

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: May 2015	Decision Taker:: Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Business, Employment & Culture
Report title:		Arts & culture grants programme 2015 to 2016	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure	

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Business, Employment & Culture approves the arts & culture grants 2015/16, as attached at Appendix 1, effective from 1 July 2015 to 31 March 2016.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. Approval of grants over £2500 for the arts are a matter for the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Business, Employment & Culture (Constitution: Part 3D para 5). The culture commissioning plan (approved in February 2015) sets out the priorities and themes for 2015/16, the expected links between council priorities and outcomes that are to be delivered by the organisations that receive grant aid.
3. The council's cultural strategy and accompanying action plan were approved in July 2013. One of the main actions identified in that plan was a review of the arts & culture grants programme which had not been open to new applicants for at least ten years. It was agreed that the arts & culture grants programme would be opened up to new applicants in 2015/16.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

4. In 2015/16 the total budget for the arts & culture grants programme is £269,893. This is a reduction of £85,000 compared to 2014/15, when the funding was allocated for seven organisations, and not open to other applicants.
5. In the last decade Southwark has developed into one of London's most vibrant and innovative locations for cultural activity, attracting many new and emerging artists and cultural organisations that offer high quality opportunities to local people to benefit from culture across a range of disciplines. Many of these organisations operate on limited resources. Opening up the grants programme has provided an opportunity to redress the balance, to broaden the artistic scope of the programme and fund work which directly delivers against the cultural strategy objectives and action plan, whilst also encouraging more of the young and emerging artists to remain in the borough.
6. Enabling open applications to the grant programme has inevitably meant that recommendations for funding amounts include reductions or a loss of funding

entirely for organisations who have previously been in receipt of allocated funding.

7. The council has provided the minimum of three months' notice of funding decisions to previously funded organisations. This was implemented in April 2015 and organisations received the equivalent of their first quarter payment, covering the period from April to June 2015.

Application and assessment process

8. Arts and cultural organisations were invited to apply to the new grants programme through an online application form. Previously funded organisations were eligible to apply for up to a maximum of their previous grant amount and new applicants were eligible to apply (as individual organisations or as a consortia/partnership) for between £5000 and £30,000.
9. The commissioning plan set out clearly the criteria for funding, including the requirement to deliver work within the key themes of the council's cultural strategy.
10. A set of detailed guidance notes were provided as part of the application pack, to support the applicants through the process. The arts service also ran a series of funding workshops for applicants and produced a list of FAQs, which were circulated and uploaded onto the website.
11. 26 applications were received, with a total sum of £571,347.11 requested. Assessment was carried out against how well each project addressed the criteria set out in the commissioning plan, including whether or not the organisation had 40% income confirmed from other sources.
12. Particular focus was given to how the application met the cultural strategy objectives and how it would deliver against the strategy action plan. It was stipulated in the guidance notes that all projects must meet theme 5 (people and audiences) and all must address at least one of themes 1-4. A score was given of between 0-5 (5 being the highest) based on how well both themes had been addressed and a minimum score of 6 out of a possible 10 was required to be considered for funding.
13. Focus was also given to the financial information provided in the income and expenditure / revenue budget. A score between 0-5 on both income and expenditure was given and a minimum score of 6 out of a possible 10 was required to be considered for funding. Financial breakdown of income and expenditure was assessed based on the following principles:
 - The level of detail and clarity in the budget breakdown
 - Value for money
 - Correct calculations
 - Is it realistic and achievable
 - Is 40% match funding confirmed
 - Financial viability of the organisation
14. Nine organisations are recommended for funding, including five of the previously funded organisations at a reduced level, and four new organisations. Two of the previously funded organisations are not recommended for funding.

Policy implications

15. The council's cultural strategy was approved in July 2013. The recommendations in this report implement the agreed action to review the arts & culture grants programme. The projects that have been recommended for funding are those that best meet the cultural strategy objectives and have clearly demonstrated how they will deliver against the strategy action plan.

