

Leeds' Cultural Investment Programme

Date: 21 June 2023

Report of: Director of City Development

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Following the Executive Board decision in July 2022 to approve a review of Council investment in the city's independent cultural sector, an extensive audit and consultation process has taken place. This report summarises the headline findings and recommendations arising for the period April 2024 to March 2027.

The city's independent cultural sector is an important part of 'Team Leeds' and makes significant contributions to the Best City Ambition. It has become recognised as a vital component and catalyst of inclusive growth, the retelling of Leeds' story and the repositioning of the city as a successful global cultural destination.

These recommendations seek to best reposition the Council's existing investment in the independent cultural sector to maximise future opportunities and to connect its investment and impacts firmly to the Best City Ambition.

Recommendations

- a) To approve the redesignation of the current grant programmes (arts@leeds and Leeds Inspired) as the Leeds Cultural Investment Programme working to the shared aim, priorities and principles and implementation approach, as set out in this report.
- b) To approve a new three-year investment programme for 2024/25 to 2026/2027, based on the existing annual investment of £1,835,720 across the two present funds – arts@leeds and Leeds Inspired, noting that funding commitments will be subject to annual Council budget setting and therefore to potential change.
- c) Subject to recommendation b), agree to the Director of City Development using his existing delegated powers to approve grant funding decisions for these programmes, with awards of grants made in accordance with the proposed aim, principles and priorities and in support of the Best City Ambition.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report seeks to enable the Council to modernise its cultural investments and relationships with the independent cultural sector in the city in order to enable the sector to play a full role in Team Leeds and in the achievement of the Best City Ambition.
- 2 This report and recommendations have been developed through consultation with the Council's grant management teams and with the independent cultural sector. Aim, Priorities and Principles have been tested through public consultation in February and March. The proposed aim was approved (strongly agree and agree) by 67% of respondents. The proposed priorities were approved by 77% of respondents and the proposed principles were approved by 78%. There were a total of 434 respondents. We have also sought examples of current best practice through consultation with several other core cities. These benchmarks have informed this report and will assist in the detail of refreshing and repositioning the funds, terms and conditions and guidance which will follow approval of this report.
- 3 Leeds is a rapidly growing and diversifying city and culture has become recognised as a vital component and catalyst of inclusive growth, the retelling of Leeds' story and the repositioning of the city as a global cultural destination.
- 4 The independent cultural sector in the city is an important part of 'Team Leeds' and alongside the Council's own directly delivered cultural services, makes significant contributions to the Best City Ambition.
- 5 The sector delivers more than 850 jobs in the city and creates work for more than 2,300 freelance workers. The sector's activity also brings a host of benefits in health and wellbeing and community cohesion from the joyful intensity of the legendary Leeds West Indian Carnival to Made With Music's mini-gigs at Brudenell Social Club designed for families with members with a disability and winners of an Outstanding Attitude Award from the charity Attitude is Everything which celebrates excellence and innovation in live music accessibility.
- 6 However, the sector is facing unprecedented levels of challenge with traditional audiences slow to return post COVID, inflation impacting all operational and activity costs and the cost-of-living crisis restricting discretionary spending. Providing a clear three-year pathway for support and investment will be invaluable to help Leeds' cultural sector to navigate these challenges.
- 7 It is expected that LEEDS 2023 will 'let culture loose' across all areas of the city and that this will stimulate increased demand for cultural activity, participation opportunities and subsequently, for investment.
- 8 Now is the right time for the Council to refresh how it invests in the independent cultural sector to ensure the programmes are fit for future purpose, to maximise these opportunities and to connect its investment and impacts firmly to the Best City Ambition.
- 9 The two existing programmes; arts@leeds (which provides multi-annual, ¹revenue funding to organisations) and Leeds Inspired (which provides small and large project grants for one-off and non-recurrent activity), have been continuously improved and iterated by the grant management teams leading them. But there has been no strategic review of the programmes since they were established in their current form following a report to Executive Board in July 2011. At 2022/23 levels, the current Council investment through both funds is as follows:

¹ Revenue funding can be used to pay for cultural events, performances, and participatory activities. Funds can also be used to contribute to the running costs of an organisation delivering these activities.

