

Report of: Sarah Westaway

Report to: Director of Children's Services

Date: 24.07.14

Subject: Nesta Digital R&D Fund for the Arts



Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. ArtForms (Arts Development) working in partnership with DigitalME (Technology partner) and Sheffield Hallam (Research partner) submitted an application to Nesta Digital R&D fund for the Arts. Our application was successful.
2. ArtForms (Arts Development) is the lead partner and will be the budget holder for a grant of £124,972. To release the funding the grant agreement with Nesta must be signed by 22nd August 2014.
3. ArtForms will enter into partnership agreements with DigitalMe for **£46,053** and Sheffield Hallam University for **£38,620**.

Recommendations

To enter into an External Funding agreement with:

Nesta Digital R&D fund for the Arts - Deadline 22nd August

1 Purpose of this report

To seek approval to enter into an External Funding agreement with:
Nesta Digital R&D fund for the Arts - Deadline 22nd August.

2 Background information

Nesta, Arts Council England and the Arts and Humanities Research Council are running a research programme called “The Digital Research and Development Fund for the Arts” to support innovative arts organisations and their partners to use digital technologies to enhance audience reach and/ or create opportunities for new business models for arts organisations to promote the sustainability of arts organisations with merit for the benefit of the public.

The Project

The **BotBadge** project will pilot the use of emerging digital Open Badge (OB) technology to incentivise participation and reward individual learning in the arts, prioritising the involvement of children from disadvantaged groups in Leeds who are non-engagers in the arts and learning. Through a programme of in-school and out of school arts workshops, led by artists and arts organisations who are partners in the research project, participants will have the opportunity to explore and extend their own creativity and skills. Participants will earn and will display their ‘BotBadges’ through the project’s secure platforms. The BotBadges project will develop and share Open Badge tools, expertise and workshop materials, of use and significance to the wider arts and education sector.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 As the grant agreement is for **£124,972** it has to be taken as a significant operational decision

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Partners in the bid (ArtForms -LCC, DigitalMe and Sheffield Hallam University) have worked together to develop the bid in consultation with our Arts partners: Playful Leeds, Studio 12 - Leeds Library Service and First Floor - West Yorkshire Playhouse.

- 4.1.1 ArtForms has shared information and consulted with colleagues in Learning Skills and Universal services, and Libraries, Arts and Heritage, City development.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 A key focus for the grant is to support audience development. In our project the ‘audience’ are children and young people. A criteria of the grant is that the programme and project activity:

- Broadens (connects with non-engagers in arts activity)
- Deepens (intensifying the level of participation e.g. young people attend more often)
- Diversifying (engaging new groups of young people who would not otherwise participate)

Our project activity as outlined in our application aims to deliver on all of the above.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 'Badges' have been used for many years to motivate, reward and recognise achievement. Open badges are a digital version of this where learners collect and display their digital badges on line. Open Badges offer an alternative and complimentary approach to the conventional accreditation of learning. The Bot Badge project will pilot this technology as a way to

- a) engage children and young people in Leeds in arts activities
- b) reward individual learning in the arts

Open Badges have the potential to be an important way of engaging children and young people in cultural learning activities.

Child Friendly City

All our learning places identify and address barriers that prevent children and young people from engaging in and enjoying learning: lessons are more interactive and fun.

Children and Young People's Plan

CYP do well in learning and have skills for life.

CYP have fun growing up.

This pilot project will explore the following research questions:

- What value do young people attach to Open Badges as a record of their learning?
- Do Open Badges encourage young people's engagement and participation with arts activities?
- Do open badges help schools and arts organisations to engage children and young people who are non-engagers in arts and cultural learning?

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 ArtForms as the lead partner will be the budget holder. **£13,650** will be awarded to ArtForms to cover Project management costs. Activity will be delivered at no cost to LCC. ArtForms and LCC will gain National publicity for participation in this high profile project.

4.4.2 **Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.4.1 ArtForms (Arts Development) as the lead partner and the budget holder must enter into a grant agreement with Nesta.

ArtForms will need to enter into partnership agreements with DigitalMe for £46,053 and Sheffield Hallam University for £38,620.

4.5 **Risk Management**

4.6.1 There is a standard condition attached to all Nesta grants that the grant agreement must be signed before **22nd August 2014** at the latest. Nesta will **not** provide funding after this date.

4.6.2 **Insufficient funding**

Detailed planning has already gone into development of project budget with all key activities defined and costed.

Scale of activity and timetable for project are realistic.

5% contingency is included.

Strong financial monitoring and cost controls will be implemented

4.6.3 **Partnership breakdown**

Links between partners are well established.

A partnership agreement will be in place outlining clear roles and responsibilities.

IP ownership and licensing will be clear from outset.

Clear implementation plan with milestones.

Regular partnership/project planning meetings will be scheduled.

Open project management and communication tools will be adopted (Google Docs/Basecamp).

5 **Conclusions**

5.1 This is a high profile National programme. The pilot programme will be researched and reported on by Sheffield Hallam University. The learning from this programme will be rolled out nationally, regionally and locally. The development of Open Badge technology could potentially have far reaching city wide benefits.

6 **Recommendations**

For ArtForms Arts Development to enter into an External Funding agreement with:

Nesta Eol Digital R&D fund for the Arts - Deadline 22nd August

7 **Background documents**¹

7.1 Funding application

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.