

MEETING:	CABINET
DECISION DATE:	23 JANUARY 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	WITHDRAWAL OF ARTS COMMISSIONING GRANTS
REPORT BY:	CULTURAL SERVICES MANAGER

1. Classification

Open

2. Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the County.

NOTICE has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 10 (General exception) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) Regulations 2012.

3. Wards Affected

County-wide

4. Purpose

To approve the withdrawal of the Arts Commissioning Grants to external organisations from 2014-15.

5. Recommendation(s)

THAT: The payments of Arts Commissioning Grants made by Herefordshire Council to external arts organisations are withdrawn from April 2014.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 *The payment of Arts Commissioning Grants is continued.*
- 6.2 The Council's financial position is such that, to enable essential services for its most vulnerable residents to be maintained, it must reduce both the range and the level of services provided to the minimum necessary whilst meeting statutory requirements, unless there are clear reasons to do otherwise.
- 6.3 If the Arts Commissioning Grants are not withdrawn the Council will have to make further reductions elsewhere in its service provision.
- 6.4 *The payment of Arts Commissioning Grants are continued but at a reduced level, for example a 50% decrease in the total funding available for 2014-15, reducing to zero funding by end of 2015-16. This would enable organisations to plan for adjustments to their funding and to mitigate the impact on their activities.*
- 6.5 In relation to the potential disproportionate impact upon groups with Protected Characteristics an option would be to maintain 50% of the funding and commission it to organisations which focus their activity on these groups.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 To make a saving of £65,296 in 2014-15 to support the corporate financial strategy and enable Council resources to be focussed on priority services.

8. Key Considerations

- 8.1 Herefordshire Council signed one year commissioning agreements with local arts organisations for a total of £58,200 of grants in 2013-14 for the delivery of cultural activities which support the Council's strategic priorities. The total amount in the budget is £65,296.
- 8.2 Eleven organisations received the grants in 2013-14 and which ranged from Borderlines Film Festival and Arts Alive to the Music Pool, Echo and Fetch Theatre. Appendix 1 sets out a full list of organisations and the amounts paid.
- 8.3 The purpose of the grants is to use cultural activity to support people and the economy across the county as outlined below.
- 8.4 **Economy**
- Support economic growth & connectivity (*includes broadband, local infrastructure, transport and economic development*).
 - Makes Herefordshire more attractive to younger age groups for a more balanced age profile.
 - Supports the improvement and quality of our natural and built environment.

- Has vibrant town centres with shops, restaurants and leisure facilities that keep people spending locally.

8.5 Supporting people

- Enable residents to be independent and lead fulfilling lives.
- Sustain people to be physically and mentally healthy and stay healthy for longer.
- Support outcomes for children and young people improve.
- Support access to excellent education and learning opportunities at all levels (*includes early years/schools/FE/HE/adult learning*).
- Enable people to take more responsibility for themselves (*includes making healthy choices & focus on prevention*).
- Enable people to be more active in their communities and look out for the more vulnerable so they live independently.

8.6 Anticipating pressure on the budgets a consultation process was carried out with the beneficiary organisations in August/September 2013 to identify what the impact would be on the possible reduction or withdrawal of the grants. All eleven of the organisations responded to the consultation.

Appendix 2 sets out a summary of the comments received with regard to the impact of both the payment and loss of the grants.

Appendix 3 sets out detailed feedback from Borderlines Film Festival.

Appendix 4 sets out detailed feedback from Arts Alive.

Appendix 5 sets out feedback from DanceFest.

8.7 Box Office sales at the Borderlines Film Festival devolve back to the villages hosting events. The festival is also having a positive impact on tourism by attracting people into the county to spend.

8.8 The organisations create jobs in the county e.g. Rural Media 16 posts, 2Faced Dance, 2 posts

8.9 Hereford Media Network (Rural Media) promotes employment and training, currently having three trainees working for the organisation.

8.10 Ledbury Poetry Festival draws in over 5,000 people and 1,000 participants into the town, bringing spending potential to the visitor and tourism economy.