Funding programme/strand	Budget
arts@leeds – Investment, Development and Engagement strands	£1,616,720
Leeds Inspired – Main and Small grants	£219,000
Total investment	£1,835,720

- 10 This Council investment leverages significant national investment into Leeds and its communities through successful efforts of the independent sector. Based on 2020/21 data, Arts Council England's total investment in Leeds (revenue funding of National Portfolio Organisations and Project Grants) was £21,202,878. This is an additional national investment in the cultural life and wellbeing of the city of £26.11 per capita.
- 11 Looking forward to the period covered by these recommendations, Leeds has continued to be successful and Arts Council National Portfolio Investment for the period 2023-2026 is set to increase by £7,746,232 | 34%. This investment includes the creation of new National Portfolio Organisations including Transform Festival and The Performance Ensemble – both of which have been enabled through arts@leeds and Leeds Inspired grants support.
- 12 To protect these investments in our city and to encourage future growth of the Leeds' independent sector and the civic benefits it brings, it is recommended that the Council maintain its current level of investment in its independent sector through a refreshed Cultural Investment Programme for the next three years (2024/25 to 2026/27) at a standstill level of funding of £1,835,720 per year. This proposed commitment will be subject to annual Council budget setting and therefore to potential change.
- 13 Although standstill funding creates significant challenges, it is clear that all sector consultees recognise the pressures faced by the Council. Refreshing the fund's priorities and principles through this consultative process, does provide a platform to revisit and reconsider the traditional distribution of existing funds.

The aim priorities and principles and implementation approach for a refreshed Leeds Cultural Investment Programme.

- 14 Through the refreshed Leeds Cultural Investment Programme we will continue to offer a range of support including grants to support one-off projects as well as for longer programmes and core running costs.
- 15 Project grants and Revenue grants perform very different and important functions and it is clear that both are valued by the diversity of the sector.
- Revenue grants provide stability and certainty. They enable the Council to work strategically with cultural organisations and to leverage other significant funding into the city. The Council's investment in culture also positions the Council well with key national funders, e.g. Arts Council England.
 - Project grants, especially those in the format of the Leeds Inspired rolling small grants, are agile, responsive to short term opportunity and adaptive to fast changing social and environmental contexts (for example during COVID-19). These smaller funds can also enable the Council to offer support to individuals as well as organisations. This can often provide a vital first step for new talent and retaining talent – an important consideration for the city and its university partners with levels of students studying cultural and creative courses far higher than national averages.
- 16 Most core cities, consulted through this process, continue to offer both types of funding (Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol and Glasgow). In some cases, after retreating to prioritise revenue funds during periods of funding constraints, cities are now re-establishing project funds to extend the reach and diversity of their city offer (Newcastle).

- 17 Whilst continuing to offer both types of support in future it is important to note that there are challenges in the format of current funds. Award levels for most arts@leeds clients are relatively low (£5,000 per year) and the lack of flexibility in the overall amount of funding available discourages growth and ambition.
- 18 Cities like Bristol and Belfast are already innovating in this space and have made some funding flexible so organisations can apply for a project grant (for specific, time limited activity) or for a revenue grant over a fixed time period. This means an organisation, in consultation with its council, can prioritise its own needs strategically, seeking support for a its next one-off project or seeking support to grow capacity as its own journey demands and for maximum benefit to the city. The detail of Leeds' future grant levels and types will be developed at the next stage of this review while working within the current budget envelope.
- 19 While the refreshed programme will continue to offer different types of funding to ensure fitness for purpose, all funds will operate under a common set of priorities and principles for the three years from April 2024 – March 2027.
- 20 The Council will use these priorities and principles in its assessment and decision-making process about the funding it grants. These principles and priorities have been developed through consultation with the independent sector. They seek to provide clarity about why the Council invests and what it seeks to achieve through its investment in regard to delivery of the Best City Ambition.
- 21 They also reflect the challenges posed by the sector to the Council during consultation. These were to improve and simplify process, transparency and equity in investments, to ensure the benefits of the funding are felt across the whole city, to value small and large organisations and to use the investment proactively to champion the people, the creativity and the stories of Leeds. These principles and priorities have been further shaped through a public consultation exercise in February and March 2023.

