

Statement from Luke John Emmett on 31<sup>st</sup> Oct 2018

I am here today to talk about the short-sighted closure of the Arts Development Department, and the hugely detrimental impact this will have to the cultural and creative ecology, and financial economy of Bath and North East Somerset.

Firstly I would like to personally thank both Ann Cullis and Peter Salt for their many years of service to cultural organisations and individuals in this area. Their knowledge, advice and guidance have helped so many, including myself, and will leave a huge knowledge gap within the Council if this administration chooses to get rid of their posts.

I would like to know what impact studies have been done on these cuts? Has this administration carried out a detailed impact assessment? Do you know how this will effect individuals and businesses working within the cultural industries? What will be the long term impact of these cuts? What impact will this cut have on cultural tourism? Has a viability study been done on your suggested replacement service? Investment in the arts brings back more money into the economy – for every £1 invested it brings back a return of between £2 and £7. How will these cuts effect Bath's economy? How will this cut effect Bath's relationship with the Arts Council and future funding bids from creative companies?

Under UN Convention B162 on the rights of a child it clearly states that the best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children. Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities. The arts service helped fund projects for young people who fall within B&NES most disadvantaged communities. Have any young people been consulted about these cuts? Have these cuts gone through any young politicians or youth parliament? Have any schools or educational institutes been consulted?

Bath is a World Heritage City. Point 20 of the city's world heritage plan states the Council should "support the ongoing coordination of Bath's cultural offer and the identification of funding to support this". This has been adopted as Council policy. How does this administration plan to fulfil this obligation without any investment in the arts and without a dedicated arts development team in place to do so? Will failing to observe this damage the city's World Heritage Status?

If you allow these cuts to go ahead, the detrimental impact of them will be felt across the city for generations to come. You will irreparably damage people's livelihoods and negatively impact tourism, particularly long-stay tourism in the city and therefore the city's economy. People will not wish to visit a city that is devoid of culture and entertainment – to encourage long-stay visitors the city needs a thriving cultural scene.

These cuts are the final nail in the coffin for arts and culture in Bath. This administration will be remembered for silencing the arts in Bath and destroying a once vibrant city.

Best wishes

Luke John Emmett

Creative Director/Founder