



**A Report from the
Overview and Scrutiny Manager**

**Report of the Community Overview and
Scrutiny Committee on a potential
Theatre/Arts Centre**

Report Reference: OS 06/03

August 2003

1. INTRODUCTION

At the start of the 2002/03 civic year Overview and Scrutiny Committees consulted widely over which topics they should consider under that part of their work programme devoted to Subject Reviews/Inquiries. The committees then evaluated the topics, which came out of that consultation using a series of criteria. Those criteria included community support for an issue and whether it featured in the authority's Corporate Plan. On both counts a review on the potential for developing a Theatre/Arts Centre scored highly and was selected for review by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee then endorsed this review.

2. PROCESS

As a first step the committee considered a background report (August 2002), prepared by the Overview and Scrutiny Manager which covered: -

- existing and planned provision
- potential impacts on council services
- the position on funding and bidding
- the Council's own unsuccessful bid in the late 1990's
- demand issues
- business planning
- potential sites.

Following this the committee decided to proceed by way of verbal evidence initially from: -

- the Council's then Director of Leisure and Community Development (Euan Cartwright) (October 2002),
- the Council's Arts Development Manager (Mick North) (October and November 2002)
- the North West Arts' officer responsible for Cumbria (Ian Tabbrown) (November 2002).

During this period a group which became Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust had come together. They were formed initially following concerns over the future of the Lonsdale Cinema, and thus the future of independent cinema provision in the city, but were by this time exploring a Theatre/Arts Centre facility on that site. The committee, therefore, decided that the next step was to seek evidence from this

group and subsequently received this at two sessions (March and July 2003) from:-

- the trust's chairman (Nick Addington)
- their consultant (Arthur Stafford).

The trust having appointed this consultant to undertake a feasibility study on 'The potential for the redevelopment of the Lonsdale Building'.

3. THE EVIDENCE RECEIVED – SUPPORTING PAPERS

The following papers are included with this report:-

- Theatre/Arts Centre Review/Inquiry - Background Report (Appendix 1)
- Relevant Minute Extracts - Community O&S Committee Meetings (Appendix 2)
- Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust - Report and Presentation July 2003 (Appendix 3)

4. THE COMMITTEE'S FINDINGS FROM THE EVIDENCE RECEIVED

- a. The City Council's own earlier research on needs/demand is probably still valid but may need to be reviewed/refreshed if it is to be relied upon further.
- b. Lottery and Arts Council England capital funding is much more restricted than previously, making any multi-million £ cultural development very difficult and provision of a traditional theatre as the Council had envisaged in the late 1990's financially unachievable.
- c. Because of Cumbria Institute of the Arts own requirements there is limited and declining capacity to allow for additional programming at Stanwix Arts Theatre and it would also not be cost effective for the Council to pursue this option for development of this service.
- d. There is, however, a likelihood that Arts Council England North West would provide more financial support to arts programmes in Carlisle if programming can be expanded in some way.
- e. Members had expected a more detailed feasibility study from Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust however, as both the trust and its consultant acknowledge, there is considerable further work required before the feasibility of their proposal can be satisfactorily tested and a robust project plan developed.

f. If the trust's proposal proceeds there are a number of issues relating to the Council's existing service provision, which will need further consideration including:-

- impact on and relationship with Tullie House
- future of current Stanwix Theatre programme (the committee believe full transfer of that programme to any new facility would be essential)
- future of the Council's current Arts Development Service.

g. In terms of operational arrangements for the proposed new facility then the committee feel that there must be significant reservations about:-

- the viability of any facility which still involved continuing separate independent cinema provision outwith the trust
- the wisdom of adopting any staffing arrangement which was heavily dependent on volunteers and/or annual fund raising/sponsorship.

h. The nature of the trust's proposal (involving community and social aspects as central to the concept) provides great potential benefits across a number of the Council's objectives including in particular those relating to economic prosperity, health and well being and perhaps most significantly the community.

i. Although a city centre location is highly desirable there are concerns in relation the proximity of public car parking.

j. There is a presumption of significant economic impact in the city centre but this should be verified in any further feasibility work.

k. The potential for a professional theatre company being based in the proposed new facility should be explored further although it is recognised that this may be over-ambitious.

l. Subject to these observations the type of development envisaged by the trust offers the most realistic option for achieving significant Theatre/Arts Centre development in the city.

m. If this project is to be supported by the City Council then this will require ongoing collaborative input from Council officers henceforth as it develops.

n. The City Council needs to be clear about whether development of a Theatre/Arts Centre is a high priority.

o. If it is, then the Executive needs to consider:-

- how the Council should be involved in taking it forward
 - the nature of any financial commitment it would be willing to make
- and
- make appropriate recommendations to full Council.



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 29th August 2002

Title: THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE REVIEW/INQUIRY - BACKGROUND
REPORT

Report of: Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Report reference: TC 171/02

Summary:

The report provides background information for Members prior to the start of this review/inquiry and suggests the next steps in the process.

Recommendations:

Members note the information, give their views on the issues and agree the next steps.

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1. Existing and Planned Provision

1.1 Stanwix Arts Theatre (280 seats) - This refurbished and successful venue provides a varied programme with direct programming and promotional input by the City Council through the Arts Development Manager.

1.2 West Walls Theatre (130 seats) - Again this has been refurbished and works well in fulfilling the needs of the amateur theatre club.

1.3 Lonsdale Trust - Members will have seen media coverage of the possibilities (copy web pages attached as Appendix 1). The building, although well located, is not without problems since it may be impossible to provide satisfactory backstage space and scene dock/vehicular access.

1.4 Theatre by the Lake (400 seats main, 73 seats studio) - Hugely successful new venue with very high occupancy rates. Draws audiences in part from Carlisle and East Cumbria. Blossoming relationship with Stanwix including joint programming and provision of Stanwix Youth Theatre.

2. Impacts on City Council Services

2.1 The provision of a Theatre/Arts Centre would inevitably impact on certain existing services. There would be some degree of competition in the areas of programming and audiences with both the Sands Centre and Tullie House. These impacts would affect the Leisuretime Trust and likewise any potential Tullie House trust. These impacts would need to be assessed as part of any future proposal.

3. Funding and Bidding

3.1 National/Regional Policy – The Lottery (Arts Programme) has reduced considerably from late 1990's levels as a consequence of the re-focussing of lottery funding generally, however, significant funding is still available. All grants over £100K are now dealt with through the Arts Council on a national basis. Their capital programme, which gives capital grants of up to £5m., is run on a bi-annual basis (in years 2003,2005,2007) with the objectives and criteria being set and published a matter of months ahead of the next bidding round. The objectives and criteria for the 2003 capital programme are due shortly. There are no set percentages for grant levels or amount of partnership funding, each scheme is judged individually. By way of example the total capital fund for 2001 was

£90m., this covered 60+ projects with average grants in the region of £1.5m. Half of the fund was targeted at Asian/African/Caribbean arts.

North West Regional Policy does not currently include a theatre in Carlisle. These factors would need to be considered in developing any future proposal.

3.2 Previous City Council Bid – Following a review of performing arts provision a bid for lottery funding was put forward starting in 1997. This was for an £8m. 500-seat theatre linked to the Sands Centre, which initially found favour. However, changes to the assessment process went against it and despite further development work it was ultimately rejected. The reasons were not given directly but there seemed to be a preference for a stand-alone venue with a greater emphasis on artistic output rather than the business planning aspect. The bid itself cost £150K and was part funded by grant. This may make it more difficult to gain grant aid to develop another bid.

3.3 Recent Failures – members will be aware of some high profile failures amongst new projects in the North East (The ARC and Durham Theatre); these will undoubtedly lead to greater caution on the part of the grant giving bodies. Learning from these schemes would need to be part of any future proposal.

