Strategy.

This presentation "Stour Valley Arts - Investing in Ashford" by newly appointed Director Huttson Lo, shares with the

Committee the detail of achievements to date, and how they are meeting our service outcomes and performance measures, detailed in their 3-year Grant Offer Agreement.

Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards:

Recommendations: That the Committee be asked to note the progress made with SVA and provide any feedback to the presentation

Policy Overview: **Ashford's 5 yr Business Plan: The Ashford Arts Strategy "Grow the Arts"** that recognises that the Council needs to invest in the arts, especially to support the new arts and education programmes
Ashford 2030 – A Framework that aims to facilitate a stronger, integrated cultural and leisure offer

Financial Implications: Within approved revenue budget.

Background Papers:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes 24/04/2012
- Ashford Arts Strategy "Grow the Arts"
- Ashford 2030 – A Framework
- www.stourvalleyarts.org.uk

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