

Community, Cultural, and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee
Meeting to be held on Thursday, 26 September 2024

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;
Supporting economic growth.

National Portfolio Organisations

Contact for further information:
Andy Walker, Tel: 01772 535629, Head of Service – Business Growth,
andy.walker@lancashire.gov.uk

Brief Summary

This report details how work to support Arts Council designated and funded National Portfolio Organisations (NPO's) are being supported within Lancashire and our expectations for how the next round of NPO funding may play out in Lancashire.

Recommendation

The Community, Cultural and Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

- i. Consider and comment on the content of this report.
- ii. Consider the range of other support and engagement activity designed to ensure the best possible outcome for Lancashire organisations as clarity around the parameters for funding in 2025 become clearer.

Detail

Following the recent general election, the policy priorities of the new government (Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT)) with respect to the creative industries and the role of culture within economic regeneration are being established.

There is clearly a strong devolution focus to mobilising place-based policies which could play well alongside Lancashire's own well-advanced plans in this respect, but the detail on the form and extent for support to the creativity and culture sector are yet to emerge and are likely to be heavily impacted by the overall constraints on spending. The Spending Review in October is the next point when we are likely to understand more, both around priorities, (for example, it is clear that the new



government is looking to feature the Creative Industries more strongly in its proposed Industrial Strategy) and in terms of resources.

The Secretary of State, Lisa Nandy MP, and Minister of State, Chris Bryant MP, have both met with key sector bodies (including Creative Industries Council/Creative UK comprising large cultural organisations and government arms-length organisations – i.e. Arts Council England (ACE), Crafts Council, National Theatre, South Bank Centre, BFI UK Music, Broadcasters etc).

These regional meetings have provided some encouragement to the sector that the government recognises the importance of access and inclusion for arts and culture.

Lancashire's National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) and other opportunities for the Cultural and Creative Sectors

Creative Lancashire continues to prioritise work with cultural organisations via its Creative Step Programme in readiness for next round of NPO awards. This work is being delivered in partnership with Arts Lancashire and Lancashire County Council Cultural Services and takes the form of intensive one to one support and thematic based workshops informed by ACE investment principles for existing and potential new NPOs.

Over the months leading up to the ACE NPO programme Cultural Services supported Arts Lancashire to deliver a series of workshops and webinars to organisations interested in applying to become an NPO.

These sessions brought in experts from across the country to provide information which would give organisations the best possible chance of success. The success of this has been shared as a model of good practice to other authorities nationally.

In total, 18 Pan-Lancashire organisations joined the portfolio for 2023. 10 Lancashire arts organisations existing Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) continued to be supported as NPO organisations. These are:

- Blackpool Grand Theatre, Blackpool
- Burnley Youth Theatre, Burnley
- Horse + Bamboo, Rossendale
- Imitating The Dog, Lancaster
- In-Situ, Pendle
- Lancaster Arts, Lancaster
- More Music, Morecambe
- The Dukes, Lancaster
- The Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool
- The Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library, Preston

8 new organisations were brought into the portfolio within Lancashire for the first time. These include:

- Blackburn Museum & Art Gallery Blackburn
- British Textile Biennial Blackburn



- Culturapedia Blackburn
- The National Festival of Making Blackburn
- The Whittaker Rossendale
- LightPool Blackpool
- Dance Syndrome Hyndburn
- Idle Women Hyndburn

Creative Lancashire is also working with individuals and organisations for other ACE Investment Programmes (Project Grants & Developing Your Creative Practice) and place-based propositions for Historic England & National Heritage Lottery Fund Programmes.

Linear Park & Morecambe Triennial were also invited to submit applications for the ACE Major (Significant) Project Strand.

The current NPO Round 2023-26 has been extended by one year and it is anticipated that the process for the next round will commence early next year. Officers recently met with ACE who are keen to understand where we anticipate emergence of new NPOs from within the county.

In the previous round, Lancashire benefitted from several places being listed on the government Levelling-Up for Culture List, but this has now been abolished.

It should be noted that Blackburn & Blackpool remain on the ACE Priority Places List and will continue to receive additional focus and resource to support programmes. Blackburn are currently awaiting the outcome of their Place partnership Fund Application.

Creative Lancashire continues to support our two Creative People and Places Programmes (LeftCoast in Blackpool & Super Slow Way in Pennine Lancashire), who are both part of the ACE portfolio but not technically NPOs. It should be noted that these are the only organisations in Lancashire supported to the same degree as larger NPO's in Liverpool and Manchester – with scale capacity and resource to drive economic and inclusive growth in places.

The future will be determined by government decisions and budget. However, given the availability of any additional resource is considered unlikely, the impact in Lancashire is the prospect of funding moving from one NPO to another.

Despite this, ACE still maintain that they are keen to invest in Preston, on the basis that it is proportionally under-represented in terms of that specific organisation's investment and the general operating principle that investment in large urban places typically amplifies outputs, in comparison to other locations.

The government has now formally closed the ACE review which influences the decision related to its charter (settlement from government). It was initiated by the previous administration last spring. It's expected that the new government will launch its own review shortly.



Finally, it should be noted that ACE never guarantee that there will be future rounds of NPO, however they will need to come up with something that delivers the same support if they wish to see the sector's future secured.

Consultations

N/A

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Financial

There are no financial implications in this update report, funding arrangements where they are in place are part of wider revenue budget provisions and not subject to review at this stage.

Risk management

Loss of funding or an inability to attract new or sustained funding may cause these organisations to seek additional funds locally to sustain key cultural and community infrastructure.

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

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
None		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A		