4. Demand

4.1 A comprehensive demand study formed part of the previous bid (and was supportive of that proposal) but would now be out of date. Such market analysis is, however, accepted as valid and has proved sufficiently accurate. It would need to form part of any future proposal and up-front funding be found for it.

4.2 Higher/Further Education demands/needs would need to be considered. Also student views as a potential audience sector although experience elsewhere tends to suggest that they favour music venues which are difficult to combine with theatre in a single location.

4.3 There are good examples of successful theatres in similar cities including York, Chester, Exeter and Plymouth.

5. Business Planning and Related Issues

5.1 It is well recognised that outside London virtually all theatres run with substantial revenue support, the extent obviously varying with size, occupancy, programme policy etc. The previous Carlisle proposal envisaged a £300K per annum deficit with a £25K sponsorship contribution to this. It may be wise to be cautious as to the extent of potential

sponsorship which may be sustainable in Carlisle, given past experience and the nature and composition of the local economy (i.e. the limited number of larger firms and the relatively high number of 'branch plants' as opposed to headquarters).

5.2 Delivery of comparable theatres/arts centres is either directly by local authorities or through a not for profit organisation (e.g. a trust) with which Members are already familiar. The history of these would suggest a significant role for the City Council in any such proposal.

6. Sites

6.1 A considerable range of suitable locations were explored in a detailed options appraisal in 1999 and, with the exception of sites subsequently developed, this study could still prove useful. The study included – Stanwix Arts Theatre, former Palace Theatre, Lonsdale, Strand Road Sports Centre, former Her Majesty's Theatre site and Bitts Park Depot.

7. Next Steps

7.1 The aim of the review should be to make an initial assessment of the potential for the development of a Theatre/Arts Centre Scheme for Carlisle and to make appropriate recommendations to the Executive as to how this may be taken forward.

7.2 It is proposed that the next steps should be to invite the Director of Leisure and Community Development and Arts Development Manager to the next meeting of the committee. They can then give their views based on their detailed knowledge and experience of these matters. They would also respond to Members' questions.

7.3 Depending on the outcomes of that session the way forward for consideration at subsequent meetings can then be agreed. The committee may wish to see representatives of other interested parties. Indeed, it may be appropriate to hold a special meeting at which all interested parties could put their views. The committee may also wish to invite an officer from the Arts Council Regional Office to attend a future meeting.

7.4 Members' suggestions on inputs to the review are particularly welcomed at this stage so that they can be included.

8. Recommendations:

8.1 Members note the information, give their views on the issues and agree the next steps.

EXCERPTS FROM THE MINUTES OF COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES RE THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 29 August 2002

COS.123/02 THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE REVIEW/INQUIRY –
BACKGROUND REPORT

The Chairman advised that he was aware that certain Members were critical of a further review being undertaken into the possible provision of a Theatre in Carlisle. He felt that this review should examine whether a facility could be provided and by whom, and stressed that the City Council would not, in his view, act as a provider.

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy confirmed that the matter appeared in the Carlisle City Vision 2002-2012 document and had been included in the Committee's Work Programme following consultation.

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy then presented report TC.171/02 providing Members with background information prior to the start of the Theatre/Arts Centre Review/Inquiry.

He outlined existing and planned provision which included:

Stanwix Arts Theatre (280 seats);
West Walls Theatre (130 seats);
Lonsdale Trust; and
Theatre by the Lake (400 seats main, 73 seats studio).

The provision of a Theatre/Arts Centre would inevitably impact on certain existing services (i.e. The Sands Centre and Tullie House) and these impacts would require to be assessed as part of any future proposal.

Details of funding and bidding, demand, business planning and related issues and possible locations were also provided.

He commented that the aim of the Review should be to make an initial assessment of the potential for development of a Theatre/Arts Centre Scheme for Carlisle and make appropriate recommendations to the Executive on the manner by which that may be taken forward.

It was proposed that the next steps should be to invite the Director of Leisure and Community Development and Arts Development Manager to the next meeting of the Committee. Officers could then give their views, based on their detailed knowledge and experiences of such matters, and respond to Members' questions.

Depending upon the outcomes of that session the way forward for consideration at subsequent meetings could then be agreed.

Members' suggestions on inputs to the Review were particularly welcomed so that they could be included.

In considering the matter, Members made the following points:

- (a) The City did want a Theatre and the information previously compiled by the Theatre Working Group could be used as a basis for this review.
- (b) It may be that any Theatre/Arts Centre could best be provided as separate entities.
- (c) Programming was important and a high standard of entertainment provision essential.
- (d) The financial viability of such a project required careful investigation.
- (e) Information should be obtained from other Authorities who had developed a Theatre/Arts Centre.
- (f) It was particularly important at this stage not to raise public expectation that such a venue would be provided.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Activities noted that there was no reference to the North Cumbria Technology College bid within the report.

RESOLVED – That report TC.171/02 be noted and the next steps, as detailed in Section 7 thereof, agreed.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 10 October 2002

COS.135/02 THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE REVIEW/INQUIRY – BACKGROUND REPORT

Pursuant to Minute COS.123/02, the Director of Leisure and Community Development and the Arts Development Manager had been invited to attend the meeting to present their views, based on their detailed knowledge and experience of such matters, and respond to Members' questions.

The Director of Leisure and Community Development commented that, in his experience, it was unlikely that an outside body would be forthcoming who was prepared to provide funding to build a Theatre or, indeed, to run it and stressed that those costs would fall upon the City Council. The Committee must therefore ask itself 2 questions:

- What could the Council afford to build? and

- What could it afford to run?

He acknowledged that certain of the baseline information compiled previously would still be valid and significant demand existed within the area for the provision of a Theatre.

The Director drew attention to the Stanwix Arts Theatre which provided a varied programme, with direct programming and promotional input through the Arts Development Manager. He suggested that it would be possible to provide additional programming and staffing at Stanwix for a modest cost.

The Arts Development Manager stated that, in the event that funding became available, the Council would require to show that it had done everything possible with the resources currently available, and that Carlisle required that type of improved facility. He commented that a small capital fund had recently become available from the Northern Rock Foundation, stressing that the Council needed to be in a position to make a bid should such resources be forthcoming in the future. He felt that the continued development of the Stanwix Arts Theatre would be a significant step in that direction.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being commented that the City already had a number of venues e.g. the Sands Centre, Stanwix Arts Theatre and the Green Room that delivered excellent performances. He believed that the Council needed to talk to people to make things happen which would not necessarily involve a purpose built venue.

A Member stated that there was a gap in provision in Carlisle, particularly as regards larger scale events. He believed that revenue costs was an issue and cautioned against raising public expectation that a Theatre would be provided. He added that if demand existed then the option of developing Stanwix Arts Theatre for slightly larger scale productions should be investigated.

The Arts Development Manager confirmed that he could investigate possible options and report back.

A Member questioned whether potential existed for an Arts Centre to be linked to the Lonsdale Trust.

The Arts Development Manager commented that the Trust now had funding to undertake an initial feasibility study, the outcome of which was as yet unknown, and suggested that it would be sensible to await the outcome of that study.

A Member questioned how many people from Carlisle visited other venues e.g. The Theatre by the Lake and asked that the Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy obtain that information. The Arts Development Manager added that it may be worthwhile contacting the Queens Hall in Haxham on that point.

The Chairman then thanked the Officers for their input to the meeting.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy be requested to obtain the statistical information outlined above and report back to this Committee.

(2) That the Arts Development Manager be requested to investigate options for and implications of the provision of additional programming at Stanwix Arts Theatre and report back to this Committee.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 21 November 2002

COS.152/02 THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE REVIEW/INQUIRY – PROPOSALS FOR EXPANDING THE STANWIX ARTS THEATRE PROGRAMME

The Arts Development Manager introduced Mr Ian Tabbron, Cumbria Officer – North West Arts who had a professional background in drama, theatre and performing arts.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Tabbron to the meeting.

