

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture & Sport
DATE	20 September 2012
ACTING DIRECTOR	Charlie Penman
TITLE OF REPORT	Cultural Grants Second Round 2012/13
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/12/039

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents to Elected Members the recommendations for the second round of Cultural Grants for the financial year 2012/13.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee agree:

- (i) The allocation of cultural grants to the total value of £148,405.00 as presented in the appendix to this report.
- (ii) To allocate the remaining amount through the Public Art Fund and the new Commissions programme to further support the UK City of Culture 2017 Bid.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A total of £148,405.00 is available from within the remaining 2012/13 budget to support the second round Cultural Grants programme. Previously £217,414.00 was awarded in an initial round in June. Applicants were invited to be considered for support of up to 50% of the costs towards a cultural project or initiative, showing 25% match funding and 25% in kind contribution.

19 applications were received requesting funds of £93,173.77. At this time it is recommended to allocate cultural grants to the value of £35,541.09. This leaves a total of £112,863.91 remaining for this financial year.

It is recommended that committee delegates powers to allocate the remaining amount through the Public Art Fund and New Commissions programme. This funding will be used to develop large scale participatory cultural activity as part of the UK City of Culture Bid programme (£50,000) and to deliver services and activities which have been identified as integral to the Bid development (£62,863.91).

In order to avoid any potential duplication of funding, applications were considered in the context of cultural provision across Aberdeen and, where possible, against other relevant funding opportunities provided by Aberdeen City Council. By providing up to a maximum of 50% of the project funding, the Council's proportionate level of exposure is reduced. The grant scheme is designed to encourage partners to carefully examine the opportunities for a range of alternative funding streams, consider the further development of self sustainability within their projects and encourage partnership working and innovative approaches to the delivery of cultural opportunities for the community.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Officers considered a number of factors when presenting recommendations:

- Reducing the level of dependency on Council grants which could result in organisations not being able to continue to operate should Council funding not be granted.
- Where external funds will not be brought to the City if matching funds are not made available by the City Council.
- Funds not being used by organisations for the purposes for which they were granted.

These risks have and will continue to be managed through a robust assessment of each application and through systems to monitor and review funded activities throughout the year.

There are no additional legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, environmental or health and safety implications arising from this report at this time.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 New Cultural Grants Applications Framework

The Education Culture & Sport Committee on the 7th June 2012 approved Officers recommendations to restructure the current Cultural Grants process and design an application process which attracts new applicants and addresses clear gaps in the types of cultural provision in Aberdeen. The new themes are as following:

- **Access** – to support organisations and projects that will breakdown barriers to cultural engagement and participation, for those who are currently less likely to engage in cultural activity. This theme will seek to attract hard to reach groups, including those from disadvantaged communities.

- **Aspire** – supporting innovative, high quality work, raising the profile of Aberdeen as an attractive and vibrant place to live and work. The programme seeks to support collaboration and partnership proposals, international and national opportunities, and the production of new work whilst enhancing the quality work already being made in the city.
- **Support** – many of the applications received evidenced a need for additional support and training within the cultural sector, both to improve the quality of their submissions and for more specialised input. This includes a need to improve fundraising initiatives, organisational structures, audience development, and community engagement, marketing and volunteering. Support aims to help organisations to become more robust and independent, leading to a decrease in the level of dependence on the Council.
- **Public Art** – The existing public art scheme was established in 2011/2 and has proven to be an effective way to engage city residents in cultural activity in public spaces. The fund supports the aims of the public art tool kit, encouraging and empowering residents, communities, artists and organisations to use public art as a key driver in developing the City.

This fund in 2011 supported the City's Olympics public art project 'Lightspeed' (11-14 June) and three community commissions, allowing communities a first time opportunity to participate in commissioning public art. It is Officers recommendation that the 2012/13 funding is used to develop large scale participatory cultural activity as part of the UK City of Culture Bid programme.

5.2 Grants to Cultural Organisations

A table is attached as an appendix presenting the applications and the recommendations of the Cultural Grants Selection Panel for funding. The criteria for which the selection panel made the attached recommendations for the dispersal of funds included:

- Evidence of impacts on the objectives in Aberdeen's Single Outcome Agreement
- Evidence of links to 'Vibrant Aberdeen' – the Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen
- 50% match funding (25% in kind and 25% financial contribution)
- Evidence of beneficial partnership working, and best value to the Council
- Evidence of best value to the City Council
- Evidence of activity happening within Aberdeen City and being for the benefit of Aberdeen City residents
- Where relevant, a report back on the use of last year's funding.

For the first time in the award's history the Cultural Grant selection panel membership was made up of external creative sector leaders and community member representatives as well as relevant council officers. This has enhanced the depth of expertise and experience within the panel, resulting in a more informed selection process that understand the needs of the people of Aberdeen as well as the local cultural sector.

