

Management Committee

12 December 2017

Funding for cultural projects in Weymouth & Portland

For Decision

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Richard Kosior – 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 provision of a grant to Weymouth Museum Trust, and thereby enable members to allocate appropriate resources.

Recommendations

2. That Management Committee:
 - a) pursues the commissioning of public art in Weymouth and Portland for installation before March 2019 by allocating £133,000 from the reserves already set aside for one-off projects;
 - b) approves the detailed designs and costings for any public art to be commissioned in accordance with recommendation 2 (a) in consultation with the Member Arts Advisory Panel;
 - c) awards a one-off grant of £17,000 to Weymouth Museum Trust Ltd (charity no.1143692) to assist with the development of a Stage One bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the creation of a new museum at Brewers Quay and that this grant is funded from the reserves already set aside for one-off projects;
 - d) gives delegated authority to the Head of Economy Leisure & Tourism to agree, in consultation with the relevant Briefholder, the terms of a

grant agreement with the Weymouth Museum Trust Ltd if the grant requested in recommendation 2 (c) is agreed;

- e) if the grant recommended in 2 (c) is agreed then it must be claimed by Weymouth Museum Trust Ltd by 31st March 2019 at the latest subject to the Trust meeting the conditions of the grant agreement.

Reason for Decision

- 3. To enable Management Committee to take forward the Action Plan objective of creating a sculpture trail in the borough and also to enable the Committee to assist with the creation of a new museum for Weymouth.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 4. At its meeting in November 2017, the budget working group agreed to provisionally allocate £150,000 to a sculpture trail for the borough, subject to Management Committee approval. However, subsequent discussions with both the briefholder and the Leader of the council (Cllrs Kosior and Cant) has led to a proposal that £17,000 of this funding is allocated to help Weymouth Museum Trust with its stage one application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Overall, the proposed allocation of £150,000 will make a significant impact on cultural projects in the borough.

a) Public Art Project

- 5. 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. Following careful consideration of the options, the Committee agreed that its preference for future action would focus on the following:

- a) Supporting local community projects
- b) Design a programme of public art.

This report sets out, therefore, detailed proposals for taking forward objective (b).

- 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.
- 7. 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.
- 8. 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). The retention of specialist project management expertise to oversee the process would ease capacity issues within the existing workforce.

Stage Two: The costed designs and implementation requirements will be presented to Management Committee for consideration and approval – along with estimates of future maintenance costs. Every effort should be made to match any council contribution with external funding, particularly from Arts Council England, although the timescale for implementation (March 2019) may make it unlikely that match funding can be secured – for example, Coastal Community Fund grants may not be available until later in 2019.

9. It is proposed that the Member Arts Advisory Panel oversee the implementation of the Public Art project and is consulted on designs and locations. The Panel's role will also include advising officers on the execution of the project and helping with the selection of artists.
10. This project has been considered by the Budget Working Group and it has supported the allocation of funding from a budget set aside for one-off projects. It is proposed, therefore, that £133,000 is allocated by Management Committee to the implementation of this public art project.
11. The project outlined above represent an ambitious arts programme for the borough and is designed to reflect the aspirations of Management Committee to support high quality public art (for the benefit of both residents and visitors) and the enhancement of the built environment.

b) Support for Weymouth Museum Trust

12. The borough council has worked closely with Weymouth Museum Trust and the owners of Brewers Quay over recent years in order to bring to fruition the aspiration of creating a new, permanent museum for Weymouth. At present the Trust operates the museum (mainly comprising the borough council's collection) on a temporary basis within a part of the Brewers Quay building provided on a rent free basis by the current owners.
13. The planning permission for the site (granted in 2016) will result in the creation of a permanent area for the museum in the heart of Brewers Quay and thereby help fulfil the council's planning policy requirement that the development creates a wet weather attraction for the town.
14. Weymouth Museum Trust now wishes to restart the process of applying for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) to help establish the permanent museum by 2020. The total cost of the project will be at least £500,000, with exact costs determined during the project development (stage 2) phase which, it is hoped, the HLF will fund once it agrees to support the project following a stage one application. The benefit of this two stage approach is that a project can get an early indication that it is broadly acceptable and can then receive funding from HLF for the full development of the scheme

(designs, costings, business plan) when drawing up the stage two application.

