

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance Policy & Resources
DATE	9 March 2017
INTERIM DIRECTOR	Bernadette Marjoram
TITLE OF REPORT	14 -18NOW- WW1Centenary Art Commissions
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/17/041
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	YES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform members about the progress of the Council's bid to deliver the 14-18NOW WW1 Centenary Art Commissions Weeping Windows installation for 6 weeks in late 2018 within Marischal College Quadrangle and to inform the members as to why it is recommended that the Council withdraw its bid.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Instruct the withdrawal of the Council's bid to host the 14-18NOW WW1 Centenary Art Commissions Weeping Windows installation.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendation is to withdraw the Council's bid to host the 14-18NOW WW1 Centenary Art Commissions Weeping Windows installation as there is no identified budget to support this installation therefore there are no financial implications arising as a result of this report. Based on the generic information provided within the application pack and the core costs we would anticipate if we apply the industry standard approach/Purple Guide guidance to installation of this scale would be £129,675.14.

Currently there is no funding identified to deliver this installation, so, if this were to proceed, consideration would need to be given to the

identification or reallocation of funds from existing budgets to support this activity.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Staffing: There are no staffing implications as the recommendation is not to proceed with this installation.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

As per FP&R Committee's instruction via the Director of Corporate Governance on 7 December 2016, the City Events Team submitted an application to 14-18Now on 12 January 2017. All bids are currently being assessed with successful applicants announced on Friday 17 August 2017. Applicants will be asked to confirm they have the funding and resources available before confirming successful awards.

Following the approval of the Aberdeen 365 Events Strategy at FP&R Committee on 7 December 2016, where the criteria for future event investment was agreed, going forward for any/all event and installation applications consideration will be given to the economic impact, funding, alignment to existing economic/tourism strategies and place shaping when reviewing the feasibility of this installation.

The economic benefit that could be achieved from this installation would not be as significant as those delivered by some of the major events that have recently been secured through the City Centre Masterplan.

14-18NOW, the UK's official arts programme for the First World War centenary, invited expressions of interest from across the UK to host the iconic ceramic poppy sculptures Wave and Weeping Window in 2018.

Wave and Weeping Window are from the extraordinary installation Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red by Paul Cummins Ceramics Limited in conjunction with Historic Royal Palaces. The installation was originally at HM Tower of London in the autumn of 2014.

The application for 14-18Now application sought the following information:

- **Artistic resonance of location (30%)**
 - General visual appeal
 - Suitability of the location for the particular sculpture
 - General environment of location (not close to commercial enterprises) including close up and medium vista view
- **Relevant resonance with the heritage of the First World War (30%)**
- **Ability to provide free access - presentations should be free to view (pass/fail)**

- **Capability and expertise of the Presenter (20%)**
 - Ability to fulfil the requirements to the highest standards
 - Ability to present large scale outdoor installations including prior experience of delivering and managing large scale public art events
- **Ability to provide an appropriate public participation and learning programme (20%)**
 - Indication of proposed programme
 - Target audiences
 - Levels of engagement

Site proposals

The City Events Team was asked to consider two potential sites for the Weeping Window installation. They were Marischal College Quadrangle and the Remembrance Hall within the city's soon to be refurbished Art Gallery.

The Remembrance Hall within Aberdeen Art Gallery, and the Marischal College Quadrangle have significant connections to the city's sacrifice during the Great War.

Following discussions with colleagues in the Museums & Galleries Service, it was noted that they are under contractual obligation to a number of grant funding bodies including the Heritage Lottery Fund, Museums Galleries Scotland and the UK Government (through the LIBOR fund) to deliver the Remembrance Hall element of the art gallery redevelopment project as stated in the initial applications for said funding.

This includes a number of key commissions as well as a publicly accessible balcony gallery exploring memories of conflict. Considerable time has been spent liaising with serving members of the armed forces and veterans to ensure the feel of the space is preserved and that it serves as an open access route connecting all parts of the new building project.

A major installation in the first full year of opening would impact on the funding contracts, the specified intention for the space as well as circulation and visitor management. The opportunity for the city, driving visitors between the two sites (such as Marischal College Quad) for "visions of remembrance" would be increased if the installation were not sited in what could be a cramped and complex space. The Weeping Window piece has been viewed elsewhere by colleagues in the service and they feel that a circular room would not give the poppies much prominence nor an adequate vista.

On this basis, the City Events Team has further investigated the Marischal College Quadrangle as an installation site. Point to note - to date all of the successful applications have been for outdoor venues.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience – The recommendation is not to proceed with this application so there would be no customer experience.

Improving Staff Experience – There appears to be no improvement to the staff experience.

Improving our use of Resources – We do not have the financial resource to deliver the installation, therefore the recommendation aligns with improving our use of resources.

Corporate: A decision not to proceed with the installation will not support the corporate goals.

Public – Neither an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment nor a Privacy Impact Assessment is required for this report as the recommendation is not to proceed with this installation

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Aberdeen's City Events programme and the Aberdeen 365 Events Strategy is key to the destination promotion that Aberdeen City Council, Visit Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen Inspired and VisitScotland Aberdeen City and Shire currently undertake.

Withdrawing this application may make Aberdeen a less attractive destination for visitors and local residents with economic spend being distributed elsewhere in Scotland and event organisers considering alternative delivery locations.

The withdrawal of this bid may create some negative publicity for the Council.

However, withdrawal of the bid now (rather than at a later date) will limit damage to the council's reputation with regards to bidding for events and preserve the existing relationship with 14-18NOW.

Going forward there will be the opportunity to prioritise investment to support events using the criteria agreed within the report OCE/16/040 criteria agreed to better inform the local authority's decision on whether to invest in an event. By applying these criteria, capacity could be created in the events programme in future to develop opportunities to support the development of an events programme that maximises economic benefit for the city and wider region, and showcases a legacy that promotes the region's capability on the national and international event stage.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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