5.3 Unsuccessful Applications

Eight applications received did not meet the stated criteria, terms and conditions and have been deemed unsuccessful. This includes applications which have no match funding pending or secured, inappropriate legal status or requesting funding for the promotion of activity which would not have been available to all. It was felt that in the case of 3 of applications there was evidence of potential benefits but not enough to justify the level of investment requested. In these instances, it is recommended that a smaller 'seed fund' be allocated to applicants in order to support the development or piloting of the activity. All unsuccessful applicants will be supported to consider alternative funding avenues or reapplying for support in 2013/14. For reasons for rejection please see appendix 1.

5.4 Review of External Investment for Culture and Sport

The PBB option ECS C_10, Root and branch review of commissioned culture and sports services is currently being conducted by Officers in the Education, Culture and Sport Directorate. Recommendations relating to this review, designed to achieve significant budget savings and to improve the return on the City's investment in external culture and sports providers, will be presented to Elected Members in November 2012. The cultural grants programme is subject to that review, and as such, officers are working with several of the Cultural Grant supported organisations to assess the impacts of their work in the City, and will make recommendations accordingly.

6. IMPACT

This report relates to 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City':

- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- We aspire to be recognized as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality and diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.
- we will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience.

All successful applicants must illustrate how their projects meet the key objectives of 'Vibrant Aberdeen' the City's Cultural Strategy through the three main themes 'Access', 'Aspire' and 'Support'.

'Vibrant Aberdeen' has five objectives:

- Establish a cohesive cultural sector.
- Increase community engagement in cultural activity.
- Improve the city's cultural profile.
- Increase investment in culture.
- Effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of culture.

Successful applicants must evidence a connection to one or more of the local outcomes in the Single Outcome Agreement. The projects proposed directly relate to strands of the following Local Outcomes:

Outcome 2, 'Aberdeen will have high quality employment opportunities for its citizens',

Outcome 3, 'People of all ages take an active part in their own learning to achieve their full potential' and 'Learning and training is appropriate and accessible to learner's needs.

Local outcomes for National Outcome 4, 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens'.

Outcome 7. 'Improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas.'

Outcome 12, 'Aberdeen is widely recognised as a City with high quality natural assets, biodiversity, architecture and heritage which instill civic pride in its citizens.'

Outcome 13 'We take pride in a strong and inclusive national identity'.

Outcome 15, 'Our public services are consistently high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.' Guidance for Community Planning partnerships, from the Scottish Government entitled 'Culture Delivers' states: 'Cultural provision and infrastructure is part of the drive for best value. High quality should be promoted, continually seeking to improve its impact on communities and taking account of local aspirations and needs. Cultural activity can also help other sectors and services deliver in ways more closely matched to peoples wishes, and can assist in engaging citizens with civic life'.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Root and Branch Review of Commissioned Arts and Sports Services
Education, Culture & Sport Committee March 2011
Cultural Grants 2012/13 EC&S Committee June 2012
Second Round of Cultural Grants applications 2012-13 lodged in
Members Library.

Apendix 1

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Appendix 1

Cultural Grants – Please see below for frequent reasons for resubmissions, deferral or rejection of funding applications.

- No match funding
- Applications not fully completed or illegible
- Projects with no or limited cultural component
- Projects do not have clear outputs or outcomes
- The group is not constituted as required by the grants criteria
- Projects which were of limited value to the residents of the City, or primarily benefited those out with the City
- The organisation has outstanding debt with Aberdeen City Council
- The group cannot meet FPHP (Following the Public Pound) guidance and/or has not submitted the required reports against previous grant applications
- No clear evidence of need and/or duplication of existing initiatives
- Projects which included unrealistic costs or which were either over ambitious or unachievable
- Projects with recurring costs which were not sustainable (i.e., staffing)
- Funding requested to cover a shortfall in previous revenue without demonstrating any benefits.
- Evidence that the projects can be delivered without requiring additional financial support from Aberdeen City Council.
- Inadequate or no monitoring or evaluation plans.

Council officers from a variety of backgrounds and knowledge work together to assess the wider value to the cultural sector of each application. All organisations who have been rejected for funding are contacted with individual feedback and supported, where necessary, to resubmit.

Feedback and additional support

Where time allows, Aberdeen City Council officers will contact organisations on receipt of their applications to seek further clarification or further information when appropriate. This is not always possible when applications are received close to the deadline for Committee reports. Applicants are offered a telephone call or face to face meetings to help improve their applications: a pre-submission meeting with the Cultural Policy and Partnership Officer is a criteria requirement for any application made by an organisation that are currently in receipt of a Cultural Grant award or core funding for 2012/13 or were previously unsuccessful in their application.

In addition, officers provide advice and support to arts organisations with applications to Awards for All, Creative Scotland and other small grant funding streams.