

Leeds Cultural Investment Programme – Grow: Project (R1)

Date: 6 March 2024

Report of: Head of Culture Programmes

Report to: Chief Officer Culture & 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.

The Grow: Project strand provides grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 for one-off, large scale and artistically ambitious projects to enable artists and arts organisations to deliver cultural activity in response to the Council's Best City Ambition pillars: Inclusive Growth, Health & Wellbeing and Zero Carbon.

This paper sets out proposed outcomes for the Grow: Project (Round 1) for Chief Officer Culture and Economy consideration and approval.

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer Culture and Economy is recommended to approve the funding proposals set out in this report with a total investment value of £110,320; subject to each grant recipient meeting council requirements under the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- b) The Chief Officer is asked to 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 made in FY24/25.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report sets out funding recommendations for the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme (LCIP) to support a range of largescale projects and events which will engage artists and local people in creative and cultural opportunities.

The report proposes the allocation of funding to 12 projects (listed below) totalling £110,320 for the first round of the **LCIP – Grow: Project** 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 Also informed by public and creative sector consultation, the LCIP is working to a new set 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 Grow: Project provides funding for arts projects, events and activity that Leeds residents of all ages can get involved in. For this first round (deadline January 2024), Grow: Project received 34 applications. The make-up of applications received were 18 artists and 16 organisations with the total ask for investment of £341,311.

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 enabling the sector to build on the legacy of LEEDS2023.

- 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.
- 9 By funding these projects 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
 - Promoting Leeds City Council as a cultural funder
- 10 All applications were assessed: for eligibility, quality of application and ability to deliver based on experience and budget provided, plus their response to the best city ambition. The assessment was completed by balancing the portfolio of projects in relation to the budget available, artform and targeted demographics.
- 11 For round one the proposal is to invest £110,320 in 12 projects of which 7 are for arts organisations and 5 are for individual artists with activity in 19 wards including Calverley and Farsley, Armley, and Temple Newsam. Covering a range of projects from a lantern parade, to a film supporting people dealing with grief, an international African arts festival and visual arts project working with the homeless.
- 12 The decision to propose these projects means that we can support an estimated 140 new cultural activities, 110 performance or exhibition days, 256 learning/participation sessions for approximately 21,150 participants and an expected audience of 116,008, across 19 wards. The funding will aim to support 735 days employment for freelance artists & creatives, 132 training opportunities and 306 volunteer opportunities.
- 13 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is a key consideration in the assessment process and in making funding recommendations for grants. An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Inclusion Screening Report was undertaken, and the outcome attached as an appendix to the Executive Board Report of the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme in June 2023. Delivery of the investment programme will continue to be informed by this assessment.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 14 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

15 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.

16 In June 2023 Executive Board gave approval for the design and launch 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](#).

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

What are the resource implications?

18 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.

19 Grow: Project Round 1: It is proposed to grant fund the following individuals / organisations

Name of organisation/ artist	Name of Project	Artform	Ward	Grant award
Grumpy's Leeds Ltd	Farsley Lantern Festival	Crafts	Calverley and Farsley	£10,000
Haitian Heritage Group UK CIC	Language, History & Culture Summer Camp	Combined Arts	Bramley and Stanningley	£10,000
Harewood House Trust	Make it Harewood	Crafts	Harewood	£10,000
Leeds Animation Workshop Ltd	A Special Kind of Grief	Film	Gipton and Harehills	£7,145
Louise Atkinson	If Walls Could Talk	Visual Arts	Calverley and Farsley	£10,200
National Poetry Centre	Rubbish Words	Literature / Poetry / Spoken Word	Little London and Woodhouse	£15,000
Pareesha Webster	Valentina's Swirl	Festival / Carnival	Killingbeck and Seacroft	£5,600
Paul Harker	Game Changer	Film	Gipton and Harehills	£9,000
Rachel Dean	May & the Mountain Witch	Dance	Chapel Allerton	£5,000
Retreat to Rebirth CIC	The Leeds International African Arts Festival 24	Combined Arts	Headingley and Hyde Park	£9,500
SJ Bradley	Uneasy Listening	Literature / Poetry / Spoken Word	Kirkstall	£9,625
St George's Crypt	Lazarus	Visual Arts	Little London and Woodhouse	£9,250

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

- 20 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 2 assessors.
- 21 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 reference checks to help determine the financial stability of an organisation or individual.
- 22 Key risks to the Council are managed through the grant agreement and officer monitoring. Officers will attend funded activity, where possible.
- 23 Grant awards will be split into 2 payments, 90% on receipt of the signed funding agreement and 10% will be held back until the completion of the project and the return of the project report. Incomplete activity, long delays or breaches to the terms and conditions of funding might result in the required repayment of grant. This risk is clearly specified within the grant agreements.
- 24 For this funding strand, each applicant is required to match fund with additional external funding or earned income, (25% for grants £10,000 or less & 50% for grant requests of £10,001 or more).

What are the legal implications?

- 25 The report is not subject to call in. All applicants receiving grants will be required to agree the Leeds City Council LCIP terms and conditions set out in the Funding Agreement.
- 26 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 Council requirements.
- 27 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.
- 28 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.
- 29 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?

- 30 The only feasible alternative option would be not to proceed with the Grow: Project strand. However, following Executive Board approval, Grow: Project 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?

31 All grant recipients will be required to complete an end of project report to enable them to receive their final payment 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?

32 The timeline for implementation is:

Indicative Date	Actions
March 2024	Conditional offer letters sent to successful applicants. Subsidy control assessment undertaken. Funding agreements issued. Grant agreements issued.
April 2024	Projects commence
March 2026	Projects completed no later than end March 2026

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

34 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](#)