

## Leeds Cultural Investment Programme – Activate funding proposals (1)

Date: 11 March 2024

Report of: Head of Culture Programmes

Report to: Chief Officer Culture and Economy

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

### Brief summary

Leeds City Council invests in the development and growth of the city's creative sector through a new cultural funding framework aligned with the Best City Ambition and Leeds' Culture Strategy (2017-2030). In 2022 a review of the Council's cultural funding programmes (arts@leeds and Leeds Inspired) was undertaken with Executive Board approval. In June 2023, Executive Board subsequently approved the creation of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme (LCIP) and agreed the progression toward a new funding period for activity in 2024/25 to 2026/27.

LCIP comprises 6 funding strands – Inspire, Grow: Project, Grow: Revenue, Thrive, Activate and Cultural Anchors – each offering different types and/or levels of funding. This refreshed framework for cultural grants was formally launched in October 2023 and opened for applications in November 2023.

Activate is a flexible funding strand which enables the Council to distribute external funding, commission projects, make strategic interventions and solicit applications that respond to a defined need or gap in provision.

This paper sets out the first outcomes of the Activate funding strand for Chief Officer Culture Economy consideration and approval.

### Recommendations

The Chief Officer Culture and Economy is recommended to:

- a) approve the funding proposals set out in this report; subject to each grant recipient meeting council requirements under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- b) note that the funding proposals in this report operate within approved Council budgets including the permanent reduction by £150,000 of the Council's net commitment to the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme annual budget.

## What is this report about?

- 1 This report sets out funding proposals for the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme (LCIP) to support a range of cultural activities and/or sector developments which provide opportunities for the creative sector whilst delivering measurable benefits for Leeds residents.

The report proposes the allocation of funding to 5 organisations (listed below) totalling £172,000 for the first round of the **LCIP – Activate** funding strand.

- 2 In 2022 a review of Leeds City Council’s cultural funding programmes (arts@leeds and Leeds Inspired) was undertaken with Executive Board approval. In June 2023, Executive Board subsequently approved the creation of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme (LCIP) and agreed new funding rounds for funding between 2024/25 to 2026/27.
- 3 The LCIP is, in effect, a framework comprising 6 possible investment routes for individuals and/or organisations each offering different types and/or levels of funding. Informed by creative sector and public consultation, this refreshed framework for cultural grants was formally launched in October 2023 and opened for applications in November 2023 for activity delivered within the period 2024/25 to 2025/26.

**Leeds Cultural Investment Programme** – a framework to enable culture and creativity, support the stability and growth of Leeds’ creative sector and to promote access to cultural and creative opportunities by Leeds residents. It’s six funding strands:

- **Inspire** – provides small grants for one off cultural projects and activities offering grants between £500 to £1,500 for individuals or organisations.
- **Grow: Project** – provides larger grants for one-off larger scale and artistically ambitious projects. Grants offered are between £5,000 to £15,000. This strand is open to individuals and organisations.
- **Grow: Revenue** – provides revenue grants to support organisations working year-round to deliver exceptional programmes of cultural activity for, by and with the people of Leeds. With funding between £5,000 and £15,000 per year, grants are available for up to two years. Grants at this level contribute to increasing the resilience of cultural organisations.
- **Thrive** – provides grants to support ongoing activities for more established cultural organisations delivering positive creative and social impacts through year-round programmes of work in the city. Organisations are typically (but not exclusively) Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations with many delivering local, national and international activities thus raising the cultural profile of Leeds. Grants range between £20,000 and £60,000 per year, over a two-year funding period.
- **Cultural Anchors** – includes the largest, building based, cultural organisations in the city, each attracting significant levels of funding to the city from a range of sources. Applications to the Cultural Anchors is by invitation only with these organisations operating as strategic partners with Leeds City Council to deliver a range of cultural and strategic benefits across the city and beyond. Cultural Anchors play a pivotal role in the contributions of the cultural sector to the Best City Ambition.

- **Activate** – is a flexible funding strand which enables the Council to distribute external funding, commission projects, make strategic interventions and solicit (invite) applications that respond to a defined need, gap in provision or demand for activity.

4 Again, informed by consultation, the LCIP is working to new sets of priorities and principles.

### Leeds Cultural Investment Programme – Priorities and Principles

#### Priorities

- **Culture** – To value culture as a golden thread that runs through the Leeds Best City Ambition and contributes to all three of its pillars for 2030: Health and Wellbeing; Inclusive Growth; Zero Carbon.
- **Engage** – To ensure everyone who calls Leeds home should have the opportunity to engage in high quality creative and cultural activity.
- **Communities** – To champion the creative diversity of our people and communities.
- **Culture and creativity** – To use culture and creativity to tell our stories to the world and to maintain our city (and region) as a great place to live, work and grow.

