

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture & Sport
DATE	28th March 2013
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Cultural Awards 2013/14: Over £5,000 and up to £10,000
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/13/022

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents to the Committee, recommendations for the Cultural Awards 2013-14 in the 'Aspire' category from over £5,000 and up to £10,000.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Agree the allocation of Cultural Awards to the total value of £60,610 as presented in Appendix 1 of this report.

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 panel's recommendations will be put forward to the following Council committees for a final decision:

- Culture & Sport Sub Committee, 8th March 2013: Awards £5,000 and under
- Education, Culture & Sport Committee, 28th March 2013: Awards over £5,000 and up to £10,000
- Education, Culture & Sport Committee, 30th May 2013: Awards over £10,000

Ten different applications requesting funding over £5,000 and up to £10,000 were received, requesting funds of £81,900.08. At this time it is recommended to allocate cultural grants to the value of £60,610. £53,932 of funding has been recently approved by the Culture & Sport Sub Committee on 8th March 2013. This leaves a total of £200,458 remaining for awards over £10,000 and a potential second application round for this financial year.

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 Awards Applications Framework

On the 7th June 2012, the Education Culture & Sport Committee 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 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** – supporting 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 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 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 to all Aberdeen citizens. In this respect, the panel was seeking Cultural Award proposals that reflect the levels of engagement, collaboration, opportunity and aspiration that this period could offer towards a more vibrant cultural life for Aberdeen and its citizens.

From 2012 it was decided that the Cultural Awards selection panel membership will be made up of 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.

5.3 Awards to Cultural Organisations

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

5.3.1 Aspire: Over £5,000 and up to £10,000

- **University of Aberdeen: Directors Cut 7**, Recommended award - £6,000

The programme of events will showcase innovative and international film makers, broadcasters and musicians talking about their work and tying it to a concert/music session. The series will include screenings and masterclasses at the Belmont Cinema where audiences have the opportunity to hear first-hand about the film and music industry from leading professionals. A Junior Director's Cut working with Aberdeen City Schools will also be coordinated.

- **Scottish Sculpture Workshop: Granite Slow Prototype**, Recommended award - £7,750

The project focuses on the commissioning of an artist working in granite and stone masonry during the Granite Festival and Aberdeen Tartan Day. The artist will create site-specific works of contemporary sculpture, lead public workshops in the sculptural processes and methods of stone carving.

- **Aberdeen Art Gallery: Lunchtime Concert Series**, Recommended award - £8,400

Aberdeen Art Gallery, working in partnership with Aberdeen University, will deliver a mixed repertoire ranging from medieval plainchant through baroque, classical and romantic music to contemporary music, in association with the Sound festival. Performers comprise a mix of international, national and local musicians, with some to be broadcast by BBC Radio 3. Opportunities for local schools and students to perform at two events will also form part of the series.

- **Scottish Ballet: Woodland Performance Project**, Recommended award - £9,960

In conjunction with Forestry Commission Scotland and City Moves, Scottish Ballet will facilitate week-long creative workshops in which a community dance group of up to 35 participants in Aberdeen will explore selected themes from the *Hansel & Gretel* story leading to a site specific participatory dance performance.

- **Aberdeen Sinfonietta: Music Hall Concert Series**, Recommended award - £10,000

The grant is recommended for a series of concert performances at Aberdeen Music Hall, including the first Scottish performance of a recent work by the acclaimed Aberdeen-based composer Paul Mealor. The series will also include master classes and workshop programmes.

- **Scottish Ensemble: Aberdeen Concert Series, Year 6**, Recommended award £10,000

Activity will include three evening concerts, bringing world-class soloists and new commissions to Aberdeen audiences, as well as a 4 day residency. Partnerships and performances will include University of Aberdeen, numerous local schools, youth and amateur ensembles, care homes and community centres.

- **Aberdeen Art Gallery: WALK ON/ Soul Lines**, Recommended award £8,500

Tying in with the major exhibition “WALK ON: From Richard Long to Janet Cardiff - 40 years of Art Walking”, a collaboration with Deveron Arts in hosting the artist residency, plan B’s Soul Lines project. This mobile/ online project will look at man’s relationship with technology and explore its meaning through performance, participation and exhibition.

All awards will be conditional based on applicants meeting Council officers to clarify a series of specific requirements to ensure the proposed projects maximise their potential and ensure a lasting legacy.

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.

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. 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.

Appendix 1: Awards table

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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