22 Priorities

1. Culture is a golden thread that runs through the Leeds Best City Ambition and contributes to all three of its aims for 2030.
 - Health and Wellbeing – Leeds will be a healthy and caring city for everyone: where those who are most likely to experience poverty improve their mental and physical health the fastest, people are living healthy lives for longer, and are supported to thrive from early years to later life.
 - Inclusive Growth – Leeds will have an economy that works for everyone, where we work to tackle poverty and ensure that the benefits of economic growth are distributed fairly across the city, creating opportunities for all.
 - Zero Carbon – Leeds will have made rapid progress towards carbon neutrality, reducing our impact on the planet and doing so in a fair way which improves standards of living in all the city's communities.
2. Everyone who calls Leeds home should have the opportunity to engage in high quality creative and cultural activity
3. Champion the creative diversity of our people and communities
4. Use culture and creativity to tell our stories to the world and to keep our city a great place to live, work and grow

23 Principles

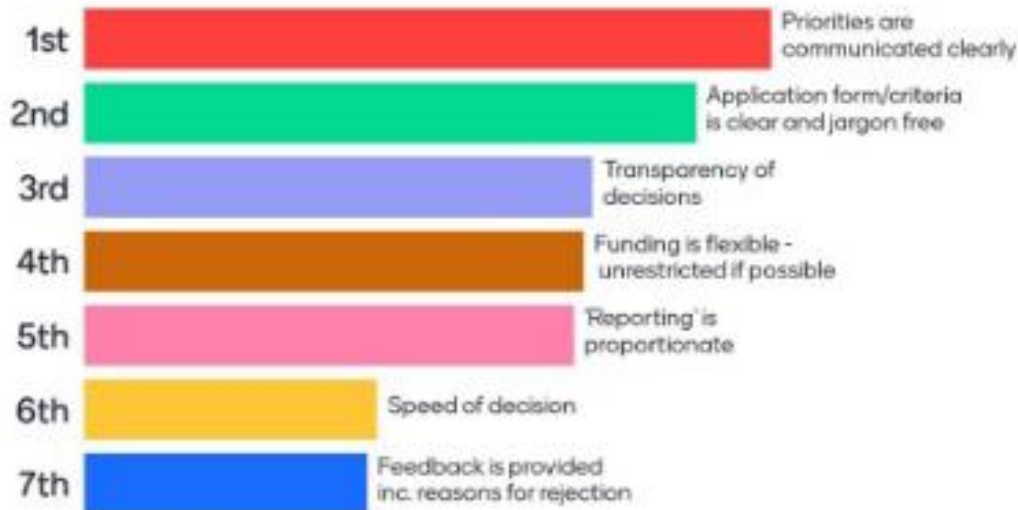
1. City Council funds are for public benefit and all funded activity will contribute to the Best City Ambition
2. Support individuals as well as organisations, small projects as well as large ones and

- activities with local impact alongside those with national and international reach
3. Encourage creative ambition and excellence
 4. Reflect the growing diversity of the city and foster creativity in every community
 5. 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
 6. Work together with the independent cultural sector to maximise opportunity and grow investment for culture and creativity in Leeds
 7. Funding guidance will be clear, easy to understand, accessible and inclusive and monitoring will be consistent and proportionate to the level of funds awarded
 8. Make decisions based on open applications, share data on decisions openly and use monitoring data gathered to inform future funding

