

=[REPORT TO:ARTS & HERITAGE COMMITTEE - 16 OCTOBER 2000

REPORT ON: DUNDEE CULTURAL QUARTER

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ARTS AND HERITAGE

REPORT NO: 616-2000

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the findings of the Dundee Cultural Quarter study.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:-

2.1 Endorses the further development of the cultural quarter in Dundee as outlined in this report.

2.2 Remits the Director of Arts and Heritage to work with the Dundee Partnership Cultural Quarter Steering Group to develop detailed implementation proposals.

2.3 Remit the Director of Arts and Heritage with the Dundee Partnership Cultural Quarter Steering Group to bring forward early proposals for branding the Quarter including a suitable name.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications. Specific proposals would be considered in due course by the appropriate City Council committee and via the Dundee Partnership. It is anticipated that the focus of the implementation proposals will be to encourage further private sector investment in the Quarter.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The proposals in the Cultural Quarter Study are consistent with the aims of Local Agenda 21, specifically, to ensure that opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are readily available to all.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposals in the Cultural Quarter Study are consistent with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

6.0 PREVIOUS DECISIONS

6.1 Report No 241/2000 to the Arts and Heritage Committee in April 2000 approved the engagement of consultants to undertake a feasibility study and action plan relating to the development of Dundee's Cultural Quarter. The consultants, EDAW and Urban Cultures have now completed their final report.

7.0 DUNDEE CULTURAL QUARTER

7.1 What are Cultural Quarters?

Cities provide the flow of people and the markets necessary to support viable cultural activity. Many good cities therefore have identifiable quarters to which artists and cultural entrepreneurs are attracted, whether its Soho in London, the Lower East Side in New York, Temple Bar in Dublin or in smaller cities such as Grainger Town in Newcastle. Creative people and those they attract often pursue a peculiar lifestyle where work and ideas and friendships are pursued in bars, restaurants, clubs, venues, galleries and other semi-public meeting places. This kind of activity can help reinvigorate the city economy, and also provide opportunities for people to set up in business. The emerging Dundee Cultural Quarter is on the verge of achieving this status and it is the role of the Strategy to further focus and develop this potential.

7.2 Dundee: Signs of Success

From the outset the City Council's involvement in the Quarter has focussed on a strategy of bottom-up development and this initial phase has been effective in generating momentum and commitment without raising unrealistic expectations. The important early successes include:-

- **Key cultural centres:** Dundee Contemporary Arts, the Rep Theatre and the recently opened "Sensation" Science Centre.
- **World class education facilities:** including Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art (design, media and imagery), University of Abertay (computer games development and virtual reality) and Dundee College (contemporary dance and multimedia).
- **Creative Industries:** a number of key businesses have or are looking to locate within Dundee including VIS-Interactive and Rage Games. Low-rent workshops/studio space (WASPS) in Blackness have also been successful.
- **Dundee By Design:** which aims to encourage companies to develop markets and opportunities in both new and existing industrial sectors through the use of good design.
- **Tourism Attractions:** A wide range including McManus Galleries, Discovery Point and Verdant Works which attract large numbers of visitors
- **Specialty retail, eating and drinking:** a range of interesting facilities and venues particularly in Nethergate and at West Port
- **Quality public realm:** good urban grain and a range of open spaces set within an outstanding Conservation Area

7.3 Emerging Cultural Quarter

Dundee's emerging Cultural Quarter consists of two main areas which are divided by Hawkhill: the Nethergate and South Tay Street area; and the southeast corner of Blackness.

West Marketgait severs the Cultural Quarter from the main shopping centre and this includes the new Overgate development. The Quarter is still therefore relatively isolated from the remainder of the City Centre and Abertay University to the east, however, there exist strong physical connections with the University of Dundee campus and Perth Road to the west.

The Victoria Dock, currently being redeveloped for mixed use, and the Central Waterfront area which is a key focus for the regeneration are located to the east of the Cultural Quarter and south of the City Centre.

The Quarter has several other positive 'place' characteristics on which to build:

- Its core is relatively **well-defined** (focusing on South Tay Street)
- This area has a **cohesive character** which gives it a recognisable and characteristic environment
- It is relatively **easy to walk through** the core as many of the roads have relatively low levels of traffic. Problems only really occur when traversing West Marketgait and Hawkhill. Facilities are therefore accessible to a wide range of the population
- It is located on the edge of a major regional retail/shopping centre which provides **high catchment potential**

The Dundee Cultural Quarter is generally smaller in area to quarters within other European cities. The positive side of this is that it brings more of the Quarter within a comfortable 10 minute walk-time radius.