#### Principles – Leeds City Council will:

- **Ambition** – Encourage creative ambition and excellence
- **Public benefits** – Ensure City Council funds are used for public benefit and all funded activity will contribute to the Best City Ambition
- **Local impact** – Support individuals as well as organisations, small projects as well as large ones and activities with local impact alongside those with national and international reach
- **Diversity** – Reflect the growing diversity of the city and foster creativity in every community
- **Collaboration** – Encourage organisations to work mutually, with generosity and in collaboration and to support individual artists and freelancers to develop their practice and careers in Leeds
- **Grow investment** – Work together with the cultural sector to maximise opportunity and grow investment for culture and creativity in Leeds
- **Inclusive** – Make funding guidance clear, easy to understand, accessible and inclusive. Make monitoring consistent and proportionate to the level of funds awarded
- **Open** – Make decisions based on open applications, share data on decisions openly and use monitoring data gathered to inform future funding

Further details of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme are provided on the Culture Programmes site: <https://www.leedscultureprogrammes.org.uk/>

5 For this first round (deadline February 2024), 5 organisations were invited to apply for LCIP – Activate. All applications were subsequently assessed: for eligibility, capacity to deliver and achieve stated outcomes and contribution to the Best City Ambition.

### What impact will this proposal have?

- 6 A key impact of this funding scheme is a greater city-wide cultural engagement by Leeds' creative sector and residents aligned with the Best City Ambition and to enable the sector to build on the legacy of LEEDS 2023.
- 7 The council's cultural grants act as match funding to lever in additional money into the activity and the city. It is one of the only sources of arts-specific match funding available to artists and

organisations when applying to larger external funders such as Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Grants.

- 8 All funding recommendations will make a measurable contribution to the Best City Ambition with all organisations funded through the LCIP now required to complete an annual Cultural Impacts Survey.

#### Funding recommendations

The Arts Together network is for arts organisations, community partners, charities and freelance arts workers in Leeds. Through training, network meetings, online signposting and newsletters, Arts Together supports, sustains and nurtures community engagement through the arts, and the development of a broad and inclusive arts workforce. With 100 member groups, the network aims to increase inclusion, social cohesion and benefit wellbeing through culture. Leeds City Council investment will lever a ratio of 1:4 investment from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority over two years to 2026. Best practice will be shared with other West Yorkshire local authorities.

Leeds West Indian Carnival (LWIC) is the oldest and biggest Caribbean carnival street parade outside London, with a regular audience of 150,000 visitors across their festival. Their programme includes the Carnival Arts Summer School, Carnival on the Road, Prince, Princess, King and Queen costumes showcase, J'ouvert morning and a carnival parade of over 1,00 participants. The grant offers funding for activity in 2024.

The Black Music Festival, primarily aimed at the African Caribbean population, produced by Black Health Initiative forms part of the 'carnival weekend' alongside Leeds West Indian Carnival. With an emphasis on health and wellbeing, the event uses music as a transformative power to relieve stress, promote emotional wellness and create an inclusive atmosphere that fosters emotional and social connections. It also works, through its partnerships, to provide festival goers with a range of health and wellbeing advice, in particular for conditions that affect the local communities in Chapeltown and surrounding neighbourhoods. The grant offers funding for activity in 2024.

The Leeds St Patrick's Day festival is a free annual event celebrating Irish music, dance, and cultural heritage. Taking place on or before the 17th March, the festival honours the history of the Irish diaspora in the city and the positive impact they have had to the culture and infrastructure of Leeds. The parade consists of local pipe bands, floats from Leeds Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, Leeds Irish Health and Homes, JFK Gaelic football club, Joyce O'Donnell Dance School, primary schools and vintage farm machinery. With performances from local Irish dance schools, the Leeds Irish Choir, and local Irish bands playing both traditional and modern music. The grant offers funding for activity in 2024.

Sustainable Arts in Leeds (SAIL) is a members network of creative and cultural organisations in the West Yorkshire region that have come together to tackle the climate emergency. During the two year funding period SAIL will support the council to respond to the Eurocities Call to Action through the recruitment of new members, events, training courses, collecting environmental data and knowledge sharing through training and resources. Funding is proposed for 2024-26 and will also include activities to support Leeds' creative sector to amplify its contribution to the council's Zero Carbon ambition.

- 9 By funding these organisations, the council will be able to deliver significant benefits including:
  - Enabling more people across the city to engage with culture.

- Strengthening the sector relationships as part of the LEEDS 2023 legacy.
- Creating opportunities for artists and organisations that have not been previously funded to receive support.
- Allowing the Council to prepare for and respond to cultural growth
- Promote and maintain the city’s cultural profile – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally

10 Funding for these organisations would enable an estimated 14 new cultural activities, 17 performance or exhibition days, 42 learning/participation sessions for approximately 76,500 participants and an expected audience of 196,000 across the city. The funded projects collectively aim to support 336 days employment for freelance artists & creatives, 528 training opportunities and 120 volunteer opportunities.

