

Management Committee

18 April 2017

Proposals for an arts programme 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 proposals for both the commissioning of public art and the funding of community-based arts initiatives, and thereby enable members to allocate appropriate resources.

Officer Recommendations

2. That Management Committee:
 - a) establishes a Member Arts Advisory Panel in accordance with the draft terms of reference set out in Appendix A;
 - b) pursues the commissioning of public art in Weymouth for installation before the end of 2018 by allocating £30,000 from reserves to enable officers, under the guidance of the Member Arts Advisory Panel, to commission the development of designs and costed proposals for submission to Management Committee for consideration and resourcing;
 - c) considers a bid for £200,000, when it meets to consider the use of council reserves for key projects, to enable the commissioning of the public art installations in Weymouth following consideration of recommendations to be presented to Management Committee by the Member Arts Advisory Panel;

- d) considers a bid for £20,000, when it meets to consider the use of council reserves for key projects, to be used to award individual grants of no more than £1,000 for community arts projects and to be allocated in accordance with criteria to be agreed with the Member Arts Advisory Panel;
- e) awards a one-off grant of £20,000 to the Portland Sculpture & Quarry Trust (registered charity no.1086659) for phase 2 of its Memory Stones project on condition that all match funding is secured from other sources including the Arts Council;
- f) gives delegated authority to the Strategic Director to agree the terms of the grant agreement with the Portland Stone & Quarry Trust with regard to the grant proposed in recommendation 2 (e).

Reason for Decision

3. To enable Management Committee to take forward the Action Plan objective and the recommendations agreed by the Committee at its meeting in December 2016.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

a) Background

4. At its meeting in December 2016, Management Committee considered a report which set out a range of options for arts activities and programmes in the borough. Members were presented with 6 choices accompanied by a basic indication of costings.
5. Following careful consideration of the options, the Committee agreed that its preference for future action would focus on the following:
 - Supporting local community projects
 - Design a programme of public art.

This report sets out, therefore, detailed proposals for taking forward the two preferred options.

6. A key driver for investment in arts projects, particularly public art and the creative improvement of public realm, is the ability of high quality installations and designs to help 'redefine' public perception of a community. By allocating resources to improving the public realm, the council can help to increase the attractiveness of an area and set the tone for the quality of new development.
6. **Supporting local community projects:** This would involve the allocation of modest one-off grants to local arts initiatives and activities would allow these projects to secure additional external funding (principally Arts Council England). The projects would need to be community-based and primarily not-for-profit, although it would be recognised that some arts activities are income generating.

7. It is proposed that a budget of £20,000 be established from this Community Arts Grant Scheme when Management Committee decides on the allocation of council reserves at its meeting in June 2017. This would be a one-off allocation with all grants to be drawn down by beneficiaries by March 2019. The operation and impact of this scheme should be monitored in order to inform future funding decisions by local government in Weymouth.
8. The criteria for this grant scheme could be agreed by the newly established Member Arts Advisory Panel (see paragraph 11 below) but should be based on the following key requirements:
 - a) Each grant should not exceed £1,000 and be at least matched equally with funding from other sources or in-kind contributions (e.g. staff time);
 - b) The minimum size of grant will be £250.
 - c) Projects benefitting from the grants should demonstrate a combination of artistic quality and community involvement.
 - d) Organisations benefitting from grants should be community groups or not-for-profit organisations.
 - e) Projects should demonstrate a beneficial economic impact by contributing to tourism or skills development.
9. **Public art project:** The development of a longer-term public art programme to design options for new works of a permanent street art in the town – these may be incorporated within new developments linked to the implementation of the town centre masterplan. 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.
10. Given the scale and complexity of this public art project it is recommended that it is, in accordance with best practice, undertaken in two stages.

Stage One: Consultation, design selection and identifying what permissions are required (e.g. planning permission). Indicative costs for preparatory work is **£30,000** and this would include both design costs and also the retention of specialist project management expertise to oversee the process, thereby easing capacity issues within the existing workforce.

Stage Two: The costed designs and implementation requirements will be presented to Management Committee for consideration and approval. If the proposals are approved then the Committee will need to allocate from reserves an appropriate capital sum. However, every effort should be made to match any council contribution with external funding, particularly from Arts Council England. It is recommended that Management Committee considers the allocation of **£200,000** from reserves for the Stage Two when Management Committee decides on the allocation of council reserves at its meeting in June 2017.

11. **Member Panel.** To oversee the implementation of the Community Arts Grant Scheme and the Public Art project, it proposed that a Member Arts Advisory Panel is established. The Panel's functions will include advising officers on the execution of the projects, helping with the selection of artists, developing grant scheme criteria and scrutinising grant applications. The draft Terms of Reference for the Panel are presented in Appendix A for consideration by Management Committee. The council would seek to buy-in specialist project managers with a track record of delivering complex public art initiatives, and thereby ensure effective implementation.
12. **Public art project on Portland.** In addition to the public art project proposed above and which would take place in Weymouth, it is recommended that funding is made available to support a community-based project planned on Portland. A request for funding has been received from the Portland Sculpture & Quarry Trust for its 'Memory Stones' Project. This project will create a semi-circle of large, carved stones on a raised aggregate platform and will form an 'entry point' for visitors to the Tout Quarry Sculpture Park and other areas of the island. A summary of this project is set out in **Appendix B** and the Trust is requesting a grant from the council of £20,000 to help it secure £75,000 of match funding from Arts Council England and from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The award of this grant to the Memory Stones Project subject to the Trust entering into a standard grant agreement with the council.
13. The projects outlined above represent an ambitious arts programme for the borough and are designed to reflect the aspirations of Management Committee to support both high quality public art (for the benefit of both residents and visitors) and community-based creativity.

Implications

14. **Corporate Plan.** *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities.* The need to develop an arts strategy is also identified in the Management Committee's Action Plan.
15. **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.
16. Of the arts development budget allocated for 2016-17, £8,000 is still available and will be carried forward to 2017-18. It is proposed to use this budget to provide match funding for outdoor arts events planned by B-side and Activate in 2017 as reported to Management Committee in December 2016. However, any residue of this budget will be put towards the Community Arts Grant Scheme if established by the Committee.
17. **Equalities.** Consideration will need to be given to ensuring that any supported arts projects are accessible to all sections of the community.
18. **Economic Development.** Arts events and installations can make a significant contribution to economic growth.

19. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety).** Any grants awarded by the council will need to be subject to formal grant agreements (based on established models) and no funding would be released until implementation of a project is confirmed.

Consultation and Engagement

20. To inform the development of the options set out in this report, a member workshop was held on 18th 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

21. Appendix A – Draft Terms of Reference for Member Arts Advisory Panel.
Appendix B – Funding Request from the Portland Stone & Quarry Trust

Background Papers

22. None.

Footnote

23. 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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