8.11 A number of the organisations which receive funding (Arts Alive, Dancefest, Ledbury Poetry Festival) are National Portfolio Organisations whose funding from Arts Council England (ACE) is reliant upon support from the local authority. Withdrawal of the funding would put their status, their ability to deliver their programmes and their funding at risk.

Herefordshire Council Arts Commissioning grants

2013-14

Performance Table

Organisation	Grant 2013-14	Leveraging impact of funding	User figures	Equality Protected Audience	Volunteers
2 Faced Dance Company	£3800	£150,000	15,000	Age & Disability	25 = 120 hours
Arts Alive (& Flicks in the Sticks)	£12000	£96,000	11,000	Age & Disability	250= 2500 hours
Borderlines Film Festival	£8000	£36,000	18,000		300
Dancefest	£4500		800	Age & Disability	15= 150 hours
Echo (About Face Theatre)	£5550	£26,330	300	Age & Disability	2=450 hours
Feral Productions	£1500	£102,206	750	Age-young people	70=700 hours
The Fetch Theatre	£1400		1800	Age & Disability	8=320 hours
Ledbury Poetry Festival	£3000	£132,960	5500		90
Meadow Arts	£1500	£182,000	80 participants 1000 education engagement		4=40 hours
The Music Pool	£10500	£102,645	6694	Age & Disability	30=350 hours
The Rural Media Company	£6500	£39,650	1100	Age & Disability	3=192 hours
Total	£58,250	£586,073	44,024		797=4822 hours

- 8.13 The report of the Cultural Services Task & Finish Group was received on 8 January 2014 as this report was being finalised. Its recommendation 4 relates to this issue and indicates that the executive should give an assurance that all impacts shall be sufficiently considered when making any decisions on reducing or stopping Herefordshire Council support. Such information is set out in this report and its appendices. Particular issues are set out in paragraph 8.11 and Sections 11 and 13 of this report.

- 8.14 It is clear that there would be considerable merit in continuing with the current arrangements for arts commissioning grants. They are well received in the community and lever in significant sums of other income and businesses. Nonetheless the Council is faced with a particularly challenging budget for 2014/15 and the various organisations that benefit from these grants are not directly providing statutory services. It is on this basis and on balance that the recommendation is that the grants are withdrawn.

9 Community Impact

- 9.1
- The organisations create community led projects involving large numbers of volunteers. Rural Media recently ran a large scale community project in Ledbury. The Music Pool have run gathering Wave, Stonemason's Tale, music for Flavours of Herefordshire.
 - They create activity to support people's health and wellbeing - Dancefest run dance programmes linked to health.
 - Activity is devised for young people to improve their skills and self-esteem. In 2011/12 Rural Media enabled in excess of 3,000 people from rural and disadvantaged communities to participate in creative media activities, to develop skills, promote self-confidence and find 'a voice'.
 - Cultural projects run to give rural communities a focus. Volunteering is a huge part of Arts Alive work, working with hundreds of local people, meeting with them and other promoters for sharing of ideas, organising training sessions, supporting them etc. This gives each promoter a sense of worth and place, keeping them active, helping them support their communities.
- 9.2 The organisations create community-led projects involving large numbers of volunteers. Rural Media recently ran a large scale community project in Ledbury. The Music Pool have run gathering Wave, Stonemason's Tale, music for Flavours of Herefordshire.
- 9.3 They create activity to support people's health and wellbeing - Dancefest run dance programmes linked to health outcomes. Ledbury Poetry Festival is running a programme for people with Dementia. They have also been working with local GPs to support people with health conditions.
- 9.4 Cultural projects help to give rural communities a focus. Volunteering is a significant part of Arts Alive work, working with hundreds of local people, meeting with them and other promoters for sharing of ideas, organising training sessions, supporting them etc. This gives each promoter a sense of worth and place, keeping them active, helping them support their communities.

10. Equality and Human Rights

- 10.1 The grant funding provides participation, opportunities, training for groups with Protected Characteristics in a rural setting which could be adversely and disproportionately affected by the withdrawal of the awards.