Approach to Implementation

- 24 The current programmes have run in parallel to each other for a decade and whilst there has been some sharing between the teams, they have stayed formally apart until April 2021 and the establishment of the Culture Programmes service.
- 25 All Council cultural grants and data collection and monitoring will be brought under one umbrella as 'Leeds City Council Cultural Investment Programme' with sector and public facing branding to be developed at the next stage.
- 26 Bringing the funds together administratively, will enable them to pool knowledge and to join up data gathering and reporting in a consistent and more dynamic fashion. This will enable the analysis of the impact of future investment to be coordinated and potentially seen through the city's Social Progress Index. The Council's planned move to a Dynamic CRM system in 2023 will further this understanding and potentially lead to improved reporting and increased efficiency.
- 27 Above all, a more streamlined Cultural Investment Programme will significantly improve the user journey, better enabling applicants to navigate the funding programmes available and make affirmative decisions about the most suitable funding programme for them.
- 28 Both grant management teams have developed exceptional knowledge of the city's cultural sector over many years. The levels of approval for their work from the sector are extremely high with ratings for service over 80% in survey. However both teams identify concerns about the current volume of work created by growing demand, and their capacity to enhance their relationships with the sector further. These relationships sit at the heart of good grant-making. Close contact with funded clients is an invaluable resource to help organisations to develop and also a vital means for Council to monitor risk.

Enabling the teams to work together across the refreshed programme will maximise the talent and experience of the existing grants management teams.
- 29 In shaping the refreshed programmes we will also make use of the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) funding best practice principles to design and manage the refreshed programme as effectively as possible and ensure a smooth, accessible and holistic relationship between Council and sector.
- 30 IVAR is UK research charity which has worked through extensive consultation to develop a set of common-sense guidelines for better grant making and reporting. Their guidance is being adopted by many grant making trusts and now, increasingly by local authorities, including core cities Manchester and Bristol. The sector survey conducted asked beneficiaries to rank the IVAR principles in order of importance to them.



This prioritisation and the IVAR guidance will be used to shape the redesign of Leeds grants processes, funding criteria, application and monitoring forms in the stages of work following this Executive Board report.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 31 Adoption of the new principles and priorities and confirmation of Council support through to 2027 will lead to an improved, modernised and more fit for purpose suite of investment programmes, built on the best qualities of the existing ones, but providing greater clarity and support for applicants, more closely linked to the Best City Ambition, easier to use and monitor and made more accessible to a more diverse range of people.
- 32 This will enable delivery of cultural activity in every district and ward of the city and ensure Leeds citizens continue to enjoy a cultural offer of local, national and international significance, from the work of Space 2 in Gipton to that of Opera North at the Grand Theatre.
- 33 The independent cultural sector provides services to a wide range of Leeds communities. The sector is predominantly made up of charitable organisations and social enterprises which traditionally focus activity, and the benefit of council investment, on the most deprived areas of the city. Pre-COVID, 65% of Council supported activity took place in the 10 most deprived wards in the city. For example:

The 'Highrise Project' by artist Louise Atkinson worked with communities in and around high-rise flats in Burmantofts and New Wortley to undertake photography and art workshops resulting in the creation of Zines about the area. The project was also supported by the local area housing panels. Highrise Project has now secured a permanent base in Armley and continues to provide arts activity and support for people in the local community.

RJC Dance recently created a short film series, the Black Cultural Exchange Project, that shone a light on Black creatives working in arts and culture in Leeds. The films were shared weekly during Black History Month and the project was featured on ITV Calendar News.

At Yorkshire Dance, choreographer Hannah Robertshaw worked with 6 professional dancers to create a new dance work exploring life after retirement. 203 older people from 10 groups across the city took part in the project and the piece was performed as a flash mob at White Rose Shopping Centre.

Meanwhile, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory at Leeds Playhouse has been the company's most successful ever show, playing to more than 58,000 people in Leeds, drawn from all walks of life and corners of the city. The production is now taking Leeds' name around the UK on tour for 43 weeks to 14 venues and more than 475,000 people.

The new priorities and principles will embed this further into our ways of working and new and improved data collection and monitoring will enable the council and the sector to see the impact made clearly.

34 Improving and measuring equality and diversity impact is a priority for the refreshed grant programmes and will be reflected in the new programme criteria and monitoring data.

The existing programmes have historically tracked the number of sessions targeted specifically at the following groups:

- Ethnically diverse people/communities
- Men
- Women
- Sessions targeted at Non-Binary People
- Disabled people
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people
- Older people (over 55)
- Younger people (under 25)
- Religious or Belief Communities
- Carers
- People living with mental health problems
- Pupils in schools
- People in schools (teachers, governors, support staff etc)
- People with challenging lives

These categories will be reviewed with the sector and council colleagues to ensure they are relevant and appropriate. They will also be cross referenced to Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Social Progress Index (SPI) data categories and also to those commonly used by Arts Council England. Data categories are not consistent across all current programmes but will be made so in the refresh.