Pursuant to Minute COS.135/02, the Arts Development Manager presented report LCD.36/02 concerning the possible expansion of The Stanwix Arts Theatre programme in the context of aspirations for improved provision contained within the City Vision.

He outlined the history of the Theatre commenting that, since 1991, the City Council had managed and promoted its programme and had developed a close partnership with the College of Art and Design (now known as Cumbria Institute of the Arts).

Since the refurbishment of the Theatre (completed in Autumn 2000) the Stanwix Arts Theatre Steering Group had met on a regular basis to ensure that the College's academic needs were balanced with those of the professional performance programme and external hirers of the venue. Although the refurbishment had reduced the capacity of the auditorium from 290 to 217, it had introduced a new flexibility. The bleacher seating could be retracted and replaced, for example, by cabaret-style seating and technical facilities in terms of lighting and staging had also been significantly improved.

On performance days, the College's technical staff, catering contractor and students provided visiting companies with assistance as necessary.

The Arts Development Manager outlined the professional programme for the current financial year, drawing Members' attention to the spreadsheet appended to the report which showed actual figures for last year's

programme, the projected outturn for this year, and an estimated budget for next year based on additional Council expenditure of £30,000.

Additional funding of £10,000 from the Arts Council of England's Drama Review had allowed for an increase in the number of performances from 16 in 2001-02 to 31 in the current year, but had placed a considerable strain on staff time. The investment of an additional £30,000 by the City Council could fund a new post and provide a further £4,320 for programme costs, which would support a programme of at least 40 performances a year. Provision had also been made within the proposed budget for an education programme in the form of workshops led by members of visiting companies with schools, community groups and the College's own students.

The Arts Development Manager highlighted a number of difficulties as regards the Theatre, including programming, its out-of-town location which was a barrier to attendance, and the fact that it was primarily a teaching resource within a College campus rather than a fully fledged public arts venue.

However, it would be sensible and desirable to make the most of the Theatre, and it was reasonable to anticipate that audiences would grow if the number and variety of performances were increased and the venue's profile raised by more vigorous marketing.

A feasibility Study was being undertaken in respect of the Lonsdale Trust, including the Cinema and Gala Bingo next door, which should be complete around Christmas time. The Arts Development Manager suggested that this Committee may wish to have sight of that report.

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy further suggested that the feasibility study be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration prior to conclusion of the Review, which was agreed.

The Chairman thanked the Arts Development Officer for his report. He suggested that, rather than making a recommendation to the Executive at that stage, the Committee's views be presented in a report to the Executive at the conclusion of the Review.

As regards the Stanwix Arts Theatre Booking Schedule, a Member commented that most of the available time was during the week, rather than at weekends when most people were likely to visit a Theatre.

The Arts Development Officer commented that the use of Sundays could be investigated, together with the potential for companies to perform for 2/3 day periods. It was agreed that that aspect be incorporated into the ongoing Review.

Members asked Mr Tabbron for his views regarding Theatre provision in Carlisle and the costs associated with the construction of a new Theatre.

In response Mr Tabbron commented that the view amongst NWA colleagues was that Officers in Carlisle worked hard and were efficiently programming and managing a good deal of activity. However, due to capacity issues they were not necessarily able to take advantage of opportunities (such as funding) and planning strategically for developments. The proposal submitted by the Arts Development Manager sought to address that issue and he supported that. Carlisle had received considerably less than equitable share of RALP monies over the lifetime of the scheme and more time could be devoted to the preparation of RALP and other funding applications.

In the best of all possible worlds Carlisle would have a state of the art Performing Arts Centre, but the capital funding position was such that that was extremely unlikely in the foreseeable future. The cost of a new build would perhaps be £10 - £12 million. It would therefore be sensible to look to maximise the potential of existing facilities within known or realistic resources. However, sufficient Officer time for planning, fund finding and partnership building was essential for Carlisle to "position itself" so it would be able to respond to and take advantage of changes at the Arts Board, at the RDA and in regional and national Government policies.

A Member further asked Mr Tabbron for advice on running such a venue. Mr Tabbron indicated that he would require to look at the Business Plan for any organisation before he could make a recommendation. He had nothing against Trusts which had greater capacity to raise finance.

The Chairman thanked Mr Tabbron for his attendance.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be received.

(2) That the Arts Development Manager be requested to arrange for the feasibility study on the Lonsdale Trust to be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 27 March 2003

COS.32/03 THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE REVIEW

Mr Nick Addington, Chairman of The Lonsdale Trust, introduced Ms C Bird and Mr Arthur Stafford of CREATE Consultants who were in attendance at the meeting.

By way of introduction, Mr Addington commented that The Lonsdale Trust was a voluntary body of charitable status. Public meetings had been called in response to concerns as to the future of the cinema, and there was now the opportunity to secure that future and create a venue needed within the community i.e. Theatre space.

The Feasibility Research into the establishment of a new Community Arts Facility in Carlisle was not yet complete and would not answer all questions. However, an interim update would be provided today.

Mr Stafford provided details of his professional background, which included responsibilities in relation to the National Lottery Programme, indicating that he would bring that experience to bear in his work on this project.

From the outset Mr Stafford stressed the need to be realistic, commenting that funding would not be available to support both the Stanwix Arts Theatre and this project. Therefore a balance required to be struck between what people would like to see and what could be afforded. A body of historic information existed largely gathered by the Council in its previous investigations, the principles of which remained valid, and it would be prudent to apply the lessons learnt in the past.

Mr Stafford then gave a detailed presentation to the meeting on the Feasibility Research undertaken to date, which included:

- the objectives and scope of the research;
- research outcomes and key issues;
- research and organisational philosophy;
- scope of activities;
- scope of accommodation;
- capital costings;
- revenue implications; and
- characteristics of Arts Centres.

Mr Stafford indicated that the capital cost would be between £2.7m - £3.8m + purchase price which was challenging. The projected income figures outlined were very conservative but he was comfortable with that. As things stood at the moment a predicted revenue deficit of between £45,000 and £50,000 existed. As regards the timetable for the project, then by the time a design team was appointed, drawings were produced and funding put in place, it would be towards the end of 2005.

The Chairman and Members thanked Mr Stafford for his impressive and informative presentation.

Mr Addington advised that the study should be complete within 3-4 weeks and the final report would include details of funding availability.

Mr Addington and Mr Stafford then responded to a number of questions from Members, including relating to access and income and expenditure estimates.

RESOLVED – That the presentation on the Feasibility Research undertaken to date into the establishment of a new Community Arts Facility in Carlisle be noted and the Committee looked forward to receiving the final study in due course.

Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17 July 2003

COS.67/03 THEATRE ARTS CENTRE FEASIBILITY STUDY

With reference to minute COS.32/03, the Chairman welcomed Mr N Addington, Chairman of the Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust, Mr R Pearson, Ms V Dawson, Mr P Strong and Mr M Fox, all directors or trustees of the Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust and Mr A Stafford, the consultant who had been appointed by the Trust.

Mr Addington outlined the vision to redevelop the building not just as a theatre but as an Art Centre providing various arts activities. The proposal envisaged a vibrant busy Art Centre which could be used throughout the day and at night and would put culture at the heart of the City and provide access to the arts for the wider community within Carlisle.

Mr Stafford then gave a presentation on the questions which had been addressed as part of the feasibility study and on the results of the study. The study provided an assessment of the broad feasibility of the proposal to develop the Lonsdale building as a mixed use Arts and Cinema. The idea would be to allow the buildings used to move with the times, offering three lines of work, including art and culture, community and social cohesion.

