

Appendix C - WEST DEVON ARTS TASK & FINISH GROUP

Background

Following a discussion at the joint O&S Committee meeting held on 17 January 2017 (O&S 8 refers), it was agreed to form a Task & Finish Group to look at the support given to the Arts and to make relevant recommendations. The Council's contribution to various arts projects appears in the budget under 'Economic Development' and recent work by the Economy Working Group resulted in the Council deciding to cut the funding to one of the lines (Villages in Action) as there was insufficient evidence that it was directly benefitting the local economy. This caused some Members concern and it was therefore agreed to establish a small T&FG to look again at the Council's program for supporting the Arts.

Terms of Reference

1. Members of the T&F Group are drawn from the membership of both the O&S Committees. They are Cllrs Cheadle, Moyses, Roberts, Musgrave, Cloke and Pearce. They are supported by Alexandra Walker and Nadine Trout.
2. The Group will:
 - a. define the scope of 'the Arts'
 - b. review past and current budget allocations
 - c. identify the anticipated benefits of such funding as a component of community life
 - d. determine by what measure previous allocations have delivered such benefit
3. Investigate funding mechanisms (including the Community Fund) for funding future initiatives.
4. Identify the metrics by which future bids for support will be assessed.
5. Report the above, with if relevant, recommendations to the new O&S Committee no later than July 2017.

Findings of the Arts Task & Finish Group

The Arts Task & Finish Group met on 11th April 2017 and agreed the following:

- a. The 'Arts' would mean direct support to performance art (such as Villages in Action) and 'soft' support for Heritage (rather than funds to restore physical heritage buildings).
- b. Arts were a contributor to community well-being and should not be dependent for their support on their contribution to economic development (although they may well support economic development). As an example, the Dartmoor Folk Festival was funded on inception, would not now require continuing Council funding but undoubtedly contributes to both community and economic development.
- c. While it was recognised that funding is 'difficult' there was discussion on whether the Community Fund could be legitimately used to assist funding 'Arts' projects – due to a successive underspend of the Community Fund.
- d. Cllr Cheadle elected Chairman of the Group.
- e. Further information needed on the type of activity funded in the past and whether the capital Community Fund could be used for revenue grants.

The Arts Task & Finish Group also met on 9th May 2017 and established:

1. Arts Funding

In 2014/15 the arts, tourism and economy budgets were merged to create an Economic Development Grants pot of £15,571. In 2014/15 the criteria for arts grants also changed whereby applicants needed to demonstrate how their project would aid the local economy. Prior to 13/14 there were separate grant budgets for Arts (£5,300) and Economic Development (£10,271). Detailed below is how many projects the Arts budget supported:

Year	Number of grants offered	Total funds committed
2011/12	14	£5,300
2012/13	9	£4,100
2013/14	9	£4,250

Of the applicants to the Arts Grant since 2011/12:

- 1 organisation received funds in 4 separate years
- 3 organisations received funding in 3 separate years
- 1 organisation received funds in 2 separate years

The Group recognised that whilst some organisations had received funding on more than one occasion a wide breadth of projects had been supported including theatre, dance, film and heritage.

2. Capital Community Fund

Discussions with the lead finance officer confirmed the Community Fund is underspent. The fund is a capital fund and as such cannot be used for revenue activity i.e. funding to pay for events or artists but for capital assets instead i.e. repairs to village halls, etc. That said the source of the Community Fund is New Homes Bonus money which is revenue funding so technically speaking some of the funds could be used for revenue grants.

3. Contribution to Villages in Action

Data provided by officers showed a steady decrease in the number of performances from 2014 provided by Villages in Action, hence the Economy Working Group's decision to reduce the funding offer to VIA. Members of the Task & Finish Group still felt there was worth to the VIA events as they brought communities together and created local vibrancy.

4. Contribution to Museum Development

The Group reviewed the South West Museum Development Annual Report and considered the monies contributed from the Economic Development budget offered good value for money especially when advice received has allowed Dingles to recruit their first paid curator and museum visits in West Devon contributed over £4 million to the local tourism economy.

5. Tavistock Townscape Heritage

In 14/15 it was agreed by Council to contribute £10,000 per annum to the Heritage Lottery Tavistock Heritage Initiative Project up until 2019/20 leaving an Economic Development grant pot of £5,571 remaining. The initiative to date has secured £130,000 Heritage Lottery Funding and seen the completion of Butchers Hall. Further building refurbishments and public realm enhancement planned for 2017. As discussed at the previous Arts & Finish Group Meeting it was agreed this was out of scope of the Group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the above the Task & Finish Group agreed the following recommendations:

- Create a Community Fund allowing for both **revenue** and capital grant applications.
- To keep funding criteria for the Community Fund revenue monies broad including arts to allow for as many community projects as possible to apply provided applications support **community cohesion and vibrancy**.
- Operate the revenue element of the fund similar to South Hams Sustainable Community Fund¹.
- All applications to be signed off by relevant Ward Member(s) before submission to officers to process payments.
- In kind funding to be eligible as match funding.
- Where possible first time applicants to be given priority over previous applicants.²
- Returning applicants to provide proof of how previous funds awarded were well spent.²
- Successful applicants to recognise the Council funding in any publicity by naming the Council as a contributor.
- VIA funding to be ring fenced and if not used by VIA to be transferred to the revenue Community Fund.
- Museum funding to continue as considered good value for money.

That this new revenue component of the Community Fund to total £5,300 (as per previous Arts Grant Scheme annual budget) with applicants able to apply for up to £500 per grant.

¹See <http://old.southhams.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1165&p=0> for a copy of the application form.

²In a bid to ensure the same projects aren't funded year after year and if they are they clearly demonstrate they are performing well and demonstrate clear value for money.