35 The current investment programmes do not track the diversity of workforce and leadership in the sector and we will seek to make this a feature of the refreshed programme to show the growing diversity in the sector and also to monitor that applications are being received from a diverse cross section of the city. This data, including tracking of unsuccessful grant applicants, will also inform future interventions to encourage applications from underrepresented communities.

36 Overall, it is intended that changes to the grant programme and criteria, linked to the Best City Ambition, will lead to a more diverse sector and more diverse audiences and participants. A new research collaboration between the Culture Programmes team and the national Centre for Cultural Value, and funded by Research England, will assist in the design of new monitoring, evaluation and data capture systems.

An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) screening has been undertaken and is attached as an appendix to this report

- 37 Application of the IVAR principles will provide a better service and better provision for the sector, more closely fitted to their contemporary needs and more accessible.
- 38 Executive Board's commitment of support over three years will enable the independent sector to plan and act with assurance and certainty. It will enable the 25 Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations in the city to solidify their three-year funding offers and to follow through on plans for sustainability.
- 39 A refreshed and reprofiled programme will contribute to the building of Leeds' reputation and brand.
- 40 Sector data, generated through the current arts@leeds grants programme, suggests that this investment will lead to more than 4 million cultural engagement opportunities delivered in Leeds each year including 90,000 people taking part as active participants.
- 41 Investment will protect more than 850 cultural and creative industries jobs in the city and provide work for a further 2,300 freelance artists and craftspeople each year.
- 42 Investment will also leverage significant national investment into Leeds communities. £26.11 per capita of national investment from Arts Council England in 2020/21.
- 43 Many national schemes such as National Lottery programmes and trust and foundations require an element of match funding and Leeds City Council investment will be key to assisting stronger applications. The Council's investment being able to be 'first in' is also an important assist to the independent sector to grow overall investment into the city through Arts Council England and others.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 44 These changes will enable the investment and the sector to better address all three pillars. Linking future Council investment firmly to delivery of the Best City Ambition is at the heart of the proposed refresh. In consultation for the new principles and priorities, sector consultees were very concerned about their civic role and responsibility as part of Team Leeds.

"Everyone in Leeds coming together to play their part is how we will achieve our ambitions. We want to build Team Leeds – made up of the people who live or work here, and those who champion the city nationally and internationally."

Team Leeds is about supporting one another to make Leeds the best it can be. It is about sharing ideas and learning, working in genuine partnership, being ambitious about our collective social and environmental impact, and organisations sharing their resources and assets as we work towards common goals."

Several remarked how much they identified with the Best City Ambition and its inclusive values: *"At its heart is our mission to tackle poverty and inequality and improve quality of life for everyone who calls Leeds home"*

- 45 We asked current beneficiaries of the existing grant programmes to assess how much they feel their current work contributes to help address the "big challenges" facing Leeds identified in the Best City Ambition. From the brief descriptors provided it is clear that the sector feels it can deliver on all of these challenges. Confidence levels are highest in health and wellbeing and thriving communities. Climate change is the challenge where the sector feels least confident of its contribution at present.

	arts@leeds			Leeds Inspired		
	A lot	A little	Not at all	A lot	A little	Not at all
Starting Well Closing educational attainment gaps	39%	61%	-	40%	52%	8%
Living Well Health and Wellbeing	68%	24%	8%	53%	42%	5%
Living Well Thriving Communities	69%	27%	4%	76%	16%	8%
Living Well Climate Change	15%	77%	8%	21%	63%	16%
Working Well Inclusive Growth	48%	40%	12%	55%	31%	13%
Ageing Well Enable our aging population to thrive	50%	31%	19%	50%	40%	10%

46 Sector consultees were also keen that future applicants should be expected to address all three pillars. The contribution will vary depending on the nature of an applicant and the project concerned, but they felt strongly that even an individual artist should be able to articulate their own care for the environment within their practice, whilst it would be reasonable to expect a large institution to play a more impactful role in reducing emissions and also in supporting others and leading public opinion.