Community impact statement

16. The council's Cultural Strategy was approved in July 2013 and clearly set out the need for sustainable investment and development of cultural provision within Southwark. The revised grant application process mirrors the strategy's objectives and clearly sets out the criteria and expectations that organisations must meet.
17. The process by which organisations have been recommended to receive funding has not solely been based on financial viability, but also on an assessment of which organisations will have the most beneficial impact in providing support to the wider cultural sector, developing new audiences and helping the cultural sector within Southwark to thrive.
18. The application process has specifically sought clarification around target users, participants, audience and the community areas in which they will be delivered in order to identify where there may be an overlap of provision or where alternative activities are being targeted at similar audiences. This was to provide opportunity for minimising the impact on audiences and protected equalities groups wherever possible.
19. All of the groups applying for funding clearly have developed and target audiences for their activities. It is inevitable that the withdrawal or reduction of funding from some groups will have a direct impact on the users and audiences of these groups. It is also likely that this will include some impact on characteristics protected under the Equalities Act 2010.
20. The decision process has necessarily considered the equalities impact of discontinuing funding of organisations and has sought to minimise any impact by identifying alternate or similar provision. It has also taken a long term view around the financial sustainability of the organisations to ensure development opportunities for new and existing audiences, including equalities groups, are maximised.
21. As part of the monitoring process for the new programme, the Arts Service Manager will undertake formal site visits to each provider during the project period, and providers will be required to submit detailed performance information on user groups and audiences, on a quarterly basis.

Resource implications

22. The proposals set out in this report can be delivered within the allocated department budget for 2015/16.
23. Recommendations for funding have been made following robust assessment of the financial information provided. This is to ensure projects deliver value for

money and that council resources will have a positive impact and be used effectively, by organisations that operate on a mixed income model and are financially viable.

Financial issues

24. The recommended budget for 2015/16 for arts & culture services has an allocation of £269,893 for grants. Payment of the first quarter grants to each of the previous funded organisations means that there will be an overspend of £26,883.00. This overspend will be contained with the department's budget.

Consultation

25. Applicants have been sent email notification of the publication of this report and have been given the opportunity to request to make either a written or verbal representation to the Individual Decision Maker before the decision is taken. Organisations not recommended for funding will be offered feedback on their application, reasons for the recommendation, information on other sources of funding and referral as appropriate to other departments or to CAS for support.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

26. This report seeks approval of the arts grants for 2015-16 as listed in Appendix 1.
27. As noted in paragraph 2 the decision to approve the report recommendation is one which is expressly reserved to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Business, Employment & Culture under the council Constitution.
28. The Director of Legal Services (corporate team) has provided advice and assistance in connection with the preparation of the application pack which had been issued to interested arts and cultural organisations. Officers devised a clear and robust application process, which included guidance notes, workshops and relevant key criteria for the purpose of assessing the applications submitted.
29. The Director of Legal Services notes the Community Impact Statement at paragraphs 16 to 21 of this report. In recommending the grant allocations officers have had due regard to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained within the Equality Act 2010 in order to ensure that, as far as possible those allocations do not exclude any individual or group having protected characteristics (under the Act) from participating in or accessing any element of the programme and that the programme provides suitable alternative provision with a good spread of activity across different areas of the borough.

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services E&L/15/008

30. This report recommends that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Business, Employment & Culture approves the arts & culture grants 2015/16 as attached in Appendix 1 and the approach to allocating grants set out in the report.
31. The strategic director of finance and corporate services notes the resource implications detailed in paragraphs 22, 23 and 24. The grants and rent paid will be from the annual commissioning envelope of £269,893. The requirement to

give notice and pay the first quarter under the old programme will incur an overspend of £26,883.00. This will be contained within the department's budget.

32. Officer time to effect the recommendation can be contained within existing resources.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Cultural strategy and action plan	www.southwark.gov.uk/culturestrategy	Coral Flood 020 7525 5231
Culture Commissioning plan	2015 to 2016 Commissioning Plan	Coral Flood 020 7525 5231
Application guidance notes	Arts and Culture Grants Programme 2015 to 2016 guidance notes	Coral Flood 020 7525 5231

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Grants recommendations 2015/16

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Adrian Whittle, Head of Culture, Libraries, Learning and Leisure	
Report Author	Coral Flood, Arts Manager	
Version	Final	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	18 May 2015	