10.2 The two key Protected Characteristics are Disability and Age.

Music Pool

The Music Pool works with NEETS; 120 SEN children per week; 70 PRU pupils per week, 70+ looked after children per week; 100+ via SCOPE; 90+ older people per week. Their partner organisations include Youth Offending Team, West Mercia Police, Social Care.

Dancefest

- **The Jigsaw Project:** This is integral to the work of Dancefest Herefordshire with huge reach and engagement to over 140 people of all ages and abilities. This is a unique opportunity in Herefordshire and is not duplicated elsewhere. Herefordshire community and school groups benefit hugely from this biennial dance and disability performance particularly those with a physical or learning disability who achieve not only creatively through the project but also as performers in a professional venue (the CYD).
 - The total number of project attendances was more than 2000 throughout the project.
 - 700 people saw the performances including local school children, parents, friends and family.
 - The exit routes into successful weekly community classes for young people take place in Hereford.
 - On average 130 children, young people and adults with varying disabilities benefit from this unique project.

Projects/workshops for older people in Herefordshire:

- Moving Pictures: Out in rural communities.
- Chance to Dance weekly sessions
- Workshops in residential homes
- One off special projects

Regular participation for Children/ young people/ adults /older people:

- Children's classes in urban and rural Herefordshire
- Young people's dance groups and youth companies
- Adult contemporary / choreography/creative dance workshops.
- Inclusive dance workshops for disabled and non-disabled dancers.
- Older people's sessions- creative movement/dance in residential settings
- One off special workshops with visiting professional dance companies to The Courtyard- young people/adults.

About Face Theatre Company

About Face is Herefordshire's only theatre company for actors with learning disabilities. It is a vital and vibrant part of the county's cultural diversity. They provide opportunities for people with learning disabilities to explore theatre as a means of communication, expression, development and to provide a voice for personal and social issues affecting people with disabilities. For the 2013-14 investment of £5500 About Face will reach an audience of over 500, have 150 total participants, a positive experience rating of 85% and support 450 volunteer hours.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 The grants are used by organisations as match funding to enable them to bring further finance into the cultural economy .The £58,250 total funding in 2013-14 was used to lever in an overall total of £586,073 to support the activity programme of the eleven organisations. Appendix 6, Further Funding Leverage sets out the impact of Herefordshire Council Funding.
- 11.2 Many of the organisations are funded by ACE (Arts Council England) on a project basis. If organisations were to lose the Herefordshire Council support as it would significantly weaken their future applications for ACE and other funders.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 Contracts have been signed and agreed with organisations for 2013-14. By the time the report is considered over 85% of the funding for 2013-14 will have been issued.

13. Risk Management

- 13.1 The risks for the Arts organisations would be an inability to continue with their current level of programme due to insufficient funding and further reducing their ability to draw in further funding. The risks are that due to the withdrawal of these grants, the Arts organisations are unable to continue with their current programme of activity and that this may affect their ability to draw in other funding.
- 13.2 These risks would be mitigated through early communication to the organisations, enabling them to make the necessary strategic plans to manage the removal of the grants.
- 13.3 There would be damage to the council's reputation with the local organisations and the cultural community, as well as regionally and nationally with the Arts Council England.
- 13.4 If the recommendation is not supported the Council would need to find alternative ways in which the necessary savings can be achieved.

14. Consultees

- 14.1 Borderlines Film Festival
Arts Alive
Echo
The Music Pool
Rural Media Company
Meadow Arts
Dancefest
Ledbury Poetry Festival
2 Faced Dance
Feral Productions

Fetch Theatre

Herefordshire Council Scrutiny Cultural Services Task and Finish Committee.

(The group published its finding in January 2014)

15. Appendices

Appendix 1 - List of Commissioned organisations

Appendix 2 - Summary of feedback from Commissioned organisations

Appendix 3 - Detailed feedback from Borderlines Film Festival

Appendix 4 - Detailed feedback from Arts Alive

Appendix 5 - Detailed Feedback from DanceFest

Appendix 6 – Arts Commissioning Performance Table

16. Background Papers

16.1 None identified.