

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Education, Culture & Sport
DATE	16 June 2014
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Culture Programme 2014-19
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/14/045
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to request permission from Elected Members to tender for the 2015 Light Festival and to approve a course of action to support the delivery of the Culture Programme for 2014-19. The report also provides Elected Members with a framework of strategic objectives which will support the delivery of a targeted number of events and activities designed to improve the cultural sector.

**2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**Elected members are requested to:**

1. Approve the tender process for the 2015 Light Festival.
2. Approve a new initiative fund for an artists residency programme using £56,000 from existing budgets, in partnership with cultural and community organisations in order to deliver elements of the culture programme.
3. Agree the themes and budget allocations for 2014
4. Agree, that in order to deliver the desired improvements over a longer period, the themes be agreed for 2014-19
5. Agree the allocation of £50,000 in 2014 to the Youth Arts Hub Creative Scotland initiative, led by Aberdeen Performing Arts
6. Agree the allocation of £50,000 in 2014 to Visit Aberdeen on behalf of the Festivals Collective to improve the viability of the eight cultural festivals in the city

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

At the Council budget meeting on 6 February, additional investment in culture for 2014/15 of £400,000 was approved, along with an indicative allocation in 2015/16 of £710,000, in 2016/17 of £800,000, in 2017/18 of £705,000 and in 2018/19 of £680,000. In addition, a total of £56,000

is allocated towards the appointment of an individual or individuals to lead the delivery of the cultural programme.

#### 4. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Legal support will be required for the tender process. An EHRIA has been completed and is appended to this report.

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

##### 5.1 **Bidding for UK City of Culture 2017**

In June 2013 Aberdeen City Council submitted an unsuccessful bid for UK City of Culture 2017. During the period following the bid, the Council made a public commitment to deliver a step change in cultural activity and infrastructure over the period running up to 2017/18. During this time staff and partner organisations, including the UK City of Culture project board, identified a number of high level objectives which would support the city's ambitions for culture. These developments necessitate a 'step change' in the cultural offer over a longer period in order to deliver the kind of lasting change and improvement required to make the city ready for bidding for future accolades.

Feedback from the bid for UK City of Culture was received from Regeneris, the consultants employed by the DCMS. It stated:

'Aberdeen has great potential in terms of its potential resources and the significant interest that public and private partners have in upping Aberdeen's game. However this bid does not deliver the quality of outline programme or the clarity and vision and assurance of deliverability...there is great potential for the city to use the momentum from this bid process to take forward development of its cultural offer and deliver relationships with business sponsors'

The debrief process identified, amongst others, the following key benefits of the bidding process:

- Positive media coverage of Aberdeen, raising the profile of the city and engaging the public imagination
- Engagement between the city's cultural establishments and the private sector has been improved
- By signalling an ambition to improve the cultural life of the city, the awareness of the benefits this could bring to individuals and communities has been raised significantly
- The bid provided a dynamic drive for capital initiatives such as the redevelopment of the Art Gallery, Museums Collection Centre, Music Hall, and revenue funded initiatives like Big Noise Torry, the Made in Aberdeen Awards and the Diamond Jubilee Commonwealth Travel Bursary scheme.

Developing long lasting capacity in the cultural infrastructure of the city remains a key action, which, if addressed, will, in the long term, provide

the city with the resources and ambition to be ideally place for future bids, and to become recognised as a creatively ambitious city which attracts people to live, work and visit.

This paper lays out a series of themes against which the 2014-19 budgets for the cultural programme will be allocated

## 5.2 Culture Programme themes

Four key themes were developed during the bidding process:

- Placemaking - Establishing the city as a hub for creative individuals and businesses. This includes supporting development of creative and production spaces such as artists studios, residencies, locally based culture hubs, digital production spaces and other venues providing opportunities for attract and retain creative talent in the city
- Signature event - Developing an annual festival or event which is unique to the city, celebratory, of high artistic quality and which excites and involves residents and visitors.
- Building on our strengths - Where good practice exists, supporting existing organisations and creative individuals to develop their work further.
- Marketing and Communication -Investing strategically in audience intelligence and marketing, providing training and support to the independent sector, developing marketing programmes and improving the profile and perception of the city's cultural offer.

These themes will provide the framework for the allocation of the culture programme budget.

## 5.3 2014/15 Programme

Theme	Activity	Funding	Allocation process
Placemaking	Creative Spaces and Residency	£120,000	Partnership arrangement/culture network partners
Placemaking	Youth Arts Hub	£50,000	Contribution to successful application
Signature Event	Light Festival	£150,000	Tender
Building on our strengths	Festivals Collective	£50,000	Partnership with Visit Aberdeen
Marketing and Communications	Audience development, press promotion, website development and training	£30,000	In house

### **5.3.1 Placemaking: Creative Spaces/Residencies**

A lack of affordable production spaces and facilities was identified in both the Aberdeen Cultural Assets Mapping report and the draft RGU EKOS North East Creative Industries research, as a key challenge for the sustainability and growth of the city's creative and cultural sector. The lack of studio, rehearsal and production space is recognised as having a negative impact on graduate retention, creative industry employment, production levels as well as perceptions of the city's contemporary identity and reputation. Officers are proposing a series of partnership initiatives to respond to this challenge, including the establishment of an 'empty space' database and network scheme, start up funding for the development of new or existing production spaces and research and piloting of new models for creative spaces in partnership with the private sector.

