

**Audit, Risk and Governance Committee**  
Meeting to be held on Monday, 22 April 2024

Electoral Division affected:  
(All Divisions);

## **Annual Report on the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund**

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### **Brief Summary**

The report is a review of the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund which began in December 2022. The report outlines the processes, expenditure and evaluation of the fund and its reach to date.

Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund was introduced in 2022/23 to improve access to culture and sport and improve wellbeing. Crowdfund Lancashire is the crowdfunding platform that administers the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund. Crowdfund Lancashire and the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund empower Lancashire communities to shape the culture and sport offer where they live, giving community groups autonomy to fund and deliver projects in their locality. The fund is managed by the Cultural Development team in Cultural Services.

This is the first report to the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee on the outcomes of the fund's monitoring activity, in line with the committee's responsibility for oversight of the county council's governance and risk management.

This report covers the period December 2022 to April 2024. Future reports will be made annually.

### **Recommendation**

The Audit, Risk and Governance Committee is asked to consider the Annual Report on the Lancashire Culture and Sport for December 2022 to April 2024.

### **Detail**

In February 2022, Full Council agreed to provide a match fund to support the culture and sport sector with annual support of £500,000. Officers researched match fund models across the country to develop an effective approach to support cultural and sport activity. This fund would be called the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund.



The model, agreed at Cabinet in September 2022 was a match crowdfund model. Approximately 30 local authorities currently adopt similar schemes that enable people to show their support for projects which would make a difference in their communities. Following research meetings with colleagues from the Digital Business Engagement team it was agreed that the digital, professional and legal requirements required for the platform could not be delivered internally and that an external provider would need to be sourced. The procurement of a crowdfunding supplier followed and Spacehive was the successful supplier with a significant portfolio of experience working with other local authorities across England. The fund's platform pages are called Crowdfund Lancashire with eligible projects supported through the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund.

Crowdfund Lancashire therefore works in partnership with Spacehive, to help communities raise funds to improve their local areas. Spacehive offer a comprehensive service hosting the Crowdfund Lancashire platform, providing a technical support team as well as specialist expertise in crowdfunding and project management for communities.

Crowdfund Lancashire launched with an introductory round in December 2022. From the 2023/24 financial year onwards, the annual fund has been split across two funding rounds.

Crowdfund Lancashire gives people a chance to create local culture and sport projects and support the projects which matter most to them. Anyone can contribute towards their community by giving as little as £2 to help bring ideas to life. If it matters to our communities, it matters to Lancashire County Council, who will support eligible projects with a pledge from the £500,000 Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund.

To be eligible for this fund, a project must:

- Support cultural or sporting activity of benefit to the wider community;
- Contribute to improving quality of life for Lancashire residents through culture or sport; and
- Involve the public as audience or participants.

If the project is to fund a capital project, the project should still have a tangible benefit. Priority is given to projects that improve access to culture and sport, contribute to the county council's corporate priorities, and enable free or low-cost activity for public benefit.

### **Funding Strands**

- Community organisations could get a pledge of up to £15,000 (or a maximum of 50% of target) towards a crowdfunding campaign. This amount was reduced from £20,000, following the Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee 6 February 2024, in response to the significant demand of eligible projects. The reduction to £15,000 maximum will take effect in 2024/25.



- Town and parish councils are also encouraged to apply for a pledge of up to £5,000 (or a maximum of 50% of target).
- Businesses and individuals with ideas to boost the culture and sports offering in their area could receive up to £1,500 (or a maximum of 50% of target) to make it happen.

## **Support for Projects from December 2022 – April 2024**

Appendix A provides a full list of projects supported by the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund to April 2024 including the monitoring and evaluation received.

Since its inception, £819,809 has been pledged by the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund, with the total raised in external pledges so far being over £1.5m. As the recent Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund round was only agreed in March 2024, those projects are only just starting to fundraise. The fund has provided opportunities for more community cohesion, a reduction in social isolation and an improvement in the health, wellbeing and cultural experience of Lancashire's residents.

