

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE: **Education, Culture and Sport**

DATE: **30<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

DIRECTOR: **Gayle Gorman**

TITLE OF REPORT: **Cultural Awards 2013/14: Over £10,000**

REPORT NUMBER: **ECS/13/032**

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents to Committee officers recommendations for Cultural Awards 2013-14 in the 'Aspire' category, for funding requests over £10,000 and for the further allocation of grant funding in support of a range of initiatives to improve the cultural infrastructure of the city.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Agree the allocation of Cultural Awards to the total value of £105,909 as presented in Appendix 1 of this report.
- (ii) Agree the allocation of £10,000 of the balance of funds to provide opportunities for the programming of 17, the UK City bid hub in Belmont Street
- (iii) Agree the allocation of £15, 000 as match funding for Council applications to the Creative Scotland investment programme for 2013/14

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A total of £315,000 is available from the 2013/14 budget to support the Cultural Awards Programme. Applicants were invited to be considered for support of up to 50% of the total costs towards a cultural project or initiative, showing 25% match funding and 25% in kind contribution.

All applications were reviewed by a selection panel consisting of city residents and two independent cultural sector professionals. This panel was overseen by a Council officer, providing context and clarification to the panel. The selection panels previous recommendations were approved at the Culture & Sport Sub Committee, 8th March 2013 and Education, Culture & Sport

Committee, 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013 for awards 'Up to £5,000' and '£5,000 to £10,000' respectively. A total of £114,542 has been awarded to date through the Cultural Awards 2013/14.

Nine different applications requesting funding over £10,000 were received, requesting funds of £ 154,909. At this time it is recommended to allocate cultural grants to the value of £105,909. It is further recommended that £10,000 of the balance be allocated to programming activity at 17 in support of the bid for UK City of Culture, and that £15,000 is allocated to support the match funding required for proposed applications to the Creative Scotland investment programme for 2013/14.

The balance of £65,549 will be allocated through a further round of grant requests to be brought before Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013. This will enable applications which have been rejected in this cycle to be resubmitted.

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

## **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

### **5.1 New Cultural Awards Applications Framework**

On the 7th June 2012, the Education Culture & Sport Committee approved officer recommendations to restructure the current Cultural Grants process, and to design an application process which attracts new applicants whilst addressing clear gaps in the city's cultural provision. The new format was piloted for the second round of cultural funding in 2012/13. A follow up survey with applicants was conducted to ascertain the perceived benefits of the new format and any recommendations for amendments. The survey feedback indicated that changes to the application format made the process easier for applicants and clarified the expectations and priorities of Aberdeen City Council's cultural investment. The categories have been maintained for 2013/14 but the application and guidance has been made more concise and some criteria changes introduced to improve the quality of applications.

### **5.2 Criteria for Award**

The categories for the Awards Programme are as following:

- Access – to support organisations and projects that will breakdown barriers to participation in cultural activity. In particular, this scheme seeks to attract hard to reach groups, including those from disadvantaged communities.
- Aspire –to support innovative and high quality work which raises the profile of Aberdeen as an attractive and vibrant place to live and work. The programme seeks to develop 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 to support the city's cultural sector. This includes a need to improve fundraising initiatives, organisational structures, audience development, and community engagement, marketing and volunteering. The 'support' theme aims to help organisations to become more robust and independent, leading to a decrease in the level of dependence on the Council.

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
- Evidence of activity happening within Aberdeen City and being for the benefit of residents

- 50% match funding (25% in kind and 25% financial contribution)
- Evidence of beneficial partnership working
- Evidence of Best Value
- Where relevant, a report back on the use of last year's funding

With Aberdeen City Council committing to bidding for the UK City of Culture 2017 title, 2013 will see culture very much at the heart and focus of life in the city. The bidding process is an opportunity to showcase the very best that Aberdeen cultural sector has to offer, as well as increasing participation opportunities for all Aberdeen citizens. In this respect, the panel sought Cultural Award proposals reflecting the levels of engagement, collaboration, opportunity and aspiration that this period could offer to support a more vibrant cultural life for Aberdeen and its citizens.

Since 2012, the Cultural Awards selection panel membership has comprised external creative sector leaders and community member representatives supported by 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.

### **5.2.1 Selection Process**

While in previous Council cultural investment programmes applicants were occasionally asked to supply more information to support the decision making process, in 2013/14 interviews for applications over £10,000 were a stipulation as part of the application process. Four applicants were short listed for interviews, with another two internal applications recommended for development funding, which will include a formal planning session. The interviews presented an opportunity for further clarification and assurances to be sought prior to making a final recommendation to committee.

## **5.3 Awards to Cultural Organisations**

The following is a summary of the projects which are recommended for award.

### **5.3.1 Aspire: Over £10,000**

#### **Royal Scottish National Orchestra – Nickum: £20,000**

Nickum will see RSNO deliver an innovative cross art form programme of interactive workshops and performances for children and parents, in Aberdeen's regeneration areas. This programme, which includes artist's residencies, will be piloted first in Aberdeen following on from RSNO's Astar project where every child born in Scotland between October 2012 and October 2013 will receive a specially created RSNO CD of music for play, rest and sleep. To support the sustainability of the project RSNO will work closely with local partners, including ACC Early Years teams and the University of Aberdeen to develop placement opportunities for music students within the communities.

