

# **Management Committee**

## **13 December 2016**

### **Options for council support for arts activities and events in Weymouth & Portland**

#### **For Decision**

##### **Portfolio Holder:**

Cllr Jason Osborne – Tourism, Culture & Harbour

##### **Senior Leadership Team Contact:**

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

##### **Report Author:**

T. Hurley, Leisure Commissioning Manager

##### **Statutory Authority**

Localism Act 2011 – ‘general power of competence’.

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To present to the committee options for future arts activities and events in the borough and to enable members to allocate appropriate resources.

#### **Officer Recommendations**

2. That Management Committee indicates its preference for taking forward any of the following arts projects as detailed in this report:
  - a) Option 1 – supporting local community projects
  - b) Option 2 – street performances pilot project
  - c) Option 3 – a full programme of street performances
  - d) Option 4 – projections on to buildings event.
  - e) Option 5 – designing a programme of public art
  - f) Option 6 – developing an arts strategy for the council
3. That Management Committee instructs officers to develop fully costed proposals for the options that it prioritises for action (as a result of recommendation 2) and that these fully costed proposals, along with suggestions for match funding, be presented to the Committee for

consideration at the earliest opportunity to enable the appropriate allocation of resources from reserves.

## Reason for Decision

4. To guide officers in the development of fully costed proposals for arts activities and events for implementation in 2017 and 2018.

## Background and Reason Decision Needed

### a) Background

5. At its meeting in August 2016, Management Committee considered the future role of the council in arts development and, to guide future decisions, agreed a set of key principles and key themes.

6. **Key principles.** Management Committee has agreed the following key principles to guide the council's involvement in arts:

**Partnership:** the majority of funding required must come from external sources;

**Economic development:** activities and events should support economic development and help attract higher-spending visitors.

7. It was also agreed to pursue two key themes:

**Theme One: Cultural Tourism** – the use of high quality, contemporary arts activities attract more, higher-spending visitors to the borough.

**Theme Two: Public Realm** – the enhancement of the built environment with public art and good design (e.g. lighting, street furniture and materials).

8. As a first step, it was agreed to support the major arts events planned by B-side and Activate in 2017, through some match funding (from the council's arts development budget in consultation with the briefholder) and thereby help to secure significant Arts Council investment in the borough. These events should be treated as a way of testing the impact of such events on visitor numbers and their economic impact, and also to inform the council's approach to the arts in future. The planned projects and events are:

- **Activate:** An event as part of the national 'Coasters Touring Programme' that is 50% funded by Arts Council and which supports the development of high quality outdoor arts in coastal locations to develop cultural tourism. Activate is keen on developing a new way of working and to try new models of investment, working with local event providers such as for example the Dorset Seafood Festival, and the Weymouth BID. This is likely to be a combination of a circus event and small-scale street art in one identified area with complementary

concessions – however, the details have yet to be fully agreed with partners.

- **B-side:** A major ‘signature’ event that will contribute a significant cultural element to an existing event (such as Dorset Seafood Festival or Waterfest) funded by the Creative Local Growth Fund (Arts Council and LEP). An extended evaluation and study to compliment this event, including economic impact, links to cultural tourism and potential links to accommodation, food and leisure providers.
9. It should also be noted that the Dorset Library Service has recently received an Arts Council England grant to develop and deliver a future plan for enhancing arts and cultural activity in the borough, which will place the Weymouth Library at the centre of this delivery. This plan will be developed through public consultation between January and April 2017 and is likely to lead to further resources being invested in the borough.
  10. **Developing an ambitious arts programme.** Management Committee also agreed to consider the allocation of more significant resources to the development of an ambitious programme of arts activities in the borough and instructs officers to come forward with costed proposals before the end of 2016. This report sets out, therefore, options for an ambitious programme for members to consider and to agree in principal. Any options that members may wish to pursue can be developed more fully with detailed costings and then presented to Management Committee in 2017 for final approval.
  11. **Current budget.** The council currently has an available arts budget of approximately £10,000. This comprises a carry forward from 2015-16, a special allocation of £6,000 for 2016-17 and the recurring arts budget of £2,550. A significant proportion of the budget will be used to support the events planned by B-side and Activate as described in paragraph 7. Any major expenditure beyond this budget would require members to allocate resources from the council’s reserves.

**b) Options for future activities**

12. The options for an ambitious programme of arts activities, as set out below, have been developed by Activate Performing Arts, b-side CIC and the Arts Development Company in consultation with officers and following a members’ workshop on October 18<sup>th</sup> 2016.
13. Although the options are been presented as a ‘menu’ they could form a cohesive and inter-related programme which will provide maximum impact and ensure longer term success and sustainability. However, as they are presented, the options range from modest support for community arts projects through to programmes of street performances and then the designing of public art for future implementation.

**Option One – Supporting local community projects:** Modest one-off grants to the following local projects would allow these projects to secure additional external funding (principally Arts Council England)

to enhance their projects. Examples of local projects which the council could assist include:

- ArtWey 'Open For Art' event (June 2017) to allow the organisation to expand their programme by working with the local business community, including a number of "pop-up" exhibitions using local empty shops, and to help fund a marketing campaign sufficient to bring in spending visitors from the wider Dorset area into the borough.

**Indicative Cost** (council grant): £2,000 - £5000

- Friends of Rodwell Trail: Proposal for a mural or public art project for the underneath of the tunnel section.

**Indicative Cost** (council grant): £2500

- Mobile 'Three Works' Chris Shaw's proposal to produce a mobile version of his 'Three Works' Gallery on Hope St, so that contemporary art could be brought into existing festivals, events and markets in Weymouth, such as Dorset Seafood festival, Victorian Night, Waterfest, etc.

