

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

DECISION OF: COUNCILLOR MARK CANNIFORD. THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR PLACEMAKING AND ECONOMY



WITH ADVICE FROM: THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PLACEMAKING AND GROWTH AND S151 OFFICER

DECISION NO: 22/23 DP 309

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF SUBMISSION OF FUNDING APPLICATION TO THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

KEY DECISION: NO

REASON: Submission of bid does not represent commitment to expenditure

BACKGROUND:

1. In July 2022, North Somerset Council submitted an Expression of Interest to the Arts Council England (ACE) Cultural Development Fund (CDF). This was for £4.8m and was successful in passing through the Expression of Interest stage. A full application is required by 18th November.
2. The bid is proposed to encompass the following:
 - (i) Capital investments at the Tropicana: £2.95m, focused on the following:
 - Essential works to ensure that the building is sound and waterproof.
 - Upgrades to heating and ventilation to improve sustainability and reduce running costs. This will also improve the useability of the building, as the current systems are so noisy that they has to be turned off during events.
 - Works to increase the capacity of internal spaces and to improve their functionality and flexibility of use, and/or which generate income.
 - (ii) The creation of a small-scale cultural facility at Birnbeck Pier, with the intention that this would help to generate income for the wider Birnbeck scheme.
 - (iii) £700k revenue to support bid delivery and future programming.
3. Weston and North Somerset are identified as “Levelling Up Priority Places” by the Arts Councils. The investments must tie in with wider objectives of developing the cultural agenda and creative sector in Weston. The specific proposals contained within the bid address that point, and are at the same time designed to address fundamental issues at the facility to improve its suitability, running costs and attractiveness for as wide a range of potential operators and end-users as possible.

4. The bid requires match-funding of 15%, which equates to £720k. This is expected to come from the £2.4m earmarked in NSC's Capital Strategy. Formal approval by the Executive will be required prior to entering into any funding agreement, if the bid is successful.
5. A decision on bids is expected in February / March 2023. Expenditure would need to commence in the 2023 – 24 financial, with all works and expenditure completed by 31st March 2026.

DECISION:

- To approve the submission of a bid to the Cultural Development Fund, to the value of £4.8m.

REASONS:

- To support delivery of objectives identified in the SuperWeston Placemaking Strategy and to secure a more sustainable future for these venues.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

- Not to submit a bid: this is not advised as it means the opportunity to secure external funding would be lost.
- To bid for a different amount or different schemes: the content of the bid has been discussed with officers and members, specialist consultants and Arts Council contacts. It is felt to be an appropriate proposal for this funding scheme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The preparation of the bid has cost in the region of £15 – 20k, funded from Driving Growth reserves.

Formal approval by the Executive will be required prior to accepting grant and committing to the programme of expenditure (including any NSC match-funding), should the bid prove successful.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

In the event that the funding application is successful, the council will be required to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) with government. The GFA will commit the council to delivering the projects to a required timescale, and to providing the necessary match-funding. Entering into the GFA will require an Executive decision.

Legal advice has been taken to ensure that bid proposals comply with Subsidy Control regulations.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The bid requires a focus on sustainability and reducing emissions. Proposed improvements include upgrades to insulation and energy infrastructure at the Tropicana, which would lead to a reduction in carbon emissions.

Further work will be required on the detail of project delivery to ensure that sustainability is maximised and emissions minimised.

CONSULTATION

Stakeholder engagement has taken place with key partners including the Weston Place Agency, Culture Weston, local businesses, the Town Council, the Business Improvement District and local MPs. Letters of support have been received from a wide range of these business and community organisations.

A Member Advisory Group comprising selected Executive Members has been established to help guide the scoping and prioritisation of interventions.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks in relation to the submission of the bid are primarily reputation, i.e. if the bid is unsuccessful, or if it is successful and the council decides to decline the funding. Officers will liaise with communications colleagues on these points, as well as with colleagues at the Arts Council.

Risks relating to the acceptance of funding and delivery of projects will be considered in more detail in future reports, if the bid is successful.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No

The submission of the bid does not in itself have equalities impacts, however part of the purpose of the bid is to tackle issues around deprivation and inequality.

Individual projects and their delivery will require more detailed assessments in due course.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Delivery of the projects included in the bid would have implications for a wide range of council services and functions. A project team and board have been established, as has a Member Advisory Group.

Progress will be reported to NSC's Capital Planning, Programme & Delivery Board and Asset Strategy Steering Group.

APPENDICES


N/a

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Arts Council website on Cultural Development Fund round 3:
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/our-open-funds/cultural-development-fund-round-three>


SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed: ... Executive Member for Placemaking and
Economy 

Date: 5 December 2022

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:  Assistant Director Placemaking and Growth

Date: 5 December 2022

Signed:  S151 Officer

Date: 5 December 2022