

Tuesday 4 April

5 APR 1989

Dear Wilf,

I enclose Roger Lancaster's paper on the Wilding Review, which was discussed at our last Executive meeting. I had submitted quite detailed remarks to Roger about the B.F.I. and media development in the regions but he doesn't seem to have used it!

On another note, the random nature of fate decided I should be runner-up. Sue Harrison, the other internal applicant, was appointed.

Best wishes,

Paul.

The Regional Arts Association for Yorkshire

• Information • Advice • Resources •

his recognition of the significant role that local authorities played in these partnerships.

2.3 Richard Wilding's main concerns were to remove duplication within the arts funding system and achieve more effective definitions of national and regional roles. He seemed already convinced of the merits of further decentralisation, particularly of funding responsibility, and was interested in how such devolution could go further to a more local level. He thought it preferable for there to be one advisory structure that combined both national and regional advisers.

2.4 There was detailed discussion on many of the issues identified in his notes and this is reflected in the draft submission. He had been impressed by the extent to which there was agreement on the problems within the current system and the need for change. He saw his role as identifying a consensus of such changes that would achieve the brief he had been given.

20/3/89

REVIEW OF ARTS FUNDING STRUCTURE

1. This paper has been prepared as an extension of my paper to the last Council meeting (C.10.5) and aims to:

- report on the visit to Yorkshire Arts on 20 February
- report on CoRAA Council discussions concerning the review
- identify RAA boundary issues for Executive discussion
- present a draft submission for Executive comment and approval

2. 20 FEBRUARY VISIT

2.1 Richard Wilding and his associate consultant, Martin Eastel, visited Yorkshire Arts on 20 February. They had requested a briefing pack of information on Yorkshire Arts and provided a list of subjects that they wanted to discuss. This is attached as Appendix 1. The majority of the day was spent discussing these issues with the Chair and Director. The following people were invited to an extended buffet lunch as representatives of different arts, regional and local authority interests:

- Caroline Bayliss - Chair of Harrogate Theatre
- Paul Wombell - Director of Impressions Gallery, York
- Graham Roberts - Director of Public Art
- Graham Devlin - Director of Major Road and author of recent ACOB report on Dance - "Stepping Forward"
- Adrian Vinken - Leadmill, Sheffield & Chair of Combined Arts
- Derrick Anderson - Head of Cultural Services, Wakefield MDC
- David Brown - YA Vice Chair & Sheffield MDC
- Cllr Bernard Atha - Leeds MDC & ACOB nominee to YA
- Chrissie Poulter - YA Assistant Director (Arts)

2.2 This was the third such RAA visit they had made and, cumulatively, they appear to be having a positive effect. It was particularly encouraging to note Richard Wilding's appreciation of the successful partnerships which the RAAs were helping to develop and his recognition of the significant role that local authorities played in these partnerships.

2.3 Richard Wilding's main concerns were to remove duplication within the arts funding system and achieve more effective definitions of national and regional roles. He seemed already convinced of the merits of further decentralisation, particularly of funding responsibility, and was interested in how such devolution could go further to a more local level. He thought it preferable for there to be one advisory structure that combined both national and regional advisers.

2.4 There was detailed discussion on many of the issues identified in his notes and this is reflected in the draft submission. He had been impressed by the extent to which there was agreement on the problems within the current system and the need for change. He saw his role as identifying a consensus of such changes that would achieve the brief he had been given.

3. CoRAA DISCUSSIONS

3.1 CoRAA Council met on 24 February following informal discussion on the review the night before which provided a valuable opportunity to exchange information on the visits made to date. It was agreed that these individual visits should be the main focus for the present and that it was too early in the review for formal positions to be helpful. There was a substantial measure of agreement, however, on certain basic points which were believed to be common to all RAAs. These points are as follows:

- The basic concern of all RAAs was to develop the quality and accessibility of the arts in their region. Any changes arising from the review should be directed at fulfilling these aims more effectively.

- These aims were best pursued by developing effective partnerships at a local level, particularly with local authorities, and with the maximum possible decentralisation of resources and delivery of services.