**Indicative cost** (council grant): £2500

**Option Two - Street Performances:** A pilot project in partnership with the Weymouth BID to enhance the town centre with quality street performances which will increase appeal and pull in additional customers for businesses and events in the town. This should be monitored and evaluated to explore the potential to develop a fuller programme as detailed in the option below. Ideally this programme should be tied to an existing street market but a suitable market cannot be identified at the time of writing. The programme could commence as a standalone or, in the future, enhance new markets.

**Indicative Cost:**

1 event at £6000	£6,000
Administration and delivery	£3,000
Evaluation	£1500
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£10,500</b>

**Option Three - A full programme of street performances (animating the streets).** Following the pilot work proposed in Option 2 a more extension programme of street performances would be commissioned. This might include working with market events (farmer's and produce markets, existing festivals such as the seafood festival, carnival and other local events) to programme a number of street theatre performers, buskers, temporary works of a "public" art nature. All these would be integrated into the specific events and would be delivered with popular appeal in mind to add value and

appreciation and to access audiences who would not ordinarily seek such a programme out independently.

**Indicative Cost: 5 events**

Artists Fees and Production	£21,100
Marketing and Evaluation	£4,500
Project management	£9,400
<b>TOTAL COST:</b>	<b>£35,000</b>

**Option Four – Projections on to buildings.** A one-off large-scale event to project large-scale moving video images on to buildings on the seafront to take place in the summer of 2017 or 2018. This sort of event has been used extensively in ‘festival of light’ type events across the country and has proved highly popular. The project would involve working with projection artists over a three month period to enable them to work with local community groups on delivering content for the event. The resulting work would then be projected on to seafront buildings for one night only. This would build on the project which has previously taken place at the Nothe Fort. The feasibility of developing this project into a longer-term annual ‘festival of light’ event which may be supported by local businesses will be explored.

**Indicative Cost:**

Event: (Including artists, equipment set up and site management costs)	£30,000
Administration and delivery	£10,000
Marketing	£6,000
<b>TOTAL COST:</b>	<b>£46,000</b>

**Option Five – Design a programme of public art.** The development of a longer-term public art programme to design options for new works of a permanent street art in the town and along the esplanade. This would involve integrating the plans into any planned improvements to the town. This programme would be developed through extensive community consultation and the involvement of contributing artists at the earliest possible stage of development in order to produce a fully costed programme which can be commissioned if resources can be secured.

**Indicative Cost:**

Feasibility study	£10,000
Artist involvement (design)	£10,000
Project management	£8,000
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£28,000</b>

**Option Six – the development of an arts strategy for the council.**

Management Committee's Action Plan sets out the intention to develop an arts strategy for the council. However, given the implications of potential local government reorganisation, members may wish to consider whether the production of a strategy in 2017 is desirable given that any successor authority to the borough council may want to set its own strategic direction of the arts.

**Indicative cost:** if members did want to proceed immediately to produce a longer-term arts strategy then this would involve significant officer time and public consultation – the likely budget may be £10,000-£20,000.

**c) Next steps**

14. **Allocation of resources.** Members are invited, therefore, to give consideration to the above options and give 'in principle' support to enable officers to work with local arts agencies to fully develop the projects for subsequent approval and the allocation of resources from reserves. Although Option One might be partially implemented with the council's existing arts budget, the other options will require the allocation of resources from council reserves.
15. **Match funding.** The above options each have an indicative total cost for implementation. Although officers would seek to secure external funding to contribute to the total cost, in order to guarantee implementation from 2017 onwards, members will need to consider the allocation of resources to meet all of the total cost. Officers will seek to secure external funding, primarily from the Arts Council, however it may not be possible in time for the start of projects in 2017. Any applications for a funding from the Arts Council may be better focused on projects taking place in 2018.
16. If implemented, the above options will need the support of the council in terms of both staff time and access to property (i.e. outdoor areas). Such support is particularly valuable as this can be used as an in-kind contribution to help secure external funding.
17. Members should note that, in accordance with the Management Committee Action Plan, a report with proposals for the development of a business case for illuminations on the Esplanade. Although the Dorset Coastal Forum is hoping to secure a large grant to help with improvements to lighting on the Esplanade, it is not unlikely that the council will need to allocate significant resources to the project to enable it to commission design work, undertake any specialist studies required by the local planning authority, and as a capital contribution towards implementation. The allocation of significant funding for arts activities in the borough should, therefore, be taken in the context of this likely future demand on council resources.

## Implications

18. **Corporate Plan.** *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities.* The need to develop an arts strategy is also identified in the Management Committee's Action Plan.
19. **Financial.** Decisions on the future level of support for arts development in will need to be considered in the context of council's need to make significant reductions across all services. If members decide to pursue the above options then it will need to allocate resources from reserves.
20. In 2016-17 the council has an arts development budget of approximately £10,000 and this can be deployed to implement the proposals in this report – although in all cases match funding will be required. This funding will be used to provide match funding for outdoor arts events planned by B-side and Activate in 2017 (see paragraph 8).
21. **Equalities.** Consideration will need to be given to ensuring that any supported arts projects are accessible to all sections of the community.
22. **Economic Development.** Arts events and installations can make a significant contribution to economic growth.
23. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety).** The primary risk is the council's ability to make a commitment of future financial support for arts development in the borough given that this is a discretionary service and the council's need to reduce its annual revenue expenditure.

## Consultation and Engagement

24. To inform the development of the options set out in this report, a member workshop was held on 18<sup>th</sup> October and facilitated by staff from B-Side, Activate and the Arts Development Company. Eleven members attended this workshop in addition to a representative from Weymouth BID.

## Appendices

25. None.

## Background Papers

26. None.

## Footnote

27. Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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