

Scrutiny Briefing Note

The Tourism and Visitor Economy Panel have asked to monitor progress on the following issues. This briefing contains the latest position as at 5th October 2020.

Subject: Cultural Development Fund (CDF) ‘Grimsby Creates’

Background:

In January 2019 North East Lincolnshire was one of just five local authority areas in England to secure a Cultural Development Fund (CDF) grant award from Arts Council England. Developed as part of the Government’s Industrial Strategy and Creative Industries Sector Deal, CDF investment of £3.2m over the period to March 2023 will

- provide mentoring and other support for the Borough’s creative industries
- deliver a new studio/workspace facility for creative industries businesses through conversion of vacant buildings within the historic Kasbah area of the Port of Grimsby
- establish a programme of events, festivals and public art, focused on Grimsby Town Centre and building on the Borough’s international links
- build local capacity, sustainability and sector leadership.

Delivery of the Department for Digital, Cultural, Media and Sport (DCMS) funded Cultural Development Programme (CDF), will make a significant contribution to the Council’s strategic objective of a ‘Stronger Economy’. It will achieve this by supporting the growth of North East Lincolnshire’s creative industries; developing the Borough’s visitor economy through delivery of cultural events; supporting the diversification of our town centres; and encouraging the economic re-use and improved management of heritage assets. Development of cultural and heritage assets underpins the Greater Grimsby Town Deal, Stronger Towns Fund, Town Investment Plan and Heritage Action Zone.

Delivering the CDF programme will also make a significant contribution to the Council’s ‘Stronger Community’ objective by creating new opportunities for North East Lincolnshire residents to access and appreciate the area’s culture and heritage, and to participate in cultural activities. This will support health and wellbeing objectives.

Governance:

As a result of COVID19 Arts Council England requested a revised proposal for the programme which was submitted in June 2020, in order to extend the programme for an additional year up to March 2023. The programme was branded ‘Grimsby Creates’. The programme is overseen by an internal management group, comprising of the Leader and Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder, Officers and key council staff from Comms and Marketing, Finance, Legal and



Procurement. Additionally, external engagement and advice takes place via five sub-groups (four of which represent the four strands of the programme below and one specifically focusing on connecting and communications).

Key strands of work and progress made:

Strand 1- Creative Workspace:

The aim of this strand of work is to deliver a new studio/workspace facility for creative industries businesses through conversion of vacant buildings within the historic Kasbah area of the Port of Grimsby. The Kasbah affords a unique opportunity for cultural-led regeneration and the project will include new studio, exhibition and shared production facilities and communal/networking spaces to meet a gap in provision identified in the Cultural and Heritage Framework and act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the historic Kasbah area.

A scoping study led by Leeds based East Street Arts was undertaken in 2019. This report was approved at the Programme Board on 9 December 2019 which highlighted indicative options for the redevelopment of units on the Kasbah as creative workspaces. This suggested the six buildings which are most suitable for conversion. A procurement exercise appointed architects Donald Insall Associates to develop detailed and costed designs (up to RIBA stage 3). Subsequently, Donald Insall Associates have carried out a measured survey, conditions survey and ecology survey. A conservation management plan is also being prepared. Two options have been put forward for initial discussion. Officers, following the input of the Grimsby Creates Creative Workspace subgroup and Programme Management Group, have provided feedback to Donald Insall Associates who will present 3 options for consideration in October.

The Council and ABP have been in detailed negotiations regarding the partnership and lease arrangements for the buildings. The Council continues to explore the most appropriate lease arrangements to satisfy conditions of the grant award, the needs of the local creative sector and ongoing costs and income. Following the completion of the detailed and costed architectural design and development appraisal, a decision must be made regarding the lease arrangements for the buildings. Soft market testing will take place concurrently with the architectural study to consider long term delivery model, building on the work of East Street Arts in 2019. This will lead to the procurement of a management operator for the Creative Workspace in 2021.

Strand 2 – Business Development:

The aim of this strand is to provide specialist mentoring and other support for the Borough's creative industries; building on a gap identified in the Cultural and Heritage Framework and complementing the existing business support offer. The programme will deliver an intensive business incubation programme incorporating mentoring, business advice, access to business networks and investment support.

