

# Birmingham City Council

## Report to Cabinet

9 February 2021



**Subject:** Commissioning of Cultural Activities 2021-22  
**Report of:** Director of Neighbourhoods (Acting)  
**Relevant Cabinet Member:** Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture  
**Relevant O &S Chair(s):** Councillor Mariam Khan - Commonwealth Games, Culture and Physical Activity O&S Committee  
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Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 008397/2021		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the recommended allocation of budgets to support arts and cultural activities in 2021-22 at a total cost of £2,917,591

## **2 Recommendations**

That Cabinet;

- 2.1 Notes the background to recommendations for allocating funding and grants from the Support to the Arts budget for 2021-22
- 2.2 Notes the Equality Duty (Appendix 1) and Equality Impact Assessment Screening (Appendix 2) relating to the proposals.
- 2.3 Approves the allocations for revenue funding grants totalling £2,429,710 set out in Appendix 3 - subject to the receipt of requisite information in accordance with the council's grant processes and organisations adherence to the General Conditions of Grant Aid (set out in Appendix 4)
- 2.4 Approves the allocation for Local Arts Development and arts activity commissioning totalling £487,881 also set out in Appendix 3. This includes a commissioning fund of £100,000 to develop cultural programming for the 2022 Commonwealth Games by supporting capacity building in local communities.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 In June 2019, Cabinet agreed that the Support to the Arts budget (approved at Full Council in February 2019) would be ring-fenced until 2022-23. Council took this decision to ensure a stable Support to the Arts budget for a period of four years to 2022/23 leading up to Commonwealth Games 2022. This decision has since become even more pertinent in 2020 due to the devastating impact that COVID19 has had on the cultural sector in Birmingham. Venues and performance organisations have been hit particularly hard and it is anticipated that the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the recovery / continued viability of cultural organisations will be significant.
- 3.2 At the time of writing this report, most if not all large-scale venues (employers) including Birmingham REP, The MAC, Town Hall, Symphony Hall are closed and have had to make significant staff redundancies. Many are likely to remain closed until well into the new financial year if restrictions can't be relaxed. Even then most organisations are concerned that audience confidence won't return to economically viable levels until the wider population has been vaccinated and the virus eradicated. The knock-on effect of venue closure is that performance companies such as Birmingham Royal Ballet and CBSO have nowhere to perform yet need to retain their full complement of dancers and musicians in readiness for reopening.
- 3.3 The obvious challenge for all is lack of trading income and cashflow - many cultural organisations only carry 2- or 3-months reserves which are soon depleted. Even the furlough support scheme for staff (JCRC) and 'cultural relief' funding from the Government has been insufficient for many to keep staff on as they had to cancel all their contracts with no idea when work (productions) could resume.

- 3.4 Therefore, the continued financial support from Birmingham City Council outlined in this report will be vital in helping ensure these funded portfolio organisations can survive and continue to attract funding from their partner organisations and other sources in readiness for full recovery.
- 3.5 Over and above the annual revenue funded portfolio of arts organisations, smaller Birmingham based arts organisations are commissioned to deliver projects linked to outcomes relating to the Council's priorities. These schemes are targeted at; adults in neighbourhoods '*Culture on Our Doorstep*'; young people '*Next Generation*' and; residents from a culturally diverse background '*Cultural Regeneration*.' These initiatives are important as they enable the Council to target activities at people with less opportunity to engage with culture, and they help lever investment from other sources.
- 3.6 The budget also has a project commissioning fund of £100,000 to help meet the Council's priority supporting Birmingham's residents to gain the maximum benefit from hosting the Commonwealth Games. Project commissions will be awarded to local arts organisations to help build capacity and cultural programming for the 2022 Games in local communities across the city (particularly our diverse communities) to ensure that we deliver a Games for Birmingham that connects communities and fosters civic pride. This funding supports communities applying to CWG's Organising Committees Curatorial Guidelines for the Cultural Programme.
- 3.7 The Local Cultural Development funding recommended in this report enables support for local groups and community activators to work as part of local arts forums (established in 2013-14) helping coordinate and develop cultural activities on the ground - particularly in areas of low cultural engagement. In addition, the funding supports the delivery of Birmingham Heritage Week, delivery of the annual '*Black History Month*' and other planned cultural events during the year including staff costs for administering. It will also support the new Birmingham Cultural Compact initiative including the planned refresh of the city's Cultural Strategy to 2025.

#### **4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal**

- 4.1 To commission different companies or activities – the regularly funded organisations portfolio of today was established in 2010-11 based on a 'balanced scorecard' framework where contributions of the organisations and programmes to the Council's priorities were assessed (whilst also taking into account the risks and liabilities associated with each organisation). Whilst there are many excellent arts organisations in the city, the reduced arts budget has meant that it has been difficult enough to sustain the existing portfolio.
- 4.2 To allocate funding differently - Other proposed arts commissioning programmes complement the work of the revenue funded organisations and offer opportunities for smaller, locally based and specialist providers to be commissioned. Project funding schemes provide important resources to lever

investment from other bodies and sustain a large number of smaller cultural companies, as well as providing valuable activities out of the city centre including our culturally diverse communities across the city.

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 Councillors nominated by the City Council to the Boards of the funded organisations have been sent a copy of this report for information and Officers have attended arts organisations Board meetings where relevant to discuss funding.

Arts Council England, has been consulted over several meetings during the year, including discussions around the developing Cultural Compact for Birmingham.