He then outlined lessons which had been learned from other similar buildings and commented on the potential operation of the building including different options for ownership and governance. Mr Stafford then went on to outline what could constitute a programme for the Arts Centre. In relation to staffing he advised that staffing would be commensurate with activities and community engagement and again he outlined options which could include professional staffing or a mix of professional/voluntary staffing.

Mr Stafford then gave a breakdown of anticipated finances. The capital cost of the scheme would be £4million plus with an anticipated revenue cost of between £50,000 and £200,000. The consultations which had taken place with various organisations as part of the feasibility study had led Mr Stafford to believe that if such a facility were placed in the heart of Carlisle there would be a strong level of interest translating itself into high levels of take up of programme opportunities.

He added that in relating to funding it was difficult to foresee how a new venture would succeed in attracting in the order of £200,000 annual subsidy on a regular basis from day one and he suggested that this could be the start of a discursive process to identify the scale of availability of revenue subsidy as early as possible.

He emphasised that very few schemes of this type come to fruition without full hearted support from the Local Authority and the Regional Office of the Arts Council of England.

In response to Members questions Mr Stafford and Mr Addington reported on consultation which they had held with local organisations including Stanwix and Prism Arts and they felt that these organisations had been positive about the proposal.

Mr Addington then outlined an anticipated timescale if the venture were to proceed and gave a vision of where the Lonsdale could be in five years time. Members, Trustees, the Chairman of the Trust and Mr Stafford then had a detailed discussion on a number of specific points which had been raised by Members of the Committee including:

- (a) There was concern about the cinema aspect and in particular the lack of clarity as to whether the current cinema operator would be involved in the Trust or would continue his existing operation in its own right. The cinema was seen as a crucial part of the whole proposal.
- (b) There was concern that the suggested revenue costs may not stack up and it was suggested that more work needed to be done on those revenue costs.
- (c) There was no indication of economic impact on the City Centre. If a positive economic impact in terms of jobs could be seen then it was felt that the public might be more supportive of the proposal.

Mr Stafford responded that there had so far been only an initial feasibility study undertaken and not a full in depth economic impact study which would have cost significantly more to undertake.

- (d) The ability to draw capital from a range of sources was questioned especially in the light of the fact that Liverpool had just been announced as the City of Culture. Mr Stafford responded that the Arts Council for England and the Department of Culture Media and Sport did not anticipate a negative impact on other projects in the North West as a result of Liverpool's City of Culture status.
- (e) It was not clear from the proposals whether the Trust envisaged a professional theatre company being based in the building and it was suggested that a professional theatre company could attract people from surrounding areas to come and see productions.
- (f) The importance of relationships with other groups in Carlisle and North Cumbria including other arts organisations and educational institutions was stressed.
- (g) In future reports it was felt that it would be useful if Carlisle could be compared with other comparable cities, including details of resources which had been put in by various funding bodies towards the creation of Arts Centres in relevant cities.

- (h) There did appear to be a lack of car parking for customers who may use the Theatre/Arts Centre in the evening. Mr Stafford commented that a transport study had not been undertaken as this was simply an initial feasibility study but other studies were commissioned these could include economic impact and transport facilities. The feasibility study was to test the viability of the use of the building and a full impact study including a building survey could be the next stage but would have a cost implication.

The Chairman then thanked Mr Stafford, Mr Addington and the trustees for attending the meeting. She advised them that the committee was not a decision making body but was gathering evidence on the viability of theatre provision in the city. The Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust had been invited to the meeting so that the consultant's evidence could be examined. She asked that the questions raised by this committee be taken on board as should a project of this size proceed the assessment of financial implications must be certain before progressing further.

RESOLVED – (1) That Officers be asked to prepare a report for the next meeting of the Committee pulling together all the evidence which has been presented to the Committee so far in order that it can be considered and recommendations made to the Executive with any ultimate decision being made by the City Council.

(2) That all the individuals involved in the meeting be thanked for their informative presentation and for taking the time to come to speak to the committee on the feasibility study.

CARLISLE LONSDALE ARTS CENTRE TRUST

STATUS REPORT
to Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Carlisle City Council
17 July 2003

1 Introduction

The Trust thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make a second presentation and apologises for being unable to do so at the previous meeting. Shortly after attending the meeting on 27 March, the consultant we are working with, Arthur Stafford of CREATE, experienced some health problems which have delayed completion of the initial feasibility study. Although elements of the final report have yet to be finalised, we have asked Arthur Stafford to attend this meeting to present the main conclusions of the study.

This paper sets out the Trust's position at this stage.

2 Feasibility Study Activity Report

Further to the interim report presented on 27 March, there have been discussions with several agencies including North West Development Agency, West Lakes Renaissance and Learning & Skills Council concerning funding issues, and with organisations such as Northwest Voluntary Network and Prism Arts concerning demand and patterns of use for the building. There has also been further consultation with potential users and the wider community through the City Council's Citizens' Panel and the County Council's Neighbourhood Fora.

Management models have been revisited and revenue projections benchmarked against comparable venues while further investigation has been made of potential capital funding sources.

A summary paper from Arthur Stafford is attached.

3 Presentation of Findings

Arthur Stafford's presentation will summarize the proposal for developing the Lonsdale building on Warwick Road as a mixed-use arts centre and cinema and his assessment of its broad feasibility, drawing on existing research and his additional investigations.

His conclusion is that this is a positive opportunity and he will outline the opportunities for attracting capital funding to achieve it and indicate the potential mix of revenue funding to maintain it.

4 Limitations of the Study

The work undertaken to date only addresses broad feasibility issues

and will raise some further questions which need more detailed investigation. For example, practical issues concerning the physical redevelopment can only be fully assessed by commissioning a full structural survey of the building.

5 Lonsdale & City Cinemas

The Trust has undertaken this work with the support of Alan Towers, proprietor of the Lonsdale & City Cinemas, who was the first to identify the threat – and the opportunity – that the potential sale of the building posed and encouraged the formation of the Trust.

We do not seek to develop a proposal which conflicts with Mr Towers' own aspirations but wish to work with him to achieve continuity of cinema provision in conjunction with a new theatre and arts centre development. The number of cinema screens included in a Lonsdale arts centre and the relationship of the cinema operation to the rest of the venue is something we would wish to determine in collaboration with him. Different scenarios are possible, each with their own benefits.

6 Next Steps

We understand that Gala Group Ltd plan to relocate their bingo club to premises on Botchergate by the beginning of 2004 and will be seeking bids from potential buyers of the Lonsdale building before then.

The Trust hopes that the Committee will note the findings of the feasibility study and make urgent recommendation to the Executive that Carlisle City Council assists the Trust in moving the project onto the next stage. We believe that developing the Lonsdale building would be a feasible way of achieving the objective of a theatre/arts centre for Carlisle and now wish to work with the City Council, other relevant organisations and Alan Towers to pursue this opportunity. We are optimistic of acquiring funding from Arts Council England North West and other sources to develop our plans but these will be dependent on clear City Council backing. As well as financial support, the Trust needs the City Council to actively engage in the project and particularly to help us investigate ways in which the building may be acquired within the available time frame.

The immediate tasks to be undertaken are:

- Full architectural survey
- Finalizing issues of ownership, governance etc.
- Full market investigation regarding capacity of building in terms of audiences, participants and users
- Provision of full business plan

A provisional brief and costing for this next stage is included in Arthur Stafford's paper.

Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust, July 2003

Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust

A Presentation to
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
on the potential for the redevelopment
of the Lonsdale Building

By

Arthur Stafford FRSA

17th July 2003

Introduction

On 27th March, a presentation was made to this Committee on behalf of Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust (CLACT) as to the development of a piece of work examining the possible future use of an important building located in the centre of Carlisle. The Lonsdale Cinema and Gala Bingo building is undoubtedly important to the social and recreational life of the City and the continuation of this use in this building may be in doubt given the decision of Gala to relocate to a new purpose-built venue.

