

Policy and Projects Advisory Board, 12 June 2024

Item 3: Arts Council England Place Partnership Project – Bid Development

Description: The Council has made a successful expression of interest for an [Arts Council National Lottery Project Grant](#) to improve cultural engagement in Farnborough. The bid is linked to the development of the Leisure and Cultural Hub. The expression of interest is attached but key parts of the bid are outlined below.

The bid aims to improve cultural engagement over the next three years, with more events, activities, and engagement with our diverse communities.

The item will include a presentation on the background, context and outline of the bid. The Board is asked to provide feedback to inform the full application due to be submitted later in the summer.

Background

The Council has developed a strong relationship with Arts Council England (ACE) reflecting Rushmoor's designation as one of Arts Council England's Priority Places (see below). ACE invited the Council to submit an expression of interest for this funding. UKSPF will be used to provide match funding for the bid.

The expression of interest is attached. This is a very short document with the project brief limited to only 2,000 characters. Details in the expression of interest are subject to change, including the bid amount.

Core bid elements

If successful, the funding will be used for a three-year programme of activity that aims to deliver a 'step change' in cultural development. A successful bid will enable us to:

- Procure 'inspiring artistic leadership' to help inform the development of the bid itself, develop a three-year cultural placemaking programme for Farnborough and then, (subject to securing ACE funding), inform the ongoing delivery of the programme.
- Offer opportunities for residents to engage in 'high quality culture', innovative experiences and ambitious art installations.
- Test ideas, including immersive and digital art, which will in turn inform the uses of the Hub and wider spaces in the town.
- Commission experienced, national/international community co-production artists and groups to work with all the communities in Rushmoor, including the Nepali community, to reflect their lived experience.
- Engage our most deprived and culturally disengaged communities, students/young people and the business sector.
- Support new, and expand on, existing events and activities led by and involving the community.
- Build the capacity and reputation of organisations working in the Borough alongside local freelance creatives and artists, event organisers and performers to lead cultural development.

Rushmoor Cultural Strategy

The proposed bid will reflect themes and priorities in the [Rushmoor Cultural Strategy](#). The Rushmoor Cultural Strategy was endorsed by Cabinet in October 2022. This work was intended to help inform funding bids and leverage additional funding from public and private sector partners, including Arts Council England.

The Strategy has six priority actions:

- Support Rushmoor's varied communities (especially the least culturally engaged) to express and develop their cultural identity and celebrate these together.
- Ensure that culture plays an important role in the regeneration of Aldershot and Farnborough town centres.
- Work with artists and the Createch sector to establish Rushmoor as a centre for innovation and excellence in creative media.
- Build on the rich military and aviation heritage of Aldershot and Farnborough to increase both community pride and the visitor economy.
- Give more young people in Rushmoor the opportunity of developing a sustainable career in the Creative Industries.
- Establish a new arts team, the Cultural Compact and key partnerships.

The Strategy is intended to encourage a step change in cultural activity across the Borough and help the Council achieve its wider social and economic objectives.

Arts Council England Priority Places

Rushmoor has been identified as a 'Priority Place' for Arts Council England. These Priority Places, 54 across the UK, are areas where Arts Council England investment and engagement is currently low, but the opportunity for Arts Council England to increase involvement and investment is deemed to be high.

Arts Council England's 'Active Lives' research shows that arts engagement, participation and attendance in Rushmoor is 'significantly lower than the national average' and ranks as one of the UK's lowest areas of arts engagement. Figures show that Arts Council England's average annual investment in the Borough per head (between 2017/18 and 2019/20) was £1.12, relative to £22.16 in Waverley, £2.23 in Guildford £1.45 in Hart and £3.21 in Basingstoke and Deane. This is one of the lowest figures in the region.

Timelines and next steps

The Council needs to submit a full application by 7 August. The bid will be developed in partnership with Hampshire Cultural Trust and other partners on the Rushmoor Cultural Compact (partnership).

It could take approximately 2 months before the Council is informed if it is successful. The programme is intended to run for approximately three years from autumn 2024.