



Lancashire Enterprise Partnership Limited

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Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund
(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

Over the last two years, the LEP has supported and endorsed a number of bids to support the cultural sector in Lancashire, recognising its potential to drive economic growth in specific locations and for the economy as a whole. The latest opportunity is the Government's Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund (NCRF) which will support a limited number of transformational projects as a legacy of the Great Exhibition of the North, currently taking place in Newcastle-Gateshead.

The £15m NCRF is open to all 11 LEPs within the Northern Powerhouse. The NCRF intends to make three or four large capital grants over the next three years of around £3-£4 million each. Decisions on these grants will be made by April 2018. LEPs or Combined Authorities, where the latter are in place, are asked to endorse a single NCRF bid from their area.

In Lancashire, 8 bids have been received from potential scheme sponsors with Marketing Lancashire and LEP officers assessing their suitability and fit with NCRF criteria. On the basis of this analysis, the 8 EOIs were shortlisted to three proposals – **Amuseum** (Blackpool), **Locus** (Burnley) and **Lancaster Arts Hub**. These three proposals have also subjected to an independent appraisal by Regeneris Consulting. The appraisal's findings are set out at Appendix 'A'.

The independent appraisal identifies Amuseum as the strongest Lancashire proposal with a relevant regional offer, at this stage. Locus has significant merits, given the objectives of the NCRF, but the underpinning business case is not sufficiently developed. The Lancaster Arts Hub has significant merit as a local proposal with significant dependencies still to resolve.

This report recommends the LEP Board selects the Amuseum proposal as the LEP's endorsed NRCF scheme, given the available evidence. However, with more time, it is possible that the Locus proposal could have developed a more compelling NRCF submission. However, the deadline for submission is 30 November. In the time available, our independent advisors do not believe the Locus scheme can be improved to a standard that could either match or out-perform Amuseum, especially as the Amuseum proposal would also be further improve in this timeframe.

It should be noted that Lancashire is identified as a "cold spot" for national funding of cultural programmes and assets. An emerging Cultural Strategy Board, led by



UCLAN and Marketing Lancashire, will begin to address this issue. However, the Board is asked to consider some funding support to identifying how culture can act as a driver of economic growth and regeneration, supporting the development of important clusters of creative industries, building on Lancashire's heritage assets and reinforcing Lancashire's recently launched economic narrative.

Recommendations

The LEP Board is asked to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report and the findings of the independent appraisal by Regeneris Consulting at Appendix 'A';
- (ii) Endorse the Amuseum proposal as the LEP's priority NRCF submission, subject to the scheme sponsor agreeing in their final submission to address the improvement issues identified in the independent appraisal;
- (iii) Note the strategic potential of the Locus proposal and agree to work with the scheme sponsor and local partners, as part of a wider place-based growth framework, to support the development of the emerging business-case with Government and relevant national funding bodies; and
- (iv) Agree to provide a budget of up to £40,000 from the LEP's Operational Budget for 2017/18, matched by local partner contributions, to develop a strategic framework to prioritise and maximise the impact of cultural schemes and opportunities as economic catalysts as part of agreed place-based strategies.



Background and Context

- 1.1 Lancashire's cultural assets and organisations collectively constitute a significant economic actor within the area. The Work Foundation¹ estimates that, taking the broadest definition, the creative economy in Lancashire could account for over 36,000 jobs, 5.7% of total jobs in Lancashire, with estimated GVA of £1.3 billion. Up to 22,000 of these jobs are in creative industries and 14,000 in creative occupations across other sectors.
- 1.2 The impact of cultural activities is however much broader than these high level economic metrics suggest. Creative and cultural assets and activities are central to Lancashire's new economic narrative and fundamental to creating the environment needed to attract the knowledge-based workers that are key to the area's economic future. Cultural and heritage assets can also become a focus for place-based strategies with new strategic investment opportunities driving both economic growth and regeneration.
- 1.3 In recent year's opportunities to bid for events such as the Great Exhibition of the North, have seen a strong level of interest from Lancashire partners, but the area remains a "cold spot" for Government and Arts Council funding to this particular sector.
- 1.4 This report is intended to update LEP Board members on the process which is taking place to prioritise a single Lancashire bid to go forward to the Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund (NCRF), which is the latest significant funding opportunity to be offered for investment in cultural assets.
- 1.5 In addition, the report asks the Board to consider investing some resource from its Operational Budget for 2017/18 to establish a robust framework to understand and prioritise strategic cultural assets and opportunities that can act as catalysts for economic growth and regeneration, as part of an agreed place-based strategy.