- A federal structure was most appropriate for linking the regional and national agencies with accountability within the structure being achieved by direct representation of the autonomous regions on the national bodies.

- The current RAA boundaries were not inviolate but they should only be changed if direct benefits accrued to fulfilling the basic aims of the RAAs.

3.2 These four points were welcomed by the consultants when they met with CoRAA on 10 March. I attended this meeting as Vice-Chair and shared the view of my colleagues that the main issues of decentralisation within a federal structure were agreed by the consultants.

3.3 The consultants expressed the view that the need for CoRAA was in some ways a symptom of the faults within the system. If the relationship between the RAAs and the national bodies was more effective then CoRAA would not have to protect the regional interests. They therefore saw part of their job as being to improve the working of a single system and make CoRAA unnecessary.

4. BOUNDARY ISSUES

4.1 The consultants have made it clear that they believe a reduction in the number of RAAs is required if a federal structure is to be achieved. The option of keeping the twelve current regions is not one they are actively considering.

4.2 This does not mean that all RAAs are likely to be affected by boundary changes but several different options are being discussed. These options fall into three main groups:

- The creation of three 'mega RAAs' representing the North, Midlands and South and based on amalgamating the current four RAAs within each banding. The retention of a separate RAA for London would make four regions.

- The pairing of RAAs to produce 6 instead of 12. This has the advantage of preserving current regional identities and reducing the number by amalgamation rather than division. This option would pair Yorkshire with Northern Arts and the other pairings would be - NWA/MA, LHA/EA, WMA/EMA, SWA/SA, GLA/SEA.
 - The re-alignment of boundaries to create 8 or 9 regions which reflect the divisions used by other agencies and national structures. For Yorkshire, this would either result in joining with Humberside or keeping the current boundaries.
- 4.3 The consultants have also suggested different combinations of these options whilst stressing that they are sounding out reactions rather than presenting firm proposals. One such suggestion was for a West of the Pennines region combining Merseyside, North West and Cumbria, together with an East of the Pennines region comprising Northern (minus Cumbria), Yorkshire and Humberside.
- 4.4 All RAAs are naturally concerned to preserve the regional identities that have been developed over the years together with the successful partnerships forged within their regions. Changing the regional boundaries is a sensitive issue and it would be premature, as well as counter productive, to take firm positions before more specific proposals have emerged from the review. The draft submission to the review therefore emphasises that any changes to Yorkshire Arts' boundaries must be clearly linked to real benefits within a federal structure that assist in better achieving Yorkshire Arts' aims.
5. YORKSHIRE ARTS' WRITTEN SUBMISSION TO THE REVIEW
- 5.1 The closing date for formal submissions is 15 May - i.e. before the next Executive or Council meeting. I have therefore drafted a response for Executive to discuss and this is attached as Appendix 2.
- 5.2 There could be an advantage to delay submitting the response until further information is available as to the review's likely recommendations. It would then be possible to amend the submission whilst retaining the main points agreed at this Executive.
6. Executive is invited to:
- note the written and verbal reports on the 20 February visit;
 - note the main points emerging from CoRAA discussions;
 - comment on the different boundary options being discussed;
 - discuss and amend the draft submission to the review.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH RAAS1. The State of the arts in your region, and how it will develop

- areas of strengths and weakness
- trends in involvement of ACOB, local authorities, private sector, other bodies
- the role of the RAA; how it is changing; what are its future priorities; what arts bodies, local authorities, others mainly look to it for
- your main problems in delivering the service your customers want

2. The relationship with The Arts Council

- the current position: what is the real problem
- which aspects of it are getting better, and which worse
- the articulation of decision-making
- consultation and information
- duplication, overlap and obscurity over who does what
- the quality of contact at all levels

3. What is the right role for the national body?

What the Arts Council should do in

- policy formation
- representing the arts
- funding
- the provision of services
- the co-ordination of research, planning, information
- accounting to the Minister, Parliament and public
- anything else

What the implications of the above are for

- Council and committee structure
- staffing
- organisation
- articulation with regional bodies

4. BFI and Crafts Council etc

- relations with them
- fitting these relations together with ACOB relations
- role of BFI and the RAA film officer
- role of Crafts Council and RAA crafts officer
- links with MGC and AMCs
- links with other national bodies

5.