47 This will be nuanced in the guidance developed for the new programmes and made proportionate to both the amount of funding and the capacity of the beneficiary. We will also create specialist guidance on climate change in partnership with SAIL (Sustainable Arts In Leeds) for applicants to the refreshed programmes.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: All		
Have ward members been consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

48 This report has been created through consultation with the grants teams, analysis of available data on the programmes, benchmarked against core cities.

49 Through the process the cultural lead officers at Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, and Sheffield city councils, the CEO at Glasgow Life and the Northeast Community Foundation, who manages Newcastle City Council's cultural investment fund on behalf of the city, were consulted.

50 An online survey of Leeds cultural sector targeting 44 arts@leeds and 199 Leeds Inspired awardees was conducted. Officers also delivered three focus group sessions with a sector advisory group which included individual artists as well as the leads of small, medium and large cultural organisations in the city. This mixed city centre and outer area operations and included a diversity of heritages and perspectives.

51 As a matter of good practice officers also carried out public consultation on the proposed aim, priorities and principles of the refreshed programmes.

The online survey was created and published by officers using the Smart Survey platform. The survey was distributed via the Leeds City Council website, Leeds Citizens' Panel, city social media, by targeted email and through the Culture Programmes newsletter. In total 434 responses were received with a significant majority in favour of the proposed aim, priorities and principles.

Aim	
Strongly Agree	18%
Agree	49%
Neither / Nor	22%
Disagree	7%
Strongly Disagree	4%
Base 434 – all respondents	

Principles	
Strongly Agree	28%
Agree	50%
Neither / Nor	13%
Disagree	6%
Strongly Disagree	3%
Base 434 – all respondents	

Priorities	
Strongly Agree	32%
Agree	45%
Neither / Nor	10%
Disagree	9%
Strongly Disagree	4%
Base 434 – all respondents	

What are the resource implications?

52 The key resource implication is the proposed commitment by Executive Board to a new three-year investment programme for 2024 – 2027 at £1,835,720 per year across the whole Cultural Investment Programme. This is based on current (2023/24) investment levels and will be subject to annual Council budget setting and therefore to potential change.

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

53 There are a few risks associated with these recommendations, however they can be managed.

54 Revenue funded clients may assume that funds are guaranteed for three years when in reality each year of funding will be subject to annual council budget setting and approval. This will be made clear in all materials and contractual documents about the cultural investment programme.

55 Growing demand across the city will place further strain on the limited funds available. Refreshing the programmes and award criteria in light of new priorities and principles agreed through consultation provides an opportunity to reset expectations around funding and funding levels.

56 In practical terms there is a risk to delivery of the refreshed programmes in that the existing grant management teams are fully occupied but this is mitigated by the provision of consultant support funded through UKSPF and also through externally funded partnerships with University of Leeds and Centre for Cultural Value.

57 There are no Privacy Impact Risks at this stage, although the refreshed programmes and the monitoring and data collection will be subject to a privacy impact assessment.

What are the legal implications?