2. Northern Cultural Regeneration Fund

- 2.1 On the 4th of August 2017 the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) announced the opportunity to establish a £15m NCRF, aligned with the objectives of the Northern Powerhouse. The NCRF is viewed by Government as a legacy activity flowing from the Great Exhibition of the North that will be held in Newcastle and Gateshead in summer 2018.
- 2.2 This announcement emphasised the intention to make three or four significant capital awards and specifically referenced the following:

"Opening of a new tech start-up centre or renovating live music venues should increase opportunities for people to experience, benefit and contribute to culture and creativity".

¹ The Creative Economy in Lancashire, Blackpool, and Blackburn- August 2014



The call requires each LEP to co-ordinate the bidding process in their respective area, prioritising the project proposals that best meet the criteria of the NCRF.

- 2.3 In order to meet the 30 November deadline for submissions, officers from Marketing Lancashire and the LEP co-ordinated an Expression of Interest (Eoi) exercise, widely publicised to local partners. This process attracted the 8 submissions listed below:

Project Name	Lead Organisation(s)	Location
Amuseum	Blackpool Council	Blackpool
Lancaster Arts Hub	Lancaster CC	Lancaster
The People's Production Lab	Conlon / They Eat Culture	Preston
Independent Practitioner Centre for Cultural & Creative Arts	Edge Hill University	West Lancashire
The Guild of Curious Northerners	Curious Minds / Rigby Organisations	Preston
Locus	AMS Neve / Barnfield	Burnley
The Harris Centre for Creative Arts and Wellbeing	UCLAN	Preston
* Northlight – Gateway to the Linear Park	Super Slow Way Project	East Lancs (focus Pendle)

** Northlight / Linear Park was not endorsed by either PLACE or Pendle Council as the priority bid for East Lancashire but chose to submit independently.*

- 2.4 Initial shortlisting was conducted by a panel comprising representatives from the LEP, Marketing Lancashire and Arts Council. The panel identified three projects with merit against NCRF criteria. The three selected projects were; Amuseum, Lancaster Arts Hub and Locus. The respective EOI summaries are provided below for reference.



Amuseum

This project involves the creation of a brand new cultural business in the heart of Blackpool which we are calling the 'Amuseum'.

The Amuseum will blend the best of museums and visitor attractions - a museum, with a funny side. It will be filled with artefacts, film, music and performance. It will tell the story of the UK's first mass seaside holiday resort and its role in the development of British popular culture and entertainment, including rarely told stories of magic, variety and circus.

As well as celebrating Blackpool's nationally resonant heritage and unseen collections, it will showcase collections from partners including the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) and EMI Archive Trust

The Amuseum will play a critical role in the region's regeneration: creating jobs, bringing in visitors, and improving the health, mental wellbeing and aspirations of local people.

The project is central to building local pride and aspirations and helping to secure a new future for this iconic seaside resort. It will attract 296,000 annual visits; create 40 FTE museum jobs, £12.5m additional expenditure, and an annual GVA of £6.5m.

It is part of a major redevelopment of a landmark building on the Blackpool Promenade. It will create more than 2500sqm of museum space including 1200sqm of immersive, interactive, family friendly exhibits, 100sqm of dedicated learning spaces, as well as a range of other public facilities and staff spaces.

Plans include a 150sqm temporary exhibition gallery that will host temporary and touring displays about local themes and national popular culture, developing audiences, exploring stories and bringing new displays to Blackpool.

