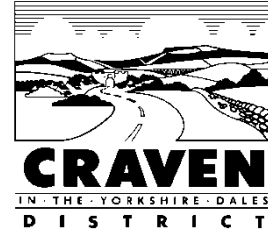


**Policy Committee – 3rd November
2015**



SKIPTON TOWN HALL: ARTS COUNCIL BID TO RESTORE MAIN HALL

Report of the Strategic Manager for Planning and Regeneration

Ward(s) affected: All wards

1. **Purpose of Report** – To present the scope of a bid for funding to the Arts Council to improve the facilities and equipment of the Main Hall and seek confirmation for the application to continue.

2. **Recommendations** – Members are recommended to:

2.1 To confirm that the funding application to the Arts Council can continue.

3.0 Background

3.1 As at Minute POL.676/15-16, funding was made available for the preparation of a feasibility study for the restoration of the Concert Hall and ancillary rooms within Skipton Town Hall. The function of the feasibility study was to look at how the space could be restructured to achieve the Council's vision for a vibrant, multifunctional events venue that benefits the visitor and evening economies of Skipton and the Southern Dales.

3.2 In addition, the feasibility study would be used as supporting evidence for future applications for funding from such as the Arts Council.

4.0 Application to the Arts Council

4.1 In September 2015, the Council was given permission by the Arts Council to submit an application for £250,000 from its capital grants programme for the financial year 2016/17. The purpose of the programme is to provide investment for capital projects that will enable more people to experience great art in resilient and environmentally sustainable venues.

4.2 As the funding available from the Arts Council is limited, a total budget of £9.6million, the application process is competitive. The 8th October 2015 was the last round for this funding therefore a submission was quickly made on the basis it was the last opportunity and as stated in 5.2 below, no match funding was required. A decision from the Arts Council is expected in February 2016. The submission for £250,000 is in excess of officer's delegation of £100,000

AGENDA ITEM 11

for external funding and therefore the report seeks approval for the funding application to continue through the Arts Council process.

4.3 Based on findings of the feasibility study, the application is requesting funding to refurbish the facilities in the Main Hall in order to provide a quality venue that will enable the Council to stage a new, more ambitious programme of events from April 2017. The assessment of the current facilities has been identified that the following improvements are required urgently:

- Replacement of the lighting and sound system
- Relocation of the control box
- Installation of an infra-red assisted listening system for the hearing impaired
- Purchase of digital projection broadcasting equipment, new seating and a removable vinyl dance floor
- An acoustic study
- Install black outs
- Secondary glaze windows for noise control and to help reduce energy consumption

4.4 It is anticipated that the proposed refurbishment will enable the Council to programme a range of activities, about 150 shows per year, including theatre, popular music, jazz, classical music, opera, contemporary dance, ballet, live streaming from international quality venues and film showings. A key part of the plan is to film live performances in the Hall and live stream them to village halls, etc. across the District, particularly those in the remoter, rural areas which are not currently served by touring performance organisations.

4.5 As a direct result of the proposed refurbishment, it is expected that the Council will be able to grow current audiences to achieve an audience of 39,000 per year, and generate an income of £267,311.

5.0 Funding

5.1 It is estimated that the application to the Arts Council for £250,000 will be sufficient to cover the total cost of carrying out the work needed – outlined in paragraph 4.3 above.

5.2 Different from other funding programmes, this programme allows applicants to use expenditure already incurred, if within twelve-months prior to the project start date, as match funding. Therefore, the Council has been able to use the investment that it has already made in refurbishing the building, including the new heating system, entrance and toilet facilities (total value of £672,254). The Council has also been able to include selected salary costs, such as the new Venue and Programming Manager and costs of preparing the feasibility study. This means that the Council has been able to provide match funding of £739,925.

AGENDA ITEM 11

6.0 Implications

6.1 Financial and Value for Money (vfm) Implications –

The Arts Council bid for £250,000 directly supports the future viability of a Council asset. The grant is not dependent on any new match funding and therefore does not generate further financial implications.

6.2 Legal Implications –

These are set out in the body of the report. If successful an offer letter between the Council and the Arts Council will be agreed setting out the terms of the grant.

7.0 Contribution to Council Priorities –

The redevelopment of the Hall directly contributes to the financial resilience of the Council and the economic and social well-being of our communities.

8.0 Risk Management – the bid seeks to purchase equipment that can be used to improve the facilities of the Hall and as it does not require any consents such as planning it is regarded at present to be low risk.

9.0 Equality Impact Assessment – the bid seeks to purchase equipment and improve facilities that have been influenced by an accessibility audit and in particular an assessment of the needs of people suffering from dementia.

10.0 Consultations with Others – the Museum Stakeholders Group

11.0 Access to Information: Background Documents – None

12.0. Author of the Report – David Smurthwaite, Strategic Manager Planning and Regeneration; telephone 01756 706409; e-mail dsmurthwaite@cravendc.gov.uk

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.