As presented in the paper provided by the Trust, my work is broadly tasked around responding to four simple questions: -

- Can the building be adapted to a more general arts/cultural use?
- If this were to happen, what activities could take place in the building and who would come?
- How could such a building and programme of activities be managed?
- Is the underlying concept financially viable?

The Trust was successful in securing a level of funding (£ 5,000) allowing for a broad-brush examination of the concept and the possible impact of a revitalised Lonsdale venue upon Carlisle and the catchment area it serves. An agreement was made with CLACT for the consultancy work to combine contact time in Carlisle with desk research and telephone interviews. In the event, it was considered that a series of public fora as initially envisaged could be perceived as premature as the building is still being occupied and, as discussed at the March Overview & Scrutiny, we are wary of raising a level of expectation that may not be met.

The following Paper updates this Committee and draws from the Final Report, which is approaching a conclusion. In particular I have paid attention to matters that were raised during the last Presentation namely: -

- What could the new building look like? What could its programme be? What could be described as its essential nature?
- How could the building operate? What operational or organisational model would it follow?
- How viable could the venture be and would its establishment have a negative impact upon other venues / organisations in the City?
- How could the works be funded? What scale of subsidy could be required to maintain the proposed venue?

The Building

There has been some discussion as to the essential nature of the concept underlying the Lonsdale building's new use. As advised in March, CLACT has always believed that the vital ingredient is to maintain the building as a key provider of social and recreational opportunity for the people, all the people, of Carlisle. Since the building's initial construction, the Lonsdale has been an avenue for relaxation be it in the form of a Picture Palace or, latterly, mixed cinema and bingo.

The challenge now is to allow the building's use to move with the times so that the activities reflect the essentially integrated nature of the population. In the previous report to this Committee, we advised that we envisaged an eclectic programme within the building that keyed around three themes: -

- Art and culture – theatre, cinema, dance, music, visual arts. For example, touring in of professional productions and the staging locally/regionally produced work
- Community – support for voluntary organisations, hire of rehearsal studios and performance area, resources, meeting and working spaces, vocational, educational and recreational opportunities. For example, serviced office spaces for casual hire, allowing local/regional bands and groups rehearse and record in quality surroundings at realistic cost, series of activities (possibly art and craft based) managed by the Lonsdale but programmed in collaboration with local networks and providers of Continuing Education.
- Social cohesion – support, resources and opportunities for groups, bodies and agencies working with excluded communities. For instance, arts and disability, arts in health, training and accreditation for emerging artists coming from these communities probably in partnership with professional groups such as Prism Arts or public agencies such as Health and Social Services.

Externally, the building would look quite similar to the present. It will have been renovated to a certain extent and probably feature a piece, or pieces, of significant artwork commissioned as part of the capital programme. There will still be two entrances (or possibly a single entrance splitting into two) one leading to the cinema as at present and one leading into the performance spaces. Subject to a structural survey it is believed that the new performance auditoria (1 x 400 seat and 1 x 90 seat) would be grouped in the existing bingo area with offices, studios and the like also arranged within the existing envelope, or requiring minimal external works.

The programme would basically be split along the lines discussed above. The exact relationship between the existing cinema operation and the potentially new organisation is discussed below but, following a telephone conversation earlier today (9th July), I am given to understand that the present situation could best be described as fluid.

During the course of this work I have examined a series of other venues through visits and desk research across the country to get a feel for what has worked and what has not worked programme wise. For information, these venues were: -

- Lawrence Batley Theatre, Huddersfield
- Brewery Arts Centre, Kendal
- Theatre by the Lake, Keswick
- Citadel Arts Centre, St Helens
- Dukes Theatre, Lancaster
- The Castle Arts Centre, Wellingborough
- Salisbury Arts Centre, Salisbury
- The Lighthouse (formerly Poole Arts Centre), Poole
- The Landmark Arts Centre, Ilfracombe
- The Riverhead Theatre, Louth
- Arena Arts Centre, Wolverhampton
- Battersea Arts Centre, London
- Phoenix Arts Centre, Leicester
- Arts Centre, Colchester
- The Brewhouse, Taunton
- Old Fire Station, Oxford
- Bowen West Theatre, Bedford
- Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
- Trinity Arts Centre, Gainsborough
- Green Room, Manchester
- Cornerhouse, Manchester
- The Arches, Glasgow
- Studio Theatre and Gallery, Leeds
- Crucible and Lyceum Theatres, Sheffield
- The Showcase, Sheffield (regional independent film theatre)
- Pictureville, Bradford (regional independent film theatre)
- Valley Community Theatre, Liverpool
- Drama Centre, Portsmouth
- Thornes Park Arts Centre, Wakefield.

There were a number of key themes that came through, in brief: -

- There is a constant need to keep users and audiences involved in programming usually through focus groups with Board/Trustee representation.
- A mixed programme (professional, semi-professional and non-professional) is needed to keep audiences at a sustainable level.
- A strong link between touring-in product and education/outreach activities is vital if the investment in the touring production (could be in excess of £ 1,000 per night) is to be realised as providing good value for money.
- Cinema is a vital tool in the marketing portfolio as it represents the art form enjoying the widest support.
- High profile, local/regional political support is absolutely vital if the venue concerned is serious about having a solid future.

So, what does all this mean for the proposed Lonsdale development?

It means that it is probably unlikely that a bespoke arts initiative (such as a new theatre – lyric or otherwise) will be sustainable in the future and therefore the investment in such a venture may be called into question. In a place such as Carlisle, the model offering the greatest degree of confidence appears to be a building having artistic or cultural opportunity at its heart but having a programme that reflects the diverse interests and aspirations of the community in which the building is located.

As reflected in one of the recently published Briefings by the Audit Commission (A Fruitful Partnership, Effective Partnership Working), part of the secret to successful capacity building is through building partner participation. If a mechanism can be determined that locks local and regional people into the building – it's events and activities will be attended for the simple reason that such events and activities have been informed through, and by, the community.

The Operation

The building's operation (ownership, governance and organisation) is clearly a key ingredient. The finer detail involved in this will be the subject of a later study but we have sufficient information to explore some of the issues at stake and, possibly, their resolution.

If we look at ownership first. The simplest option is for an organisation, let us call this CLACT for the purposes of simplicity, to acquire the building on a freehold basis and to operate it either as a Charitable Trust or Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status. This situation assumes that CLACT has secured the building outright, probably on vacant possession, or had the freehold bequeathed to them by a third party. The building could then be operated on a prosaic basis through a trading company.

The second model is for a third party to acquire the building on a vacant possession basis and to lease the building to, say, CLACT on a landlord basis – CLACT being responsible for managing the asset, paying a regular peppercorn rent but the landlord being responsible for the externals. There are a number of precedents for this one of the most recent being the acquisition of the Lawrence Batley Theatre by Kirklees District Council for the Lawrence Batley Theatre Trust. In effect the District Council has extended a low interest loan to the Trust in much the same way as a mortgage. The Trust has the theatre on a leasehold basis that converts to a freehold basis once the 'loan' is repaid. The repayment mechanism is locked into the Theatre's finances with an annual amount being paid direct to the District Council.