It will support two strands of skills development; performance skills including comedy, dance, magic and circus acts, and work and life skills through work experience programmes, apprenticeships, careers advice, resilience-based wellbeing activities, and professional development for staff and volunteers.



Locus

“Locus” is a purpose built flexible space for live performances and shows which can accommodate audiences of up to 2,500. However, Locus will be more than just another music and cultural venue.

The design will also allow for a wide range of activities to take place, from modern live music, classical orchestra, contemporary dance, theatre and art/gallery exhibition and installation space.

The focus will be on cutting-edge design incorporating the latest in acoustics to provide an industry leading experience. Locus will also be accessible by local schools, colleges, universities, creatives and professionals to train, experiment and develop their skills within a live venue environment.

The project is championed by Mark Crabtree, MD of AMS Neve in Burnley which has consistently developed cutting-edge digital innovation to the music industry and are acknowledged as producing the best sound equipment in the world.

Locus will extend AMS Neve’s acclaimed University partnership work to communities in east Lancashire and allow local talent the same access to AMS Neve’s technology and expertise as the major music industry Universities. Locus contrasts with other performance venues across east Lancashire which are based in ageing buildings not designed for modern production methods, sound or technologies.

The venue will therefore be able to attract performances from productions and shows which would otherwise never be able to visit east Lancashire for logistical reasons.

Locus will create access to a richer cultural offer for the communities of east Lancashire, enriched by UCLAN's expanding student population of up to 4,000 new students, whilst providing the latent creative community of the area with a place to experiment, test and train on cutting-edge sound production equipment within a world class venue.



'Arts Hub Lancaster'

'Arts Hub Lancaster' (working name AHL) is a transformational development at the heart of the city's major Canal Corridor North regeneration project. It positions Lancaster as a leading UK City for Arts, Heritage, Learning and Creativity. With our strategic partners, British Land, Lancaster University, The Dukes, Ludus Dance and other cultural organisations AHL will be as distinctive as the city is in its heritage. AHL aims to significantly expand our cultural and economic offer making Lancaster a powerful Northern location for artistic creation, talent retention, growth and social interaction.

Create a step change in our creative and visitor economy, local business and employment growth and radically transform, reposition and strengthen the district's arts and cultural sectors. Improve learning and education provision within performing arts and technical courses contributing to the excellence and achievements of Lancaster University. Provide a high-profile platform for local people and marginalised communities to engage creatively and openly creating work by and for young people, in and outside education.

AHL will be 3,500 sq. metres of hard working creative space, a 'cultural beating heart' in Lancaster city centre offering local people and visitors the highest quality artistic and cultural experiences. AHL will include:

An auditorium for drama, comedy, small scale lyric work, dance, screenings, music, conference, seminars and talks. Three cinemas suitable for 35mm and digital projection. Studios and spaces for participatory activities, workshops, making and rehearsals. Work and office spaces for Lancaster's growing creative community. Dance studio with fully sprung floor for class, choreography, rehearsal and small scale hires/events. A digital suite connected to AHL's high-end infrastructure for streaming and media production. Meeting rooms for community use and commercial hires with a café/restaurant and bars serving visitors and audiences throughout the day and evening.



