



# Music Development Association Campaign Paper *'Levelling the Playing Field'*

## Introduction

At the Music Development Association meeting during 'The Great Escape' in May 2010 members discussed tactics and arguments that it should compile in order to have an agency or organisation with a full remit for Music Development in each of the regions. This brief paper seeks to outline some broad reasons, models and potential future funding scenarios that would realise this ambition, alongside some questions aimed at fuelling the debate and further discussion.

We all know the value of the music industry, both in terms of exports and value of recorded sales and written works, as well as the case of revenues and economic impact from both the indoor concert and outdoor festivals industry. (This should be included in any future, more extensive paper). However, whilst the Government grasps the collective value of the Creative Industries to the Economy it does seem confused as to how to develop and grow this vibrant sector. Indeed, while film, television, games and digital media are well supported, the music sector is definitely the poor second cousin.

Traditionally the music industry has never asked for the help of Government in the form of subsidies that would support business development and workforce training. In turn many have argued that the music industry is such a successful, commercial model that neither requires nor should have any intervention. This view point is changing. Recently UK Music released '*Liberating Creativity*' which put forward a vision for the future of the UK Music Industry and its desire to become the number one player within a highly competitive Global market. Prior to this, the Creative and Cultural Sector Skills Council produced the 'Creative Blueprint'. Both argued for the support of business at all levels including access to finance, business planning and support as well as training. In an increasingly digitalised economy, small developing businesses producing content of quality that can gain real revenue streams can exist anywhere in the UK – development, support and training is vital for these businesses to thrive. This is the key reason why commercial support mechanisms as well as business to business training opportunities must be available in all regions of the UK.

## Potential models

Irrespective of the model the Music Development organisations should all perform certain central functions:

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Music Business Development – this should include business planning, access to legal services (in absence of music industry lawyers in the regions), training, mentoring, opportunities to engage with consultants (part paid for by Business Link or their successor), network opportunities (both regionally and nationally) and access to international trade missions.

Musician Support – this should include development and mentoring for artists including song writing workshops, industry awareness seminars, career guidance and this should go hand in hand with the development of live music promoters to ensure that regional platforms to perform are as strong as possible.

Regional representation – Each agency / organisation should be a member of a wider organisation that is committed to reaching consensus over issues relating to music industry growth in the regions. Similarly, these organisations must be committed to the sharing of good practise with other organisations (such as regional fund raising, development schemes and information dissemination).

Ongoing Mapping of the sector – Each regional agency should commit to the regular mapping of the sector in order to help build a case for music both regionally and nationally that would feed into the work of UK Music, CCSkills, ACE, DCMS and others. The role for collating the information to form a national picture could be performed by the MDA.

### **Possible Models**

- **Independent Regional Music Development Agencies**

Each region has a music development agency that is initially based on Generator's model. In order for this to work there must be a guaranteed, initial 3 year funding available and this must be granted on the understanding of a robust governance model (Board and Executive structure perhaps approved by the main funding bodies).

They would provide the services outlined above but in order to streamline each organisation there may be shared central services e.g. training providers, website and information dissemination and a pool of professional mentors.

They would link into an approved central agency who could offer fledgling organisations advice on appropriate governance models including a potential board bank, support mechanisms, including a potential panellist pool and formulising regional strategies and funding bids.

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Initial staffing levels for this model alongside the central services could be as few as 2 or 3 people.

**Q.** Should this be UK Music, an existing agency or should we lobby central Government for the establishment of a new one?

**Q.** Would the Welsh Assembly, Creative Scotland and the Northern Ireland equivalent buy into the central service?

- **Virtual alliance**

This is an idea that is currently being discussed in the North East within a range of future possibilities and exists around creative development agencies in the fields of Film and Television, Digital Media and Games sharing certain central services such as finance administration, IT support, central digital marketing systems, meeting space and even perhaps business support officers.

This would still mean an independent development agency / organisation but one that would operate with central administration services.

Although not perfect, this one may have greatest chance of successfully establishing itself in regions where there is currently no model at all as it looks towards convergence and the simplification of services. This results in a lower cost option for any central, regional or local Government partnerships.

For this reason this model would probably fit best for 'Local Economic Partnerships' which are the most likely replacement for RDA's and their work in the field of economic development. It would seem that at present that the partnerships are formed on the basis where individual component parts see them fitting more naturally rather than being forced into a partnership within a regional boundary. For example it would seem that Teesside in the North East are likely to form a partnership with Hull and Humberside in Yorkshire as opposed to a partnership with Newcastle.

**Q.** Would there still be a need to tap into some central services and would individual Local Economic Partnerships support this? Would there still be too many varying priorities within each partnership to secure commitment for all areas?

**Ensuring Music Development is a central element of regional commercial creative development agencies.**

If there is a future of Creative Development Agencies such as NW Vision and Media, Northern Film and Media and Creative Scotland should we be

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campaigning to ensure that all the requisite services sit within their offices with correct staffing and delivery structures?

This could ensure that all development work and representation is carried out without the need for increased office costs and administration services.

**Q.** Would all services within such a model show a bias to either film and TV or Digital Media? Would there be the full understanding of the needs for music from the leaders of such organisations?

### **Financial support**

A Music Development Agency could be set-up from scratch for around £200k per year. This agency should then have the ability and remit to apply for any localised finance for additional project elements (such as Lottery money, Working Neighbourhood funds etc) as well as future potential European funds that could also be applied for in partnership with other creative agencies. This can also add in extra finance towards operational costs.

As well as producing support projects these embryonic agencies could access and procure training programmes, digital services (website, digital marketing and information dissemination) from established agencies, hold and grow a mentor / panellist pool established by a central agency or indeed UK Music. This central agency could hold monitoring and output recording facilities that would already be developed and could be shared by the new ones. A modest contribution of around £10k per year could work with this idea as a central agency should already have most overheads covered.

They could establish their own networks from which they produce regional strategies and conduct research into the needs of the music sector in their own back yard. They would also feed into a UK wide body that would represent the interests of the music development sector.

### **Who pays?**

While the Government policy becomes clearer over the replacement of RDA's with the Local Economic Partnerships it would be wise to ensure that any wider strategy written for this by the MDA is fully prepared.

In tandem we should be talking to UK Music about co-lobbying Central Government for a fund although this may not be a priority and Government may not wish to produce a 'new' Film Council Model.



However if it is to be a changing system of economic investment some of the money should come from the Arts Council if a full remit described above is the appropriate one to target.

Therefore a level of financial input may be needed from both Arts Councils (and their equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) and the Economic Partnerships if we are to achieve our goal. We will almost definitely need the weight and support of UK Music if this is to happen.

***Jim Mawdsley, July 2010.***