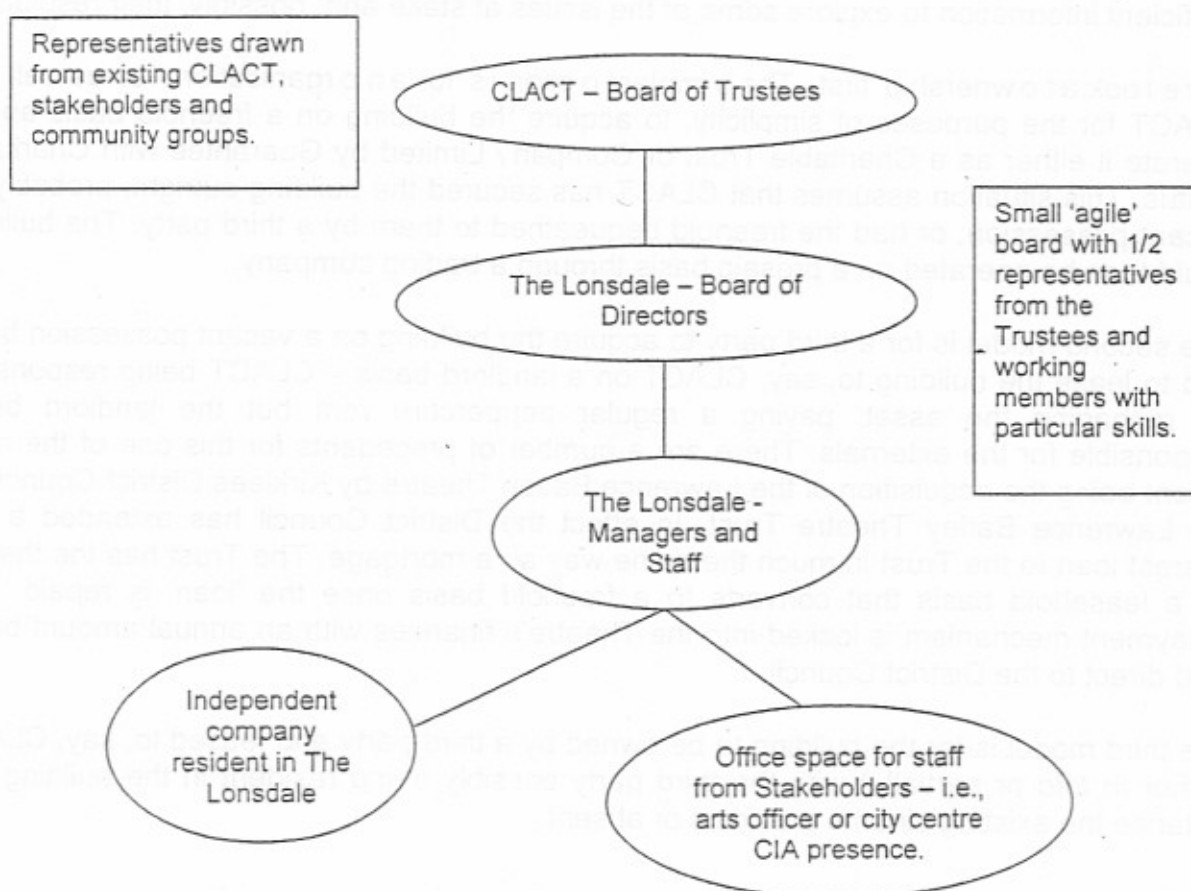
The third model is for the building to be owned by a third party and leased to, say, CLACT (either *in toto* or partially) with the third party possibly being resident in the building (for instance the existing cinema provider) or absent.

Once we have settled upon ownership, we move towards governance. In some ways, the question of governance follows directly from how the building is owned. The simplest model of governance would be for, say, CLACT to own the building outright and operate either as a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status or via a Charitable Trust through a commercial holding company.

Such a situation would open up the maximum funding opportunities (through sponsorship, donations and the formal arts funding system) whilst taking the best advantage of existing VAT and Corporation Tax rules and regulations. In this manner, CLACT would operate as a Trust and trade through, for instance, **The Lonsdale** (suggestion made in responses to the recent Citizens Panel questionnaire).

The Lonsdale could employ staff and provide the day-to-day leadership in the building. It would directly work with other tenants, for instance, Prism Arts or an arts in health initiative as well as providing casual office space for an arts officer or the co-ordinator of a major project, perhaps funded through Learning & Skills Council funding.

This model could be described in the following simple schematic: -



There are various other models that would be examined should the overall development were to be progressed. These would tie in with the varying principals of ownership. But, even if the freehold for the building was to lie with a third party, there is no reason to believe that the above model could not be accommodated in some form.

Now that we have examined ownership and governance we can turn to the day-to-day staffing operation of the building. Depending upon the ownership model adopted, it is likely that the overall organisational / operational process would be similar to that introduced above. There are two basic methods for progressing from here: -

- Professional staffing – if it were decided that the building, let us call it **The Lonsdale** for arguments sake, were to be fully staffed by paid professionals it is likely that the establishment would comprise something like a minimum of 11 paid individuals in part time and full time occupations. This would include a Director, Administrator, Technical Manager, Technician, Projectionist, Front of House Manager, Receptionist, Education Officer, Marketing Officer, Business Development Manager, Finance Officer and a support Officer working with the Front of House and Marketing/Education departments. The cost of this would be in the order of £240,000. This reflects staffing models in other Arts Centres programming a mix of performance work, cinema, outreach and education activities as well as in-house events and courses.
- Professional / voluntary staffing – the alternative is to adopt the model employed to excellent effect in, for instance Louth Riverhead Theatre and many of the campus-based arts centres such as Leeds, Wolverhampton, Portsmouth and Wakefield. In this model we have an establishment similar to that presented in March (3.5 full time equivalent posts) accounting for a salary bill in the region of £ 50,000 -£ 60,000 with a variety of tasks being undertaken by volunteers (marketing, education, front of house, reception, etc) or being undertaken by students as part of their degree studies (for instance in Leicester, Leeds, Bradford and Warwick Universities) or being the subject of ad hoc freelance employment. There is an additional cost inherent in this process in terms of training and accreditation but these combined with the anticipated salary bill would still be significantly lower than the model described above.

The answer probably lies in the middle but both of the models mentioned above work and work to good effect. A professional level of service can still be maintained without the need for recourse for a fully employed staff team. One of the benefits of the second approach is that the building becomes a living space in which members of the community are intimately involved in the comings and goings and develop a very real sense of ownership. This then reflects upon the levels of visitor numbers, sizes of audience and hirers of resources and amenities.

A viable venue?

So, we have developed an idea of **The Lonsdale** as an operating building through a sense of ownership and an understanding of its governance. Does this necessarily translate through to the building being viable and sustainable without detracting from what already exists?

In work undertaken to support the Theatre Futures (1994), AEA (1999) reports and the various National Lottery Applications an audience for the performing arts in Carlisle has been established. There may be a need to carry out some back checking on some of the detail but I believe we can be confident that the broad thrust of the work is still valid. That is [a] there is a need for an additional performance space in the City and that [b] the development of an additional space would not negatively impact upon the existing infrastructure.

In discussions with CIA and regional theatres/arts centres it is clear to me that there is little perception of competition. As noted in the 1999 AEA report, there could be competition with Theatre by the Lake if Carlisle were considering a 500 – 600 seat bespoke theatre/performance venue. But, as arising through my work and as concluded by AEA it is unlikely that such a venture could be maintained without significant levels of public subsidy or dangerously high year-on-year speculative fundraising targets.

It is my belief and understanding that programming opportunities within the Stanwix will become even more difficult as pressure for the space build from the students and course leaders in the College. Certainly, in discussions with local artists and a significant arts company, it is clear that there are just not the windows in the Stanwix's programming year for local/regional product. This reflects a trend in campus-based theatres throughout the country with the extreme situation being evidenced at LIPA in Liverpool where it is now extremely difficult for local artists to have access to the many high quality studios contained in that building.