15. In order to draw up its stage one application to the HLF, the Trust has requested financial assistance from the borough council by means of a one-off grant of £17,000 (derived from the £150,000 provisionally allocated by the Budget Working Group for public art). This will help pay for the employment of specialist bid writers and museum designers, all with experience of meeting the requirements of the HLF.
16. The borough council is committed to support the establishment of the permanent museum in Brewers Quay when it entered into a tripartite Museum Development Agreement with the Trust and the site owners in 2016. The Agreement commits the council to releasing £88,000 from reserves at the point at which the Trust took a 25-year, rent-free lease on the permanent premises for the museum following restoration of the listed building by the site owners (this may now be in 2020). This grant from the council will pay for fit-out costs and provide valuable match funding to help secure an HLF grant. Although the council still holds the £88,000, its early release to the Trust would require renegotiation of the Agreement and thereby result in all parties incurring legal fees.
17. Having considered the options, officers are recommending that the council make a new grant of £17,000 to Weymouth Museum Trust specifically to assist with the stage one application to HLF. If agreed, this grant should be time-limited and will need to be claimed by the Trust before March 2019.
18. If the council were not to support Weymouth Museum Trust in its ambition to create a new permanent museum, then there is the very real risk that the Trust will not be able to sustain its activities or create an attraction that visitors and residents would want to visit. If the Trust were to fold then the extensive museum collection would revert to the council and members would need to decide whether it should be stored or dispersed.
19. Through the use of the £150,000 provisionally allocated by the Budget Working Group to support both a public art trail and Weymouth Museum Trust, Management Committee has the opportunity to invest significantly in the cultural profile and reputation of the borough. As outlined in previous reports on this matter, such investment can benefit the local community, the quality of the built environment and the visitor economy.

Implications

20. **Corporate Plan.** *Empowering Thriving and Inclusive Communities.* The need to develop sculpture trail is also identified in the Management Committee's Action Plan.
21. **Financial.** The allocation of funding for these projects has been considered by the Budget Working Group and discussed with both the Leader of the Council and the briefholder. If allocated, the funding recommended in this report will need to be derived from reserves set aside for one-off projects. A future report to committee, setting out detailed

proposals for public art, will also attempt to estimate future maintenance costs. Consideration will need to be given as to which organisation will be responsible for the maintenance of any public art following local government reorganisation.

22. If Weymouth Museum Trust was not able to secure funding to help progress its bid to the HLF, then there is a possibility that the new museum is not delivered. In this were the case there is the risk that the borough council would incur costs relating to the storage and management of the collection.
23. Of the arts development budget allocated for 2017-18, £5,000 is still available. It is proposed to use this budget to provide match funding for a major outdoor arts event planned by Activate Performing Arts in 2018. A separate report on this matter will be presented to the committee.
24. **Equalities.** Consideration will need to be given to ensuring that any supported arts projects are accessible to all sections of the community.
25. **Economic Development.** Arts events and installations can make a significant contribution to economic growth.
26. **Risk Management (including Health & Safety).** If Weymouth Museum Trust is either unable to secure funding for the creation of a new museum then there is the risk that the collection will revert to the borough council for storage and/or disposal. This would raise financial and reputational risks for the council.
27. 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.
28. With regard to the programme of public arts / sculpture trail, there are a range of risks that need to be considered. These risks include: the possibility that not all the proposed installations will be able to secure planning consent (if required); reputational risk if there is not significant public support for the designs; and possible long-term maintenance costs that may not be affordable and for which there is currently no budget.

Consultation and Engagement

29. Consultation has been undertaken with the Leader of the Council, the briefholder for culture, the council's member representative to Weymouth Museum Trust (Cllr Farquharson) and the Member Arts Advisory Panel.

Appendices

30. None.

Background Papers

31. *Museum Development Agreement* - Brewers Quay, Weymouth. 2016.

Footnote

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

Report Authors: Tony Hurley (Leisure Commissioning Manager).

Telephone: 01305 252317

Email: thurley@dorset.gov.uk