The eligibility criteria for the fund were developed through lengthy consultation with the independent cultural sector, district council colleagues, leisure trusts, Active Lancashire, Arts Lancashire, colleagues in Public Health, Democratic Services, economic development, and the Cabinet Member for Community and Cultural Services. This was to ensure the criteria reflected the needs and wanted outcomes of the cultural and sport sector in the county. The criteria have been adapted subsequently to reflect learning, address gaps and target identified priority areas over the last 18 months. Through the project creation process on the Spacehive platform, applicants must provide adequate information and explanation to how the project meets the eligibility criteria. Applicants are also required to explain how their project contributes to one or more of the council's corporate priorities.

Leading up to and following the launch, the Cultural Development team has engaged with the district councils, hosting collaborative events in their localities and attending community forums to spread information about Crowdfund Lancashire. The team also engaged with community wide agencies, such as Active Lancashire, Arts Lancashire, Creative Lancashire, and Lancashire Football Association as well as local community/voluntary services and local frontline teams at libraries, leisure centres and community centres. The team also engaged with the two unitary authorities of Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen to address support for projects taking place across authority boundaries.

There is a deadline for each round, following which all projects are checked against the eligibility criteria by a panel to agree suitability for Lancashire Culture and Sport Funding and a pledge amount. The panel consists of County Councillor Peter Buckley, Cabinet Member for Community and Cultural Services and Steve Lloyd, Libraries, Culture and Registration Services Manager.

Appendix B sets out the eligibility criteria for the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund.

All projects successful in securing a pledge from the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund have 12 months from the date they complete their funding campaign to deliver



their project and submit their project impact assessment. Any project creators not complying with this cannot apply again.

Project creators are supported to help identify additional funds from district councils, local and national trusts and foundations, as well as ongoing support with raising off-line pledges through fundraising events and financial support from businesses. The team have effective relationships with relevant national and local trusts, foundations, funders and businesses and keep them up to date with projects each round.

At the start of each round, officers and Spacehive work closely with the potential project creators and community groups to refine, highlight and pinpoint the project so it is in the best shape it can be before crowdfunding starts. Spacehive are responsible for the verification of projects including ratifying costs of the project by asking projects for evidence of quotations, confirming the project's legitimacy through analysing the need, and authorising evidence of event permits, planning permissions and other parties' involvements.

Over the past 18 months, Crowdfund Lancashire has achieved one of the highest success rates with projects which reach their fundraising target. This has resulted in Crowdfund Lancashire and Lancashire County Council receiving a 'gold standard rating' from Spacehive. Lancashire County Council is the second-largest funding local authority on the crowdfunding platform.

Appendix C provides case studies for the projects supported through the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund.

### **Summary of Outcomes**

- For every £1 Lancashire County Council contributes to the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund, this levers at least another £1.50 in external pledges to support projects in local communities.
- Crowdfund Lancashire and Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund supports creative and physical activities within communities where there is little other affordable access, supporting the wellbeing of those communities.
- Crowdfund Lancashire and Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund galvanises individuals to feel better equipped, confident, and empowered to develop their local culture or sport offer, by supporting them to become constituted groups which provides the opportunity to secure more funding.
- Crowdfund Lancashire and Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund empowers Lancashire communities to shape the culture and sport offer where they live, giving community groups autonomy to fund and deliver projects that are of need in their locality.
- Crowdfund Lancashire and Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund enables community groups to be more resilient both in terms of funding and organisational structure, by providing one-to-one support on project management and crowdfunding.



The team has also worked with the Procurement Service to further encourage additional pledges from the council's corporate partners. For example, the council's new Social Value Policy (implemented in Autumn 2023) uses Crowdfund Lancashire as a recommendation for how suppliers can support community projects. The team hope to see projects in future rounds be supported through this policy.

## Appendices

Appendices A to C are attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	List of projects supported by the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund to April 2024, including the monitoring and evaluation information
Appendix 'B'	Eligibility criteria for the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund
Appendix 'C'	Case studies for the projects supported through the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund

## Consultations

### Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### Legal

The services of Spacehive were procured in October 2022 on a 2 + 1 + 1 basis which means the first two years were agreed to 2024 and after this the council can agree to continue on a year-by-year basis for the next two years.

### Finance

The current round of applications closed on 14 February 2024, after which the panel agreed the level of support for projects on 4 March 2024. All projects in that round have now started their fundraising. The support from Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund is added after the project campaign reaches 20 donations from the public. If the project fails to reach its target, all the funds are reimbursed including to the Lancashire Culture and Sport Fund.

### Risk management

All project campaigns are first verified by Spacehive which includes checking that any permissions are in place.



**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985  
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