Recent data gathered by officers shows that the number and quality of cultural funding applications to the Council which involve developing and delivering new work in regeneration areas is significantly less than what is required to fully engage local residents in the cultural offer of the city. This sits alongside previous local and national research which illustrates that participation within regeneration areas is significantly lower in comparison to others. It is on this basis that this programme seeks to focus on developing creative spaces within the city's regeneration areas, not only promoting access to high quality cultural activity and exciting opportunities for residents but, through involvement in other Council led initiatives, playing an integrated role within wider regeneration plans.

Having secured additional investment for staffing and Seventeen running costs, officers are exploring the feasibility of realigning some of the staffing costs to allow the salary attributed to the Cultural Programme Manager to be invested in a series of one year Artists Residency programmes in the regeneration areas of Aberdeen as part of this overall programme. The purpose of these residencies is to ensure cultural organisations in Aberdeen develop sustainable and innovative approaches and practice when working with hard to reach groups and those living in some of the city's most deprived communities. Cultural organisations will be invited to apply to work with an artist or creative practitioner of national standing in partnership with a local community group or school.

### **5.3.2 Placemaking: Youth Arts Hub**

A successful submission was made in 2014 to Creative Scotland by Aberdeen Performing Arts on behalf of a group of cultural and youth providers in the city. The initiative, over two years will: improve the infrastructure for youth arts in Aberdeen: improve access to and increase participation in youth arts provision: increase opportunities for young people to progress and excel in the arts, and to increase opportunities to celebrate and share achievements in youth arts. The

application secured £400,000 over two years. The total cost of the project delivery over two years is £700,000.

### **5.3.3 Signature event: Light Festival**

SPECTRA, Aberdeen's first festival of light, took place in February 2014, with an array of light installations, exhibitions and events. As a pilot event, attracting 17,000 people during the week of the festival, the programme balanced school and community participation with a series of installations and projections by local, national and international artists. This approach increased the accessibility of the programme, with the school and community projects offering a built in audience. An evaluation prepared by officers shows that the weekend was well received and that it provides an excellent platform to showcase the city's unique qualities. To deliver this initiative, a tender process is required.

### **5.3.4 Building on our strengths: Festivals Collective**

Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with Visit Aberdeen, have formally established a 'Festivals Collective' incorporating the city's key cultural festivals, including Aberdeen International Youth Festival, Sound , DanceLive, 50+, Aberdeen Jazz, Arts Across Learning, Techfest and the May Festival. The initial funding provided has covered the employment of a Co-ordinator and is supporting the delivery of a series of pilot activities including joint branding, programming and fundraising. This programme is seen as a key legacy of the city's bid for UK City of Culture 2017. The overarching objective is, through closer cooperation and working in partnership with Visit Aberdeen, to improve the local, national and international profile of the high quality cultural festivals which take place in the city.

## **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 promote and improve opportunities for physical activity and sport to enable Aberdeen's citizens to lead more active, healthier lives

This report is consistent with the City's Cultural strategy, 'Vibrant Aberdeen' as the proposal seeks to improve the City's cultural profile, and through working with partners, increase investment in cultural activity

The report relates to the EC & S Priorities and Detailed Action Plan for 2013/14 to 2015/16

ECS Strategic objectives:

- Accelerate progress to improve learning outcomes for specific underperforming groups
- Improve Health and Wellbeing outcomes
- Improve and increase positive destinations for 14-25 year olds
- Extend quality cultural opportunities

The report relates to the Single Outcome Agreement for Aberdeen:  
Multi Lateral Priority: Culture City:

- Aberdeen will deliver a significantly improved cultural programme and infrastructure in 2014-19 which can be seen to impact every aspect of the 2022 vision

This proposal contributes to the Council's Equality Outcomes.

**14. People with protected characteristics who make better use of cultural and sporting facilities. The lead service is Education, Culture and Sport.**

The elements of the General Public Sector Equality Duty addressed will be:

- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations.

This report will be of interest to the public as evidence of the Council's public commitment to the delivery of an enhanced Cultural programme following the bid for UK City of Culture 2017.

## **7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK**

The City Council, as stated, has made a public commitment to improving its cultural programme, and this paper provides a framework for the step change required to enable the city to address the challenges as identified in the bid feedback. This section must include an assessment of risks identified with the potential to impact negatively or positively on the decision required of the Committee. You should refer to the 'Management of Risk' Guidance (<http://thezone/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=27520&SID=4371>) in completing this section.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

UK City of Culture bid, June 2013 'Illuminating the North'

UK City of Culture feedback – Regeneris  
Creative Scotland Youth Arts Hub application  
Aberdeen Light festival evaluation

9. **REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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