What is the right role for the regional body

What should be its role in relation to

- national arts policy
- the arts needs of its regional population
- the needs of its arts bodies
- the local authorities
- other public bodies
- the private sector

Implications of this for its

- constitution and structure
- organisation
- staffing, career progressions, skills and experience, training
- the role of art-form staff, development staff

What would be the implications of a structure with fewer, larger RAAs for the delivery of the service, the cost of delivering it, the influence of the RAA, the attitudes of other bodies etc?

6.

Question of who does what

- Devolution or decentralisation
- Different sorts of funding; revenue, annual, project, other schemes
- Different art-forms: does the scope for devolution vary?
- National guidelines, standards, regulation, moderation or control
- National schemes, regionally administered
- Should RAA themselves devolve more?

7.

Articulating the system

- How best to combine more coherence and accountability with a large degree of regional decision-taking.
- What should be the "joint" between the regional body and the ACOB as regards
 - membership of bodies
 - relationships between officers
 - process of appointment
- Is there scope for more integration in
 - staffing
 - training
 - infrastructure
 - common operations

8.

The Advisory Function

How the system as a whole can best approach

- enlisting the best arts advice and deploying it effectively and economically
- the task of appraisal
- enlisting private sector help in adopting private sector skills
- the construction of partnerships, deals and consortia

DRAFT SUBMISSION FROM YORKSHIRE ARTS

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Yorkshire Arts' response to the Review is based on three beliefs, namely, that:

- the RAAs and the national funding bodies, particularly the Arts Council, are two parts of one system;
- the system is not working as effectively as it could;
- the review is therefore an opportunity to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current situation and make improvements.

1.2 These beliefs are not new. When the Arts Council set up its Organisational Review in 1985, CoRAA offered to put its own structures into the review believing that the two parts of the system had to be considered together. The Arts Council decided to only include its own structures and the opportunity was lost.

1.3 The need for an overall review has increased since 1985. "The Glory of the Garden" strategy made many significant changes to the respective responsibilities of the RAAs and the Arts Council as the first stage of an intended strategy for a decade. The strategy was only partly implemented, however, and the second stage never happened. This has created unstable, and inefficient, relationships within the system which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

1.4 The brief given to the current Review accurately identifies the following issues for consideration:

- * Policy - What are the main national and regional objectives for the funding and development of the arts, and how can greater coherence between these objectives be achieved?
- * Roles - What are the appropriate respective roles for the national and regional agencies?
- * Structure - What improvements should be made in the national and regional structures to ensure that the two parts work as one system with clear accountability to central government?
- * Economy - How can the national and regional structures be made more efficient so that the maximum benefit is obtained for the arts?

1.5 The comments which follow are organised to reflect these main issues and answer the detailed notes given by Richard Wilding.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 The basic aims of the arts funding structure are to develop opportunities for the best possible experience of the arts, and to make these opportunities accessible to as many people as possible. These aims, often shortened to the key words of excellence and access, should be recognised as common to both the national and regional elements of the arts funding structure. There is therefore, at this basic level, a cohesion of policy and purpose.
- 2.2 Any attempt to separate these twin aims, or to allocate different degrees of responsibility for them between the national and regional agencies, will necessarily weaken the coherence of policy that should inform all parts of the funding system. Excellence within the arts is not limited to the larger companies or a greater responsibility of the national agencies; any more than a concern for better access to the arts should be limited to the regional agencies.
- 2.3 The national and regional agencies do however have differing jobs to do and, whilst sharing these common basic aims, they necessarily develop specific policies linked to their individual roles. For the national agencies these policies relate to their national advocacy and service functions, with a primary relationship with central government; whilst for the RAAs they are based on building effective partnerships for local arts development, with a primary relationship with local authorities. This diversity of policies is essential if each agency is to fulfill their respective roles and demonstrates that cohesion of policy need not, and should not, mean uniformity of policy.
- 2.4 "Creative Futures" is the title of Yorkshire Arts' regional development plan which begins to translate regional policy into action. Collectively, the twelve regional plans could provide a framework for cohesive national arts policy which combines a concern for both excellence and access with meeting the needs of local communities.

