

## **Appendix 1 – LACER Application Summary**

### **Enhanced business support/Community Wealth building support within regeneration areas.**

Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an internationally recognised approach to local economic development, tackling inequalities within communities to create resilient, inclusive and sustainable economies. The principles are that local communities own, have a stake in, access and benefit from the wealth generated by local economies.

CWB provides a framework around five interlinked pillars: spending, workforce, land and property, financial power and inclusive ownership.

Aberdeen City Council is an 'anchor organisation', defined as those rooted to an area with real purchasing and spend powers. As such ACC adopted a Community Wealth Building approach at the end of 2022, with an action plan focused on short, medium and long-term interventions under each pillar. While progress is being made in delivering these via a CWB Officer and internal cross-service working group, maximum impact from CWB comes from collaboration with other anchor institutions (through local community planning structures) and embedding the approach across these.

This project seeks to build on progress to date, and accelerate this going forward, by recruiting an Adviser on CWB to work with priority neighbourhoods.

The role of the Adviser would be to engage priority neighbourhoods in CWB (raise awareness and understanding of the approach and its benefits); to represent priority neighbourhoods and their interests in the cross-service working group and any subsequent wider working groups; and to support locals and businesses from priority neighbourhoods to participate in interventions being delivered by anchor institutions.

By aligning the Adviser with Community Planning priority neighbourhoods, this ensures collaboration and ease of delivery. This would also support delivery of LOIP outcomes. Looking ahead, direct engagement with priority neighbourhoods will serve to ensure future CWB interventions are created through bottom-up consultation, maximising effectiveness of the approach to economic development.

### **Community bank/Micro-credit scheme feasibility study.**

This proposal is for a feasibility study to be procured and undertaken by an external agency.

The feasibility study will address two aims: identifying support package options which will increase self-employment rates and business start-up rates in the city; and to assess the viability of a Community Bank to support households that are in poverty to access training and/or employment.

Despite the availability of start-up loans from the UK government, and dedicated local business support via services such as Business Gateway, sources including PwC Good Growth for Cities Report and the Centre for Cities research, both find Aberdeen's business start-up rates to be lagging behind other UK cities. With a value of 37.8 start-ups per 10,000 population, Aberdeen ranks 59 out of UK's 63 largest cities and towns for business start-ups.

The proposed feasibility study would seek to engage locally to identify the reasons behind these low rates and whether there are perceived or real challenges that are failing to be overcome. Interest and appetite in opportunities to be self-employed or establish new business would also be gauged. This would then inform the creation of support package options, to be summarised as to deliverability and viability, and a recommendation highlighted.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation cites that the highest priority action to move households out of poverty is to assist them in accessing employment or training that leads to employment. The viability of a Community Bank, ideally with geographical reach through Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Moray Council areas, which would provide ethical and local financial solutions; harness local wealth for reinvestment; and offer targeted financial and management support to those in poverty with the objective of supporting them into employment will also be scoped.

It is envisaged that the recommended support package option, or a combination of the options and Community Bank action explored, will then form the evidence basis of an application to the Scottish Government's Just Transition Fund to secure funding for delivery.

The feasibility work would also identify stakeholders and determine interest in the potential, subsequent, JTF application.

### **Events Project .**

Aberdeen hosts a year-round programme of prestigious events, but the recently approved 365 Events Plan outlined the ambition to activate the city's public realm and venues more regularly. A funding award would help to achieve that ambition; allowing greater collaboration with creative partners, sport organisations and community groups, as well as enabling more high-impact events to drive city centre footfall and revenue growth – aiding the continued recovery from the pandemic and economic downturn.

Support is sought to purchase an event activation pack. This would contain the equipment necessary to stage events more easily, regularly and cost-effectively on a range of sites in the city. The equipment has been selected by the City Events Team in conjunction with creative partners, with a particular view to bringing events to Union Terrace Gardens and other outdoor spaces, but it would also be utilised inside Council-run venues to maximise the spend.

The proposed multi-use stage would pop-up on event sites to host spoken word and music events, for example Summer Sessions in Union Terrace Gardens, as performance staging for the Festival of the Seas in 2024, and to showcase local choirs as part of Aberdeen's Christmas celebrations. It could be set-up for community events such as Pride or Mela, for performances by local cultural groups, or to be a focal point for a festival taking place in venues across the city.

The temporary lighting kit proposed is highly adaptable and can bring instant colour theming and a dynamic feel to outdoor event sites or staging areas, such as Union Terrace Gardens at Christmas or Halloween. When not in use the lighting equipment would be utilised at the Cowdray Hall, Aberdeen Art Gallery or the Beach Ballroom to enhance performance or add value to corporate events – any commercial hire would help to fund future replacement. These venues would also provide safe storage for the kit.

Other equipment has been proposed to improve the visibility of events in public spaces by increasing signage in a managed way and clearly marking site access points. This will help to improve accessibility and event safety, while growing attendee numbers and aiding discoverability. This kit will be vital in areas such as Union Terrace Gardens where, for example, events at the base of the park are not visible to people at street level. Included are gantry arches which can be dressed for major occasions such as Spectra: Scotland's Festival of Light and Tall Ships 2025 as well as for community-run events. Branding on the gantry arches would also be an attractive part of event sponsorship and branding packages.

As well as increasing the number and impact of events the funding sought would save money on repeated hiring of equipment. Small hire charges for the community equipment would help to cover maintenance costs, and charges for any corporate or performance use in city venues would go towards future replacement. Solutions for storage and maintenance of equipment have already been agreed in principle with Council colleagues in Parks, Roads, Aberdeen Art Gallery and the Beach Ballroom.

## **Spectra**

The funding from LACER is vital to providing a safe and accessible environment for audiences attending Spectra 2024. Without this funding the festival will not be able to go ahead.

This funding will cover the logistics cost for delivering the event including road closures, licensing, stewarding, signage and equipment.

Existing budget is allocated to programming and production of the core festival, however the costs associated with logistics for an event of this scale is significant and vital to ensuring public safety. Funding from Lacer will enable the contracting of professional stewarding partners across the entire footprint of the site to manage the exceptionally large crowds expected at the event, as well as add to the visitor experience. This cost is anticipated to be in excess of £35,000.

The additional logistics costs ensure key roads are closed to traffic, dramatically improving visitor safety around the site footprint, and cover additional safety, visitor experience and accessibility measures aimed at ensuring the festival is demonstrating best practice in event safety regionally. These costs added together are substantial and not deliverable within the core Spectra budget in the current budgetary landscape, so funding partners are being sourced to facilitate this aspect of the event.

Following feedback from the 2023 event, it is planned to develop the partnership with WeToo further to improve accessibility and support for visitors with additional support needs. Accessibility was flagged by audiences as a major concern given the large crowds and this partnership was instrumental in supporting visitors on the last day of the 2023 festival. Lacer funding will also be used to identify further measures to improve accessibility as a priority.