The development of a purpose-built gallery and exhibition space within **The Lonsdale** does not appear to be considered as a threat to existing providers. Indeed through conversations, it appears that an additional quality space in Carlisle would be of benefit to, say, Tullie House, as it would open up possibilities of co-programming.

Finally we come to the activities that are driven by the needs and requirements of the community served by Carlisle City Council. Discussions with students at the CIA, Prism Arts, Grizedale Arts, Health and Social Services and possible funders such as Learning & Skills Council, underline the dearth of good quality spaces to make work and to bring people together through the creation of this work in the City.

There is, on the basis of my work to date and of my experience on over 150 capital schemes on behalf of Arts Council England, no doubt that were a facility such as that proposed be placed in the very heart of the City that there would be a strong level of interest translating itself into high levels of take-up of programming opportunities.

Finances

Things so often come down to money and there is no question that this initiative is little different. I would like to examine this issue from the following perspectives: -

- **Capital** – in the March presentation I offered a guide cost for the proposed venture in the area of £ 3,8 million. An architect (Allen Todd, Leeds) has examined this figure and its development and they concur that this appears to be a fairly accurate order of cost subject to survey. By the time I present this to the Committee I will have had an opportunity to meet with the architect with the existing valuation file and can report back on this meeting if necessary. This sum would deliver the level of accommodation referred to previously and a copy of this schedule is attached for Information. Given that it is unlikely that more than £ 500,000 will be forthcoming from Arts Council England and the much-reduced National Lottery Awards a funding target in excess of £ 3 million is possible.

This is undoubtedly daunting and one that will require serious attention. However, it is, in my judgement achievable once the scale of **The Lonsdale** is understood and is endorsed by key stakeholders. Early discussions with the regional development and investment agencies have been fruitful in that the need for a facility such as that envisaged within this Briefing Paper is acknowledged. The presence of a building such as **The Lonsdale** would complement the already strong external image of Carlisle and would, I understand, assist in the attraction of new investment or the recruitment of key individuals. Therefore, it is not beyond reason that this importance will translate into funding.

In West Yorkshire, for instance, significant investment in the cultural infrastructure has been made by Yorkshire Forward (in excess of £ 3,000,000 in Bradford alone). In discussions with Northwest Development Agency I was advised that the presence of a vibrant and distinctive culture in the region is imperative. As NWDA recently announced *"...enhance regeneration and economic development. Work includes capital investment in cultural projects, development of cultural skills and utilising our cultural assets to drive regional growth."* So, I believe there are clear opportunities for significant elements of the capital fund to be acquired and the follow-up work will take this promising start further.

So, I believe it is possible to explore the future funding target in terms of: -

Arts Council England	£ 500,000
Regional Development Initiatives	£ 1 – 2,000,000
European Funding	£ 250,000
Regional Capital Sponsorship	£ 250,000 – 500,000
General Fundraising	£ 250,000
Other sources	£ 300,000 - £ 1,600,000

- **Revenue** – again, in March, I presented an option that returned a subsidy requirement in the order of £ 45,000. This was, I believe, somewhat lower than as indicated in earlier assessments. The key issue to recognise here is that **The Lonsdale** is not intended to be a performance arts venues in the shape of Theatre by the Lake or the Lawrence Batley Theatre both of which are in receipt of significant levels of subsidy.

If we are to move to an option that is based on a staffing level not dissimilar that presented as model 1 on page 6 there will be a minimum subsidy requirement in the area of £ 200,000 – a figure that begins to line up with the projections made, by amongst others, AEA. If, however, we are able to accommodate an arrangement similar to that envisaged in model 2, it is likely that the subsidy level could be as low as £ 50 - £ 60,000.

In work recently undertaken for a range of clients, Local Authorities and arts venues alike, I believe a steady trend is emerging. In the past, venues – in fact many arts organisations – receive levels of subsidy significantly less than their core costs. The gap is made up by running a number of activities through the building concerned with each activity making a contribution to the core costs of the organisation. This tends to work well when there is a high volume of activity being managed and co-ordinated by a relatively small staff team and maximum use is made of freelance artists.

This situation is inherently unstable – it's a bit like credit card debt. Payments can be made (normally part payment per month) providing employment is stable. Once employment becomes unstable, income drops and the person finds it difficult to keep up with interest never mind capital. So it is with many arts organisations and it is a situation we must avoid if at all possible if **The Lonsdale** is to come into being. Therefore, there needs to be a reasoned debate at the outset on the question of year-on-year subsidy for the proposed venue necessarily with Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council and Arts Council England North West.

Given the present climate (in terms of pressure upon the arts funding and local authority bodies) I believe it is difficult to foresee how what is essentially a new venture will succeed in attracting in the order of £ 200,000 annual subsidy on a regular basis from 'day-one'. There also seems little point in producing a cash flow that takes the gap between income, subsidy and expenditure and call this 'annual fundraising' – in the case of **The Lonsdale** this could well account for an annual target in the region of £ 150,000.

So, perhaps, this meeting today could be the start of this discursive process as, in my experience, a thorough understanding of the scale of availability of revenue subsidy as early as possible is a major contributory factor in the development of a successful scheme. This equally applies to discussions with bodies such as Learning & Skills Council, Departments of Health, Education and Social Service as well as enlightened donors such as Esmée Fairbairn, Lloyds TSB Foundation and Calouste Gulbenkian.

Concluding comments

So, where does this leave us?

In my view, there is an unequivocally strong case behind the establishment of a new performance space in a city-centre site working in collaboration with the Stanwix and partnership with what could be described as the Region's producing and touring ecology. In addition, there is, even at this early stage, an equally strong case to be made for the provision of spaces for local artists to rehearse, practice, perform and exhibit their art in a local, high quality building.

There is also a clear need for high quality resources to support the ongoing work of organisations such as Prism Arts and the innovative presenting / programming strategy developed by the incumbent arts development officer by placing good quality work in non-traditional spaces. Similarly, there is a need to provide challenging cultural, recreational, leisure and social activities for people who, as a matter of course, are not provided with quality environments that validate their individual lives.

Traditionally it is believed that constructing a building from scratch is more expensive (i.e., less cost effective) than refurbishing/renovating an existing building. This is believed to be doubly true when one is considering a building enjoying a high profile in the community such as that accommodating the Lonsdale Cinema and Bingo Hall.

In my view, the need is clear, as is the lack of competition. In part this is down to the fact that potential competitors have the possibility of becoming key stakeholders (CIA, Tullie House, local and regional artists) and thus becoming involved in the enterprise as a whole.

The capital funding is clearly a significant hurdle that needs to be cleared, as is the question of revenue subsidy. But, on the basis of the work undertaken to date, I believe that the nature and operation of the building together with the multiplicity of interests located in the possible activities provides potential funders with an effective vehicle by which they can provide value for money investment opportunities.

This Briefing Paper is a narrative summary of my Final Report. As indicated in the status report provided by CLACT, there is a body of work to be undertaken next that will provide the level of detail that clearly needs to be delivered. In order to provide Members with some additional information, I have attached an outline Brief and Fee base for a programme of work that would respond to the questions contained in CLACT's report.