3. ROLES

- 3.1 Defining the appropriate roles for the national and regional agencies is rightly one of the major concerns for the Review. Yorkshire Arts believes that there is currently duplication of roles within the system which needs to be removed if the system is to become more efficient.
- 3.2 The main roles envisaged for the Arts Council can be summarised as:
- Advocacy for the arts, in all their forms and wherever they happen. This advocacy role should not be restricted to areas where the Arts Council is directly involved, through clients or provision of services, but seek to speak nationally for all the arts.

- Advice and services which are most appropriately provided nationally, e.g. research and information services, and which it would be uneconomic to duplicate at a regional level.

Funding, on a triennial basis, the regional structure and arts organisations operating on a truly national basis. It is envisaged that this is a small portfolio of clients with most funding responsibilities being decentralised to the regional agencies.

- Capital development and renovation programmes to improve arts buildings.

Accountability for the arts funding structure to central government.

- Moderate and monitor the regional structure on the basis of regional plans and management reviews.

Formulation and implementation of national arts policy in conjunction with regional policies.

3.3 The BFI has similar national roles to fulfill with regard to film, video and broadcasting. Any re-definition of the Arts Council roles will need to clarify responsibilities in these areas to avoid duplication with the BFI. At present, some of the national concerns of the BFI, e.g. distribution, are used to justify direct funding, e.g. regional film theatres. This creates a duplication of funding roles between the BFI and RAAs which needs to be resolved.

3.4 The crafts are best serviced and developed within an integrated policy with other visual arts practices and separate funding systems have tended to militate against this in the past. The role of the Crafts Council should therefore be examined in conjunction with Arts Council and RAA roles to identify the specialist craft functions which are best fulfilled by a national agency.

3.5 The roles identified by Yorkshire Arts as appropriate to a regional agency are detailed in its three year plan. They are based on the development, planning, funding and service roles which are most effectively delivered at a regional level through partnerships created with the public, private and voluntary sectors. It is these partnerships, evolved in response to local needs, which provide the key to successful arts development and which cannot be replicated at the more remote national level.

3.6 In all discussion about roles, the main issue should be where the most effective point for fulfilling the role is - national or regional.

4. STRUCTURE

4.1 The last meeting of the CoRAA Council re-affirmed its belief that a federal structure, which provided a direct linkage between the national and regional agencies, was most likely to unify the different parts of the system. This has been the consistent view of the RAAs in recent years and was also endorsed by the Management and Arts Directorates of the Arts Council at a joint conference with the RAAs in 1986. It is hoped that the current Review will at last provide an opportunity to implement a federal structure.

4.2 A federal structure would need to be based on the re-defined roles for the national and regional agencies and recognise the substantial decentralisation that this would entail. Direct representation of the RAAs on the Arts Council would seem to be the simplest and most effective way of achieving a direct linkage between the two parts of the structure. This representation could be provided by the Chairs of the RAAs being members of the Council which would also establish a direct line of accountability.

4.3 Each of the current 12 RAAs have a significant track record of achievement based on partnerships developed within their regions. These partnerships should not be lightly disrupted by changes in the boundaries of the RAAs. Yorkshire Arts would however support the view of CoRAA Council that the current boundaries should not be considered inviolate if changes to them could improve the ability of RAAs to achieve their basic aims.

4.4 If a reduction in the number of RAAs is thought essential to achieve a federal structure with full regional representation on the Arts Council, then the regions created must not be so large as to distance them from the local partnerships which have proved the basis for successful arts development in the past. There is also a danger that larger regions would require a sub-regional structure which would increase the administrative resources required.

5. ECONOMY

5.1 If there was a significant re-alignment of national and regional roles, based on decentralised funding responsibilities, this could result in reduced administrative costs at the national level. Some increase in administrative resources would be required regionally to respond to additional responsibilities but previous experience indicates that such increases would be modest.

5.2 Economies would only be achieved if the revised national and regional roles were sustained. There has been a tendency in the past for previous patterns of work to re-emerge. e.g. following "Glory", which undermines the changes made and leads to duplication creeping back.