A key focus of this strand will support graduates from creative courses from Grimsby Institute to enable access to employment in the creative industries and increase levels of graduate retention. A short preliminary market consultation (PMC) phase for this work took place in



early February 2020 to test assumptions made in the successful bid to ensure that any activity procured supplements and enhances existing business support activity and is focused on the needs of local creative industries. Following this an open tender process took place in August-September 2020 in order to appoint a business support partner. Due diligence checks are currently being carried out ahead of announcing the partner ready for delivery to commence in November 2020.

Specific creative sector support has already occurred, with an open selection process to fund the National Arts Fundraising School (NAFS) residential programme for successful candidates. Three outstanding applications were selected by the Grimsby Creates Business Development sub-group who, as a result of the current pandemic, will now attend an intensive online programme in November. Understanding and ideas from the programme will be shared with the local sector.

Additionally, to supplement the business advice offered by the business support partner, East Street Arts have submitted a proposal on how they can help the local creative sector, enhanced by conversations with local creative consortium Culture Works, to ensure that this proposal strengthens existing activity.

Strand 3 – Creative Programme:

A key pillar of the programme is the establishment of a programme of events, festivals and public art, focussing on Grimsby Town Centre and building on the Borough's international connections. CDF support will be used to develop and implement a new events programme utilising both outdoor spaces and indoor venues to attract new audiences to cultural activity in the Town Centre and Port. CDF funds will be invested, alongside Council and private sector support, to ensure that the events programme is sustainable beyond the end of the CDF programme.

Magna Vitae, an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, were appointed to undertake a scoping study in 2019 which considered options to deliver festivals throughout the lifetime of the project. Whilst programmes of such activity have been cut short in 2020 due to the pandemic, Arts Council England's one-year extension of the programme until March 2023 has enabled a reflection of programming activity for a broader period.

The Creative Programme is to be launched with inspirational talks from members of the Grimsby Creates Creative Panel and beyond, leading to an ideas phase to provide resource to build new and ambitious partnerships aligned to the themes of the programme (origins, heritage, food and future). This will lead to small funds to develop ideas which have the potential to evolve into larger commissions for programming activity. The Creative Programme will include a 'Festival of the Sea' in 2021 and 2022, with a tender for an artistic director for this forthcoming.

Grimsby Creates continues to work with Magna Vitae on creative programme development. Discussions are at an advanced stage about delivering a major European creative project, which will empower young people from the local area and provide life-changing experiences as well as provide international connections for Grimsby.



Strand 4 – St James Square:

The delivery of the public realm works in St James Square will create an enhanced environment for users of the square as well as an area for arts and cultural events which in turn, will encourage investment and enhance the growth of the visitor economy and town centre. The development of the square will also establish the start, and promote, the proposed Grimsby Heritage Trail.

Whilst there were initial delays to the commencement of construction works at St James Square, CR Reynolds are currently ahead of schedule and the works should be completed by or ahead of March 2021. This will include high-spec events infrastructure features such as sound and lighting, being installed by McCanns. In tandem with this will be the implementation of public art, commissioned by Our Big Picture. Adrian Riley, a Scarborough-based artist has produced a concept for the path that runs from St James Hotel, to Grimsby Minster, incorporating a new labyrinth performance space in between. The typography on the path reflects engagement activity that drew out local social history. Annabel McCourt, a Grimsby-based artist has been photographing local people posing for their 'human murmuration' at Freeman Street Market and Top Town market. These will be translated to silhouettes and later cast as copper pieces to add as wall artwork in St James Square.

Other developments:

Grimsby Creates has engaged with a wide range of stakeholders and integrated broader advice via the creation of sub-groups for each of the four strands. Additionally, a further sub-group 'Connecting and Communications' has enabled discussions to take place on greater sector collaboration and communication. As a result, a Creative Directory has been developed as a source for others to search for local creative practice. This will be available via the Grimsby Creates website which should be launched in October 2020. Grimsby Creates is currently also live on social media platforms.

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