Arthur Stafford
10th July 2003

APPENDIX 3

<i>Work Area</i>		<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Days</i>		<i>Total Cost</i>
R E S E A R C H	Internally	<i>Lead Consultant</i>	4		1,600
	Regionally	<i>Market Research</i>	20		19,740
	Nationally	<i>Market Research</i>	25		
A R C H I T E C T U R A L	Existing Buildings	<i>Architect</i>	8		3,200
	Future Needs	<i>Architect & Lead Consultant</i>	9		3,600
	Future Buildings	<i>Architect & Lead Consultant</i>	3		1,200
	Phasing Works	<i>Architect & Lead Consultant</i>	3		1,200
O R G A N I S A T I O N	Transitional Arrangements	<i>Lead Consultant & Human Resources</i>	6		2,400
			4		1,000
	Post Completion Arrangements – Provisional	<i>Lead Consultant & Human Resources</i>	3		1,200
			4		1,200
C O S T I N G S	Managing the Works	<i>Lead Consultant</i>	5		2,000
	Capital Works	<i>Architect</i>	7		2,800
		<i>VAT</i>	1		500
		<i>Theatre Consultant</i>	5		2,000
		<i>Lead Consultant</i>	6		2,400
	Post Completion	<i>Lead Consultant</i>	6		2,400
	<i>Summary of Costs and Contingencies.</i>	<i>Sub Total</i>			48,440
		<i>Contingency for Expenses, Travel, Accom.</i>			3,560
		<i>TOTAL PROJECT COST</i>			52,000

SCOPE OF ACCOMMODATION (1)

1. PRIMARY ACTIVITY

Main Theatre	To seat 400. Fixed seating with end stage proscenium format. Orchestra pit with fixed level floor. Small frontstage with access from side stage outside main curtain line. Prompt position required.
Stage Area	To suit small-scale theatre, dance and music performance work. Timber floor – sprung. Proscenium width minimum 6500mm x 4800mm height. Facility for hanging and trucking in flats.
Side Stage	Full height side stage required to both wings. Width to get-in side as large as possible.
Flexible Theatre	To seat 90. Flexible seating. Access from side stage outside main curtain line. Intimacy of auditorium important.
Stage Area	As with Main Theatre but width of Proscenium to be set at 6000mm.
Side Stage	As with Main Theatre.
Artists Studios	3 x studios each being wet and dry capable.
Music Studios	3 x studios.
Gallery	Simple rectangular gallery capable of low-to-medium specification works.
Cinema	2 x screens Fixed seating with end-on format.

SCOPE OF ACCOMMODATION (2)

2. SUPPORT ACTIVITY

Get-ins	Separate get-in for each theatre if possible with acoustic separation from the stage.
Control Room	Acoustically separated from the auditorium. Facility for opening window to listen to acoustic. Backstage tannoy to feed to control room. Separate dimmer room to be provided. Accessible.
Workshop	Props and general craft workshop with separate storage area. Ventilated paint store required.
Costumes	Large costume making and storage area and oversize doors. Air control – rooflights preferable – and direct access to dressing rooms via lift.
Green Room	Comfortably appointed, 'ad hoc' space for performers.
Dressing Rooms	4 to be provided all to be accessible. All to include wash basins.
Foyer / Entrance	Open and welcoming with easy access to the Box Office, coats, theatres, cinema and bar/coffee bar.
Box Office	Room for 3 people. Deep counter to house computer arranged for customers to see screen. Discreet high security cabinet safe and storage for brochures /flyers. Ad hoc exhibition space in this area.
Bar/Coffee Bar	Separate ice cream/coffee/chocolate bar and drinks bar to be provided adjacent to the foyer area. Drinks bar to have small food preparation area (no cooking). Ad hoc exhibition space in this area.
Coats	If possible, adjacent to the Box Office counter.

SCOPE OF ACCOMMODATION (3)

3. ADMINISTRATION AND ANCILLARY

Building Office	Should have a general view of site access if possible. Suitable for 2/3 people and have a floor safe installed.
Rented Offices	3 stand alone offices suitable for short, medium and long-term rental. Each office suitable for 2/3 people and c/w standard office equipment and accommodation.
Toilets	1 multiple gents. 1 multiple ladies. 2 accessible single urinals with handbasins. 2 accessible showers and handbasins.
Storage	1 storage area serving the Building Office. 1 storage area serving each of the Rented Offices. 1 storage area serving each of the auditoria.
Community Area	To be defined. Possibly consisting of general information point – suitable for presentations and exhibitions from Agencies, City Council, CIA, etc – informal meeting point with the public.
Young People	To be discussed – an area suitable for crèche, ad hoc childcare, limited drop-off zone for under 12's, etc. To be staffed and managed by a franchise organisation – outreach team from existing Nursery?
Hot Desks / Cyber café	To be researched and discussed. Area containing 3 / 4 stand alone administration desks suitable for very short term hiring (1 day plus) c/w internet capability. For community and general use.

**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2003**

EX.232/03 THEATRE/ARTS CENTRE REVIEW

Portfolio Health and Community Activities

Subject Matter

To consider a reference from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Minute COS.87/03) on the outcome of the Committee's subject matter review into the potential for the provision of a Theatre/Arts Centre for Carlisle.

A report with the Committee's findings (OS.6/03) was submitted and the reference to the Executive was as follows:-

"That as the City Council needs to be clear about whether development of a Theatre/Arts Centre is a high priority, the findings of this Committee be referred to the Executive to consider -

- (a) how the Council should be involved in taking it forward;
- (b) the nature of any financial commitment it would be willing to make;
- (c) then make appropriate recommendations to the City Council and any further comments to this Committee."

The Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee had sent her apologies for the meeting and the Overview and Scrutiny Manager presented the findings of the Committee to the Executive.

Members of the Executive acknowledged that there was demand from the public of Carlisle for a Theatre but that, in the past, it had proved impossible to attract sufficient funding.

Members were impressed with the feasibility work undertaken by the consultant on behalf of the Lonsdale Trust and the consideration which had been given to the matter by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The proposal to convert an existing building for Theatre/Arts Centre use was supported as the way forward. It was noted that funding to a maximum of £52,000 was needed to take the feasibility study to the next stage.

Summary of Options Rejected

None

Decision

1. That the work undertaken by the Lonsdale Trust and the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee into the potential for the provision of a Theatre/Arts Centre for Carlisle be commended.
2. That, having regard to the fact that providing theatre facilities in Carlisle is an objective in the City Council's Corporate Plan, it be a recommendation to the City Council that a supplementary estimate of up to 50% of the maximum cost of the study be approved from balances to part fund the next stage of the feasibility study.

Reasons for Decision

The provision of theatre facilities in Carlisle is an objective in the City Council's Corporate Plan. The proposal to convert an existing building is seen as the way forward and the City Council is being recommended to approve a supplementary estimate to part fund the next stage of the feasibility study.

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 AUGUST 2003

COS.87.03 THEATRE ARTS CENTRE REVIEW

With reference to Minute COS.70/03, the Overview and Scrutiny Manager submitted report OS.06/03 on the Committee's review of a potential Theatre/Arts centre.

Mr Mallinson reminded Members of the process which had been adopted in this subject review and the evidence which had been received including verbal evidence from a number of individuals and the Carlisle Lonsdale Arts Centre Trust report and presentation from July 2003.

Mr Mallinson then outlined a draft of the Committee's findings from the evidence received. The City Council would need to be clear about whether development of the theatre/arts centre was a high priority and it was proposed that the matter should be referred to Executive for them to consider taking the matter forward.

The Chairman and Members then thanked Mr Mallinson for the work he had done in drawing together this report from all the evidence gathered. They commented that he had brought together the deliberations well and summed up all the issues fairly.

Members again spoke of making the most of opportunities which presented themselves but also expressed concerns about the matters which had been unresolved in the Lonsdale Arts Centre's feasibility study.

RESOLVED – (1) That paragraph 4(a) – (o) of report OS.06/03 be approved as the Committee's findings from the evidence received.

(2) That as the City Council needs to be clear about whether development of a Theatre/Art Centre is a high priority, the findings of this Committee be referred to the Executive to consider :

- (a) How the Council should be involved in taking it forward.
- (b) The nature of any financial commitment it would be willing to make.
- (c) Then make appropriate recommendations to the City Council and any further comments to this Committee.

(3) That the thanks of the Committee to the Overview and Scrutiny Manager for his work on the Theatre/Art Centre Review be placed on record.