7.4 **The Case for Promoting the Quarter**

The study concluded that a very successful cultural quarter can be promoted in Dundee based on pursuing a clear strategy to accelerate development and investment. The Dundee Cultural Quarter has made an impressive start and many of the necessary conditions are evident. In order for the Quarter to continue to develop important issues need to be addressed including:-

- The Quarter has access to a World Class base of 'cultural' training and education activity on which to build. There exists the potential to exploit Dundee's 'academic' success and maximise opportunities given the current absence of direct competition.
- Graduate retention needs further development and business start-up and more graduates into enterprise need to be encouraged.
- Computer Games are emerging as a specialist niche in Dundee and this is recognised in the Scottish Enterprise Creative Industries Strategy. Key firms have already decided to establish within the City Centre.
- Workspace provision like WASPS will stimulate the demand conditions necessary for significant cluster activity and more space should be provided.
- Gaps in provision exist including a medium-sized music venue, rehearsal space, private photography/art studio and specialty shops.
- Key opportunity sites and buildings exists within and on the fringe of the Cultural Quarter's core.
- Clear opportunities exist to develop a more diverse evening economy within the Quarter.
- New/refurbished buildings present the opportunity to recast the urban public realm, to improve permeability and to generally create a more user-friendly environment.
- There is scope to develop events and festivals that highlights and reinforces Dundee's Cultural Quarter as a centre of excellence.

7.5 Dundee Cultural Quarter: The Vision

The ten year vision for the Dundee Cultural Quarter is:-

- The Quarter will have developed to become a vibrant mixed-use place with a wide range of venues, bars, cafes and specialist shops and a part of Dundee City Centre that feels at ease with itself. A regular programme of events will maintain the energy of the place.
- The Quarter will also be a thriving cultural industries production zone and a centre of national significance for cultural activities and experience. It will be a destination in its own right. The Blackness Business Expansion Zone will draw in a steady flow of start-up businesses each year and small and medium sized enterprises will grow and mature.
- The Cultural Quarter's core will be connected through a series of formal and informal 'spokes' to a wide range of cultural activities and production throughout the City including arts in the community initiatives.
- Overall a wide range of cultural businesses will be accommodated and key features include a strong export orientation, investment in leading edge technology and the commercialisation of research from the City's two universities and Dundee College.
- "It is anticipated that the economic investment in cultural industries within the Cultural Quarter will create a broad spectrum of jobs across the sector. A job creation rate of five to ten per cent per annum will be achievable over the ten year period."

The presumption is that by 2010, the Quarter will be distinctive and recognised as a showcase for culture and combine all of the following elements:-

- **Cultural economic production** - strong small firm business bases, an important business location
- **A centre for creativity and knowledge** - skills are key to business success
- Provide a **cultural experience**: a place to be - a series of good venues that involve consumption and production
- **An exciting urban environment** - more happening at street level, more things to see and people to watch
- **A balanced movement and access regime** - balance between essential parking and access and the need to reduce car dependency
- **A place to live** - the Quarter should become a living space
- **A mixed use urban quarter** - various elements should interact continuously and seamlessly

7.6 Developing the Quarter: Key Objectives

7.6.1 The following key objectives will be pursued to secure the consolidation, investment, development and expansion of the Quarter.

- Developing a dynamic cluster of businesses in the creative and cultural industries by promoting new starts and growing businesses including maximising the opportunities presented within the Blackness Business Expansion Zone.

- Building on Dundee's role in the cultural industries and reputation as a place of learning, skills development and creativity, continuing to produce trained people for careers in the creative industries and ensuring that more graduates remain within Dundee. Whilst at the same time ensuring access to opportunity within the creative industries for local people.
- Extending the Quarter's cultural offer by promoting private investment in selected additional venues and encouraging complementary new activities (music venues, galleries, cafes, specialty shops etc).
- Designing a safe, secure and ambient environment, through improving the townscape and architectural quality. This will include improving access, linkage and permeability to counter severance across various parts of the Quarter.
- Developing an area USP (Unique Selling Point) or brand
- Programming a regular diet of events and festivals
- Providing a 'critical mass' linked to an increase in the number of people living in the Quarter.
- Implementing programmes over a five to ten year time-frame.

The Strategy for delivering this Vision is based on an integrated approach based around three key Frameworks: Functional, Physical and Organisation. Within these Frameworks, eight inter-connected programme areas have been developed each containing more detailed lines of actions (policy measures and individual projects).

8.0 DEVELOPING AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- 8.1 Eight Action Programmes are detailed by the Consultants: A Competitive Business Base; A Community of Learning; A Diverse Cultural Experience, Making A Place; Movement and Access; Securing Appropriate Investment and Development; Area Marketing and Promotion and Establishing a Delivery Mechanism.
- 8.2 The Dundee Partnership Cultural Quarter Steering Group, chaired by the Director of Arts and Heritage, will now build upon these broad study findings with a view to identifying a detailed Implementation Plan and specific projects which can be taken forward in the short, medium and long term.
- 8.2 The study and the Steering Group will give early priority to developing appropriate branding and a prospectus with a view to attracting further investment to the area. A core element of the brand will be the identification of a generic name for the area. It is anticipated that a wide consultation exercise will be undertaken to ensure consensus. An initial trawl of existing names (eg West Port, Nethergate, Tay Square etc), historical names associated with the area, and new inventive names (it is noted that many other cultural quarters, eg Temple Bar, have adopted invented names) is underway.

9.0 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Support Services, Director of Finance, Director of Corporate Planning, Director of Planning and Transportation and Director of Economic Development have been consulted on this report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Dundee Cultural Quarter Strategy: Final Report (September 2000)
EDAW and Urban Cultures

A copy of this report has been supplied to the main political parties and the independent member.

Director of Arts and Heritage _____ Date _____