**How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

- Health and Wellbeing                       Inclusive Growth                       Zero Carbon

11 Proposed funding aligns with the Team Leeds approach at the centre of the Best City Ambition. All applicants are required to demonstrate the impacts of their funded activities in relation to Best Council Ambition and the three pillars: inclusive growth, health and wellbeing, zero carbon.

**What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?                       Yes                       No

12 The Head of Culture Programmes led a review of Council cultural grants programmes commencing in October 2022 and was supported by an external consultant (funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund). As part of this review, which concluded in April 2023, extensive consultation was undertaken including creative sector and public consultation. Consultation with other Core Cities was also undertaken.

13 In June 2023 Executive Board gave approval for the design and launch of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme for activity in 2024/25 to 2026/27 and agreed to the LCIP being operated under the Council’s existing [sub-delegation scheme](#).

14 The Executive Member for Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education has been consulted on these funding proposals.

**What are the resource implications?**

15 Proposed grants are recommended in line with Executive Board approval (June 2023) to launch the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme (LCIP) and in accordance with budgets agreed by Full Council on 21 February 2024 which includes a permanent reduction of the Council’s net commitment to the LCIP by £150,000.

16 For Activate Round 1, it is proposed to grant fund the following individuals / organisations. The majority of the grant allocations will be sourced from the Culture Programmes allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Name of organisation	Grant award	Duration of grant	UKSPF budget allocation	LCC core budget allocation
Sustainable Arts in Leeds (SAIL)	£50,000	18 March 24 to 17 March 26	2023/24: £47,500	£2,500
Arts Together (network)	£10,000	18 March 24 to 17 March 25	2023/24: £10,000	£0
Leeds West Indian Carnival	£59,000	18 March 24 to 31 March 25	2023/24: £56,050	£2,950
Black Health Initiative	£43,000	18 March 24 to 31 March 25	2023/24: £40,850	£2,150
St. Patrick's Day Parade	£10,000	01 April 24 to 31 March 25	£0	£10,000

### What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 17 For purposes of transparency and to meet Council's value to 'spend money wisely', funding recommendations in this paper are made following each organisation making an application for funding. Each application was subsequently assessed by external sector specialists.
- 18 To help mitigate the risk of potential fraud and to ensure that organisations were financially viable to receive public funding, officers in the Culture Programmes team undertook credit checks to assess the financial stability of an organisation or individual.
- 19 Key risks to the Council are managed through the grant agreement and officer monitoring. Officers will attend funded activity, where possible.

### What are the legal implications?

- 20 The report is not subject to call in. All applicants receiving grants will be required to agree the UKSPF and Leeds City Council LCIP terms and conditions set out in the Funding Agreement.
- 21 All recipients will be required to produce and adhere to key policies, obtain relevant insurance, and complete annual monitoring of the scheme in line with UKSPF and Council requirements.
- 22 Where necessary, all awards will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 which came into force in January 2023.
- 23 Subsidies occur where public resources are used to provide financial assistance in a selective manner to one or more entities engaged in commercial activities in a way which benefits them over other enterprises engaged in the same or similar activities, and which is capable of distorting competition or investment.
- 24 Under the Subsidy Control Act 2022, subsidies are permitted to be given provided that either they comply with a number of principles, or they fall within certain exemptions. Otherwise, if a subsidy is provided it will be unlawful.

## Options, timescales and measuring success

### What other options were considered?

- 25 The only feasible alternative option would be not to proceed with the Activate strand. However, following Executive Board approval, Activate was announced as part of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme which launched in October 2023 and opened for applications in November 2023. Not progressing with this funding proposal presents key risks to the Council and applicants to the programme. This would deny the opportunity for individual artists and organisations to create work to share with audiences and participants across the city.

### How will success be measured?

26 All grant recipients will be required to complete relevant UKSPF monitoring of outcomes and outputs and will be required to complete the annual impact survey providing qualitative and quantitative data in relation to numbers of people engaging, geographical spread (including by ward), arts practice as well as social and economic data.

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

27 The timeline for implementation is:

<b>Indicative Date</b>	<b>Actions</b>
March 2024	Offer letters sent to successful applicants. Subsidy control assessment undertaken. Funding agreements issued. Scheduled grant payments commence.
March 2025	Except for SAIL all programmes for 23/25 completed.
June 2025	Annual cultural impact survey completed for all funded activities.
March 2027	SAIL funded programme completed.

28 For the LCIP programme, the Head of Culture Programmes will maintain oversight and accountability for effective implementation of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme.

29 Culture Programmes' Arts Development Manager will maintain responsibility for the day-to-day management and effective delivery of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme, ensuring that the schedule of actions is undertaken. Monitoring of grants and associated reporting will be assigned to designated officers within the culture service.

### **Appendices**

- None

### **Background papers**

- [Refreshing Leeds Cultural Investment Programme 27 July 2022](#)
- [Leeds Cultural Investment Programme 21 June 2023](#)