**Peacock Visual Arts – Stand Scotland Where She Did? : £10,909**

Peacock Visual Arts seek funding for a seventieth birthday retrospective for the noted writer Timothy Neat, as well as the first exhibition of his work in Scotland, exploring the writers work with Burns, Mackintosh and MacDiarmid. The retrospective will also explore his collaborations with Hamish Henderson, Sorley MacLean, Ian Hamilton Finlay and John Berger and his involvement with travelling people and Scottish traditional music. The celebratory exhibition will include a new suite of screen-prints, a season of films at the Belmont, a concert of traditional music and song and a panel discussion looking at how Neat's work illuminates sixty years during which Scottish culture and politics have changed dramatically. Award recommendation is conditional based on Peacock confirming delivery partnerships, schedules and their marketing plan.

**Aberdeen Performing Arts - A Play, A Pie and A Pint at The Lemon Tree: £15,000**

Aberdeen Performing Arts seeks funding for an innovative and inspirational producing and commissioning project which will support the Lemon Tree to become the hub for new writing for the stage and for talent development. The project will be in partnership with award winning producers of Oran Mor's "A Play, A Pie and A Pint", Playwrights Studio Scotland and Aberdeen College. The project will include commissioning three new works for the stage to be presented in autumn 2013 in Aberdeen and in Glasgow at Oran Mor, alongside a masterclass programme for emerging theatre artists in the North East.

**Station House Media Unit, shmuSOUND: £20,000**

SHMU seeks funding support to rebrand and expand 'The Platform' programme to explore a broader range of musical and audio based genres, including the spoken word and radio plays, giving a platform for live performance and interview experience, sharing their creative offering to audiences of thousands. The funds are also sought to deliver training and support to young writers/bloggers/journalists to develop sustainable content for a major new music website covering Aberdeen City and Shire.

**5.5 Projects for Consideration for Development Funding Support**

**Citymoves Dance Agency, DanceLive: £20,000**

DanceLive is Scotland's only festival of contemporary dance and a unique element to Aberdeen's festival calendar. 2013 will be the 8th DanceLive Festival, celebrating new contemporary dance, with a cutting edge programme combining the best national and international companies, as well as showcasing new work by local dancers, choreographers and companies.

The programme will include at least 19 performances, at His Majesty's Theatre, Lemon Tree and Citymoves, including two new productions, plus an associated programme of film, talks, school and community workshops and masterclasses.

In recognition of the festivals unique artistic qualities and opportunities for growth, the selection panel has recommended that DanceLive is moved to a

three year Development Funding Plan, with set targets and agreed objectives for the next three years. Moving the Dancelive on to Development Funding will place Citymoves in a better place to secure investment, advance programme, better evidence and evaluate the social and economic benefits of activities as well as growing the festival to become a signature event for the city, in line with the aspirations put identified by the 2017 UK City of Culture bid proposal.

#### **Creative Learning Team, Arts Across Learning Festival: £20,000**

The Arts Across Learning Festival provides free opportunities for primary pupils to learn in, through and about the arts, embracing all artforms to support learning across the curriculum. The festival programmes artists and companies to deliver activity in museums, galleries, libraries and more to inspire children and encourage schools to visit places they might not otherwise access.

The panel feels that the activity is worthy of support but would wish to further consider the balance of cultural and educational impacts. In that respect, the panel as recommended that the festival is reviewed to assess those cultural and educational values and outputs of the activity in order to move towards a potential longer term Development Funding Agreement which will be better support and monitor this annual event.

#### **5.4 Unsuccessful Applications**

Three 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. To assist the panel in the decision process for making recommendations the following classification was used to clarify specific reasons for rejection.

1. Not enough information supplied
2. Does not meet match funding requirements
3. Proposal does not evidence quality or value
4. Project does not meet category criteria
5. No evidence of additional support requirement
6. Ineligible costs
7. Activity primarily outside of Aberdeen city
8. Significant unrestricted financial reserves
9. Support or promote religious or political activity
10. Unrealistic or unachievable aspiration (timescales, costs or track record of delivery)

All unsuccessful applicants will be supported to re-submit their application and/or source alternative funding sources.

All applications are available in the Elected Members library.

## 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 recognised 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. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

Aberdeen has committed to bidding for UK City of Culture 2017, so any investment needs to be considered in terms of those cultural aspirations and plans. All applications were considered by the selection panel within the context of the city's cultural ambitions and their potential impact on the bid development and the city's cultural step change.

All unsuccessful applicants will be offered support to reapply to future investment rounds if appropriate or supported in identifying alternative funding programmes.

All successful applicants are expected to agree to terms and conditions which mitigate any risk of exposure to the Council and that all supported activity meets Council Policies, processes and the Following the Public Pound guidelines.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cultural grants 2013/14 Culture and Sport sub Committee 8<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Cultural grants 2013/14 Education, Culture and Sport Committee 28<sup>th</sup> March 2013

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## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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