- 2.5 Detailed feedback was provided to the five unsuccessful submissions. Generally, weaknesses were focused around a lack of detail within EOIs, delivery queries, or questions as to whether the initiative proposed could deliver Northern impact and profile.
- 2.6 Independent appraisers, Regeneris Consulting, were then engaged to assess the remaining three scheme proposals in more detail. An approach the LEP has adopted for previous competitive national funding opportunities. The assessment findings of the independent appraiser are set out in Appendix 'A'.
- 2.7 In summary, Amuseum is deemed to have the strongest proposal, given the NCRF timeframe. The proposal has a strong regional offer and is clearly rooted in a robust local renewal strategy that is recognised and supported by the LEP. The proposal has also secured £1.5M in Growth Deal from the LEP. Locus is an innovative private sector led scheme that would be located in the Weavers Triangle of Burnley, the focal point of a strong local place-based growth strategy, with the potential to become a key element of the emerging Linear Park development in east Lancashire. By contrast, AHL is considered to have significant local merit but with many dependencies still to be addressed.
- 2.8 In the view of the independent appraiser, only Amuseum and Locus have the potential to submit competitive NRCF proposals with both these proposals displaying differing strengths and potentiality
- 2.9 However, given the pressing Government deadline of 30 November, the independent appraiser suggests that Amuseum represents Lancashire's strongest NRCF submission, given the extensive business case work that has been undertaken at risk by the scheme sponsor. In the remaining time, it is not felt that Locus could become Lancashire's strongest submission even though some of its key elements may be more attractive to NRCF decision-makers.
- 2.10 Subject to LEP Board approval, the LEP is asked to endorse the Amuseum proposal as Lancashire's NRCF submission. However, the scheme sponsor will be expected to address the issues identified in the conclusions and recommendations set out in the independent assessment, including the strengthening of the commercial case. The Board is also asked to note comments regarding the scheme's wider appeal to NRCF decision-makers and its ability to drive growth in the creative and cultural sector.
- 2.11 The Locus scheme clearly has significant merit and with elements capable of appealing to NCRF decision-makers. However, on this occasion, extremely tight deadlines have proved decisive in limiting the time available to develop a compelling submission. Nevertheless, given the focus and potential of this proposal to contribute to wider place-based growth frameworks, the Board is asked to work with the scheme sponsor and local partners to further develop this proposal with a view to securing alternative financial support from national funding bodies.



3. Identifying the Potential for Lancashire's Cultural Initiatives to Release Economic Growth

- 3.1 Lancashire has gained profile in recent years by identifying its key strengths and leveraging additional public and private investment to further develop the assets, services and infrastructure which create the environment for further growth and performance.
- 3.2 Culture, creative industries and heritage assets are defined in Lancashire but opportunities to build activity based on this sector have been limited by the lack of strategic leadership and competition from the Core Cities in the North.
- 3.3 In 2016, Marketing Lancashire secured £65,000 allocation from the Grants for Arts fund to develop a Lancashire cultural narrative and to create a cultural tourism toolkit to help encourage closer collaboration between cultural and tourism sectors. A key aim is for the narrative to support advocacy of the cultural sector and the appetite of relevant local partners to establish a cross-sector pan-Lancashire Cultural Partnership Board.
- 3.4 The creation of a cultural narrative aims to set out the case for culture for Lancashire and to describe its characteristics, assets, offer, future ambitions and challenges as well as connecting culture to economic and social priorities, linked to growth agendas. Work to reshape the draft cultural narrative is being undertaken following consultation with the project's leading cultural partners and stakeholders. It is envisaged that work on the narrative will be completed by the end of November.
- 3.5 Whilst the number of arts organisations in Lancashire who enjoy National Portfolio Organisation status has actually increased recently, Arts Council England have also been pro-active in driving the development of a Cultural Partnership for Lancashire to better define and develop a clear strategy and priorities for the sector. Further complementing this, colleagues in the higher education sector are pursuing an opportunity to bid for Arts and Humanities Research Council to investigate Creative Clusters across the North West led by Lancaster University.
- 3.6 To complement renewed local momentum in this area of activity, the Board is asked to make available up to £40,000 from its Operational Budget for 2017-18 to establish a strategic framework to prioritise and maximise the impact of cultural schemes and opportunities, as economic catalysts, as part of agreed place-based growth and regeneration strategies.
- 3.7 This work would be intended to identify where heritage, cultural and creative assets and opportunities (such as Locus) could become catalysts for growth, and how local partners can maximise public funding to deliver wider public and private investment frameworks. The work would also complement the recently launched economic narrative, 'We are Lancashire – the place for growth' and would support Lancashire's inward investment offer.