- 58 This is a Key Decision as the overall value of this decision is more than £500,000 and as such it is subject to call in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.
- 59 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (the general powers of competence) gives the Council the power to provide the grants outlined in this report and to enter into the necessary grant agreements with the recipients. The Director of City Development has delegated authority to enter into these arrangements.
- 60 All future grant awardees will be required to adhere to Leeds City Council's terms and conditions set out in a grant funding agreement. There should be a grant funding agreement for each grant.
- 61 All recipients of grants 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 to ensure delivery of the projects in line with the application and in the event of non-delivery to protect the Council's position.
- 62 All grant awards will be made in accordance with the provisions of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 which came into force in January 2023.
- 63 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.
- 64 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.
- 65 All prospective recipients of a grant under the proposed Leeds Cultural Investment Programme will be required to submit a grant application, and before any grant is awarded the respective application will be assessed as to whether it complies with the provisions of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- 66 The rules relating to the provision of Minimal Financial Assistance exemption allow an entity to receive subsidies up to a total value of £315,000 within a rolling three-year period but are subject to the awarding authority checking the amount of any subsidies that the intended recipient has already received under the rules in the previous three years and that they are eligible to receive further subsidies. In the event they are not entitled to receive further subsidies under this exemption then a full assessment of the proposed grant will be completed.
- 67 It is therefore proposed that where a grant is assessed as a subsidy it should, where possible, be given under the rules relating to the provision of Minimal Financial Assistance exemption, but that otherwise it should only be given where it is compliant with the principles of the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
- 68 It should also be noted that the Subsidy Control Act 2022 imposes transparency reporting requirements on public authorities providing subsidies. Where a grant under the proposed Cultural Investment Programme is a subsidy covered by the Minimal Financial Assistance exemption, details of the grants will only need to be published on the Government's subsidy control database if their value is over £100,000. For any grant which is a subsidy but is not covered by the Minimal Financial Assistance rules then the grant details will have to be

published on the subsidy control database irrespective of the grant amount. There is no requirement to publish details of any grant which is assessed as not being a subsidy.

69 In addition to subsidy control, the Council also has a duty to conduct the administration of public funds with reasonable skill, care and caution and with due regard to the interests of the Council Tax and Business Rates payers of Leeds. All necessary due diligence is being and will be carried out in relation to the proposals outlined in this report so as to ensure the fiduciary duties of the Council are complied with. Furthermore, all grants must be given by the Council in strict compliance with the Council’s Financial Regulations. The grants will not be subject to the Council’s Contracts Procedure Rules or the Public Regulations 2015, but good practice and transparency will be observed throughout.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

70 Do nothing.

This would leave the Council with its existing and well thought of programmes but would deny the opportunity to better address the needs of the sector, to maximise the opportunity of the grant management teams working in new ways and to establish new and robust data capture systems to measure the impact of council investment.

71 Reduction in funding available.

This would destabilise the sector at a critical moment, potentially push some valued city organisations into closure, impact on jobs and undermine the credibility and regeneration benefits of the investment made in LEEDS 2023.

72 Increase in funding available

This would be a powerful statement of intent by the Council and would set Leeds apart from its core city peers. It would galvanise the independent sector, allow the refreshed programme to address fundamental issues of low investment and perceived inequality of investment currently and would provide capacity to diversify the range of Council cultural partners. The Council’s budget challenges make this option untenable in the current climate.

How will success be measured?

73 Success will be measured in the short term by the successful implementation of redesigned programmes on time during 2023 and as detailed below.

74 Continuing high levels of positive independent sector feedback measured through ongoing consultation and testing and the further use of the Sector Advisory Group who supported this report, to support development of new criteria, forms and monitoring processes.

75 Staff team feedback and increased efficiencies and effectiveness in management of the grant programmes and relationships with the sector.

April 2023	Approval of recommendations by Executive Board
April – June 2023	Design of funding programmes. Development of detailed criteria and funding thresholds for each programme Development of public facing branding for the refreshed investment programme

April – July 2023	Collaboration with University of Leeds and the Centre for Cultural Value – updating grant monitoring data
July – October 2023	Preparation of new digital application and monitoring formats Translation of grants guidance into a range of accessible formats including audio and video versions Launch of refreshed programmes
September – December 2023	Grants access – delivery of application advice and support
December 2023	Application deadlines and assessment
January 2024	Notification to applicants subject to council budget approval
February 2024	2024/2025 Council budget approval

76 Successful application and assessment processes measured through repeat surveys of the sector.

77 Increased diversity and reach by the investment funds measured through improved data collection and robust reporting of impacts of investment in relation to the Best City Ambition.

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

78 Head of Culture Programmes will be responsible for implementation. The indicative timeline for a refreshed Cultural Investment Programme is:

Appendices

Appendix – Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) screening

Background papers

None.

Related Documents

- [Executive Board Report, July 2022 – Refreshing Leeds’ Cultural Investment Programme](#)
- [Executive Board Report, July 2011 – 3 Year Grant Funding for Culture](#)