The Head of Cultural Development has met with various Chairs and/or Chief Officers of the funded arts organisations to discuss the funding situation and the need for joint/collaborative working going forward.

## **6 Risk Management**

- 6.1 Appendix 5 sets out the potential risks and mitigations associated with Commissioning of Arts Activities 2021-22. There are no anticipated high risk or high implications.

## **7 Compliance Issues:**

- 7.1 **The recommended decisions are consistent with the following priorities in the City Council's plan;**

- 7.1.1 Outcome 1 - Birmingham is an entrepreneurial city to learn, work and invest in.
- Priority 1: We will create opportunities for local people to develop skills and make the best of economic growth
  - Priority 2: We will strive to maximise the investment in the city and engage local employers to create quality jobs and opportunities for citizens
- 7.1.2 Outcome 2 - Birmingham is an aspirational city to grow up in.
- Priority 3: We will inspire our children and young people to be ambitious and achieve their full potential.
- 7.1.3 Outcome 3 - Birmingham is a fulfilling city to age well in.
- Priority 1: We will work with our citizens to prevent social isolation, loneliness and develop active citizenship.
- 7.1.4 Outcome 4 - Birmingham is a great, clean and green city to live in.
- Priority 5: We will work with partners to ensure everyone feels safe in their daily lives.
  - Priority 6: We will foster local influence and involvement to ensure that local people have a voice in how their area is run.

- Priority 7: We will work with partners to build a fair and inclusive city for all.
- Priority 8: We will enhance our status as a city of culture, sports and events.

7.1.5 Outcome 5 - Birmingham residents gain the maximum benefit from hosting the Commonwealth Games.

- Priority 5: We will work with our diverse communities to ensure that we deliver a Games for Birmingham that connects our citizens and fosters civic pride.

7.1.6 The Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility - all funded organisations must comply with the requirements of the Birmingham Living Wage Policy and the Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility where applicable. Subject to them being above the Charter thresholds, all grant recipients will need to produce action plans proportionate to the grant value.

7.1.7 All funded organisations were involved in the development of Birmingham's Cultural Strategy '*Imagination, Creativity and Enterprise*' which is proposed to be refreshed in 2021 under the Birmingham Cultural Compact initiative. In addition, all funded organisations have historically signed up to the '*Creative Futures Strategy*' aimed at promoting and delivering cultural development for young people.

## 7.2 Legal Implications

7.2.1 Under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council may do, or arrange for the doing of, anything necessary or expedient for the provision of entertainment of any nature, the provision of a theatre, development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and the crafts which serve the arts and any purpose incidental to the matters aforesaid.

7.2.2 Under the general power of competence per Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to enter into the arrangements set out in this report which also are within the boundaries and limits of the general power of competence Section 2 and 4 of the Localism Act 2011.

7.2.3 The requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Human Rights Act 1998 have been taken into consideration in terms of the processing, management and sharing of data involved in these proposals. The city council has processes to protect any release of sensitive information - the funded organisations' Conditions of Grant Aid stipulate compliance with such legislation which must be signed and returned by named trustees before funding is released.

## 7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 The commissioning activity recommended will be funded from the 2021-22 Support to the Arts Budget.

7.3.2 The overall Support to the Arts budget has been ring-fenced until 2022-23 and in order to support organisational stability and security of programming,

it is proposed that the allocations for the regularly funded portfolio are maintained in 2021-22. This is particularly important as our cultural organisations continue to strive to recover from the ongoing impact of COVID19. Conditions for funding in 2021-22 will require organisations to provide annual audience and participation returns plus the necessary (financial) information during the year in order for future grant settlement assessments to be made.

#### **7.4 Procurement Implications (if required)**

- 7.4.1 The commitment has been made to the nine regularly funded major arts and cultural organisations (which have been named) through the 2019+ budget consultation.
- 7.4.2 Major arts and cultural organisations; City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ex Cathedra, Performances Birmingham, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Birmingham Opera Company, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Ikon Gallery, DanceXchange and Sampad are named as grant recipients within the financial plan 2019-23. This report allocates grant funding to these organisations in principle subject to the receipt of requisite information in accordance with the council's grant processes.

#### **7.5 Human Resources Implications (if required)**

- 7.5.1 There are no implications for the council.

#### **7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 7.6.1 A copy of the Equality Act 2010 – Public Sector Duty statement is appended (Appendix 1) together with the existing equality assessment screening (Appendix 2) – the organisations grant situation hasn't changed since undertaken in 2019-20. Organisations in receipt of funding will be required as a condition of funding to consult their own stakeholders and customers in relation to equality obligations, as they update their business plans following confirmation of the level of awards.

### **8 Background Documents**

- 8.1 Cabinet Report - Commissioning of Arts Activities 2019-20 (approved 25 June 2019)
- 8.2 Member Briefing Note - Impact of COVID19 for the Cultural Sector in Birmingham and West Midlands (October 2020)
- 8.3 Imagination, Creativity & Enterprise – Birmingham Cultural Strategy 2016-19
- 8.4 A Creative Future (Birmingham's strategy for children, young people and culture)

## **9 Appendices**

Appendix 1 Equality Duty Statement

Appendix 2 Equality Assessment Screening (EIA)

Appendix 3 Allocations for 'Support to the Arts' budget

Appendix 4 General Conditions of Grant Aid

Appendix 5 Risk Assessment