

CABINET

Development of the “Light Up Lancaster” Festival 12 March 2013

Report of the Head of Community Engagement

| PURPOSE OF REPORT | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| To seek a decision regarding an application for Arts Council funding | | | |
| Key Decision | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Non-Key Decision | Referral from Officer |
| Date of notice of forthcoming key decision | | 11 February 2013 | |
| This report is public | | | |

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR SANDS

- (1) That Cabinet support the submission of a bid to the Arts Council by the Lancaster Arts Partners.
- (2) That Cabinet notes the commitment required to deliver this initiative over the next two financial years.
- (3) That the Council agree to become the Accountable Body for the funding should the bid be successful.
- (4) That the Head of Resources be given delegated authority to update the General Fund Revenue Budget should the bid be successful and subject to there being no additional call on City Council resources.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 For the past 18 months the City Council, County Council and Lancaster Arts Partners (LAP) have been working together to develop the Fireworks Spectacular in November into an event that will gradually but ultimately grow in to one of national significance and benefit the local economy.
- 1.2 The city council last year supported the LAP bid for £30k of county arts funding to introduce Light Up Lancaster, a series of arts activities in a range of outdoor spaces across the city centre put on by LAP members and run the night before the Fireworks Spectacular. The county bid stated at that time that, based on the evaluation of Light Up Lancaster in November 2012, an application to the Arts Council ‘Grants for the Arts’ funding, totalling £90k over two years might be made £45k for each year.
- 1.3 The 2012 event, which was ambitious, was a success, with estimated visitor numbers of 2,000, despite the marketing being deliberately low key for this

first year. LAP have good evidence of people staying over the weekend in order to take advantage of weekend activities, with the clear benefits for the local economy. It showcased Lancaster in a new light, drew new audiences, demonstrated the value of partners working together, was a quality product, encouraged pride in the city and received positive publicity.

1.4 The project aligns closely to a number of council priorities and goals including:

- More tourists coming to the district and tourist income is maximised
- The attractiveness of the district as a place to visit is improved
- The district's cultural, retail and tourism offer is maximised
- Lancaster district's recognition as a visitor destination is enhanced
- Visitor spend increased
- Visitor numbers increased
- Visitor enquiries increased
- Number of heritage assets improved
- Increase in the number of people participating in arts, culture and entertainment events in the district
- Increased participation in local entertainment and community events
- Work with partners to develop and deliver events and festivals throughout the district
- Support arts in the district working with the Arts Partnership Identified as a strategically important partnership by the Council)
- Pride in our Place

1.5 It also supports the Lancaster Square Routes scheme, chimes well with the opportunities the castle development will provide as well as Marketing Lancashire's aims to promote Lancaster as a cultural heritage city. It also fits well with the emerging Arts Strategy for the district and reflects the Arts Council's encouragement of bids of this nature.

1.6 All partners believe Light Up Lancaster has the potential to become a flagship festival for the county and one acknowledged at national level and therefore wish to develop the festival further over the next few years.

2.0 Report

2.1 Whilst the event was held in November it did not prove possible to bring partners together to carry out a detailed evaluation of the event and whether it should continue in its existing or enhanced form. Partners now wish to press ahead with the Grants to the Arts bid. The aim is to create a festival to draw new staying visitors to the city in November and raise the reputation of the city as a destination of cultural and heritage significance.

2.2 Due to the very tight timescales and resource, a small amount of City council arts development funding is currently being utilised to fund a LAP consultant to develop the bid. The intention is for this bid to be in Lancaster City Council's name, with the city council as accountable body who, in turn, will outsource the development and delivery of the majority of work to arts partners.

2.3 Match funding would be set against this and would include a number of sources including the county council funding (which has another year to run - £7,500 in 2013), the range of Saturday daytime activities provided by a wide variety of partners including Lancaster University, museums, libraries and Castle and arts

partners themselves. It is likely the event will also be linked to a canals project which will also be presented as match funding, together with city council match for tourism marketing and information via the VICs and the fireworks themselves.

2.4 Longer term the ambition would be to examine opportunities for the festival to expand to other parts of the district.

3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 There has been consultation with arts partners, county council and Marketing Lancashire. Evaluation of the 2012 event from event goers has also been considered.

4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

4.1 Support the bid or not support the bid.

| Option | Benefits | Risks |
|------------------------|--|---|
| Support the bid | <p>The project aligns closely to a number of council priorities and goals outlined in section 1.4 and it also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports Lancaster Square Routes scheme • chimes well with the opportunities the castle development will provide • fits with Marketing Lancashire's aims to promote Lancaster as a cultural heritage city • fits well with the emerging Arts Strategy for the district • Reflects the Arts Council's encouragement of bids of this nature. • Is a strong partnership project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It requires match funding, along with a commitment from the city council in acting as accountable body for the next two financial years, • Financial pressures may mean the city council cannot sustain the existing level of match in 2014/15 as it will in 2013/14. However, many elements of match are from non-council sources and other funding opportunities could be sought |
| Not support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advantages above are not realised. • Retains greater budget flexibility for making savings. | The advantages are not realised. |

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 The development of the Light up Lancaster festival supports a number of Council priorities in particular the growth of the visitor economy and a bid to the Arts Council is being encouraged by that body.

RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK

The proposal supports a number of Corporate Plan priorities as set out in the report.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, HR, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None directly arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The £90k bid to the Arts Council requires a certain amount of match funding, both financial and in kind, although to date an exact amount is not specified.

For 2013/14 contributions from British Waterways and Lancashire County Council have been confirmed totalling £29.15k and existing city council budgets include amounts totalling £26k for the fireworks delivery and marketing costs. A further £11.5k has been identified but is subject to further discussions and is not yet confirmed. In addition to this the city council would also be able to contribute a certain amount of match funding for officer time spent on organising the event and also in undertaking the administration required in acting as accountable body. Detailed costings have not been calculated at this stage but any requirements for officer time will be managed from within existing resources.

In terms of 2014/15, aside from the £26k LCC budget for fireworks delivery and marketing costs, no other funding sources have been confirmed at the time of writing this report. However, it is anticipated that this will have been resolved by the time the bid is submitted. In any case Arts Council have indicated that funding for both years will need to be confirmed before any funds are released.

If the funding bid is successful city council revenue budgets would need to be updated to include the additional £90k grant.

Working with LAP, city council officers would be responsible for deciding how the grant is allocated in line with financial regulations and procurement rules.

OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources: None

Information Services: None

Property: Proposals may emerge to light up buildings that are in the ownership of the Council

Open Spaces: **None**

SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The s151 Officer has been consulted and other than highlighting that the financial aspects of any bid would require agreement with Financial Services, she has no further comments.

MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comment

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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