

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Community Services Cabinet Committee

Date: 7 February 2019

Reporting officer: Assistant Director (Communities)

Subject: Cultural Development Fund – Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) Funding

Purpose and summary of report:

To report the successful bid for Cultural Development Funding to deliver the ambition of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor.

Recommendations:

1. That the Committee notes the contents of this report and comments on the opportunities this gives to develop the cultural sector in Gravesham.

1. Cultural Development Fund

- 1.1 £4.3 million funding has been awarded from the Cultural Development Fund towards the delivery of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor with total project value of £6.7m.
- 1.2 The Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) partnership is a consortium involving the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Kent and Essex County Councils, 11 local authority areas represented by Thames Gateway Kent Partnership and Opportunity South Essex, South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN), the Greater London Authority, Royal Docks and 7 East London boroughs, working in partnership with higher and further education institutions and cultural organisations. The Cultural Development Fund bid specifically brings the University of Kent, University of Essex, and cultural organisations Metal and Whitstable Biennale into the partnership.
- 1.3 The University of Kent will take a lead on this Fund and will receive £4.3m to work with partners in Essex and Kent to develop the Thames Estuary Production Corridor as Europe's largest creative corridor – *"a world leader for the creative and cultural industries"*.
- 1.4 Through a programme of activity that develops critical cultural infrastructure, research and development and innovation, training and capacity building for local businesses and commissions of new cultural product, the project will develop the Thames Estuary's identity and productivity as a creative cluster connected to London, UK and global markets.

- 1.5 The Thames Estuary Production Corridor report identifies that there is significant potential for growth: 45000 creative industry Estuary residents work elsewhere. In some areas, over 17,000 of the Estuary's creative and cultural workforce are exported each day. There are circa 4,000 broad creative and cultural supply chain companies (fabrication, post production, carpentry) which now employ an estimated 31,000, supporting delivery of content in London, UK and globally. In the last five years freelance creative and cultural activity has grown by 20%.
- 1.6 The Cultural Development Fund will help deliver specific projects, as follows:
- Estuary 2020: expansion of this month-long international arts festival to include new commissions in locations and communities across the Thames Estuary
 - Corridor Commissions: focused on digital innovation, bringing together internationally renowned and creative technologists to 'waymark' visitors along the Thames
 - Re:Generation 2030: Creative Apprenticeship scheme, creating job opportunities for 60 young people from the Estuary's disadvantaged areas to work
 - Estuary Works: New creative workspaces for creative and digital businesses in creative clusters like Margate, Southend and Chatham Dockyard.
 - Estuary Producers: Producer 'residencies' in locations across the Estuary, creating new cultural experiences in high streets and parks, on watersides and other venues
 - Creative Labs: bringing together creatives, technologists and academics to explore how culture can address key issues such as mental health, ageing and town planning

2. Opportunities for Gravesham

- 2.1 Gravesham is at the heart of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor and benefits from good connectivity to London, Kent and continental Europe. It is also at a key and strengthening axis between the north and south of the Estuary and the Gateway to the Port of London.
- 2.2 Further discussions will take place in respect of the detail of delivery, but it would appear that opportunities will exist for Gravesham to benefit from this funding in relation to the following:
- Estuary 2020 – Gravesham participated in Estuary 2016, which was led by Metal in association with other partners including Whitstable Biennale, and with the participation of LV21 on this side of the water and a concentration of activity and installations at the Tilbury Cruise Terminal. It is likely that Gravesham will be able to develop its role for 2020 and strengthen partnership working across the water at this point.
 - Developing the council's working with creative organisations and making the case for funding to support local cultural commissions.

- Looking for help from the TEPC to develop the area's identity through culture, recognising the strength of the Gravesham's diversity and heritage.
 - Aim to develop additional cultural work and production spaces.
 - Support the development of creative skills, jobs and apprenticeships, especially within the creative and digital sector in Gravesham.
- 2.3 Creative industry¹ enterprises make up 8.1% of businesses (310 businesses) in Gravesham and there has been 41% growth over the last 5 years (2013-2018). This was the second highest rate of growth for a district across the County and is a higher rate of growth than growth in Kent and Great Britain which has been around 30% over the same period (Source: UK Business Counts). 98% of these are micro businesses (<10 employees), which is not unusual given the contribution that micro businesses make to employment within the local economy.
- 2.4 Officers are working to develop a cultural strategy for Gravesham and the delivery of the Thames Estuary Production Corridor will both inform and help to bring additional momentum behind its delivery.

3. Creative People & Places

- 3.1 Arts Council England has announced a further round of funding for a programme called Creative People and Places. Its objective is to invest in communities where there are lower levels of engagement in arts and culture. Applications for this funding are to be led by local consortia, not including local authorities, and the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation has indicated its wish to lead a bid for this area focused on the Ebbsfleet Valley area and neighbouring communities.
- 3.2 Workshops are currently taking place with local arts organisations and community groups locally with the intent of confirming consortia members and submitting a bid by 21 March 2019.
- 3.3 If successful, this bid will be looking to increase engagement in culture locally and this will complement the activity to be delivered through the Thames Estuary Production Corridor.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.1 Thames Estuary Production Corridor – A Framework for Kent and greater Essex, Emma Wilcox Associates, July 2018
 Thames Estuary Production Corridor – A Framework for Kent and greater Essex, Emma Wilcox Associates, July 2018.
 This can be accessed at Thames Gateway Production Corridor vision <https://www.southeastlep.com/government-awards-4-3m-to-develop-the-thames-estuary-production-corridor-putting-the-creative-industries-at-the-heart-of-the-estuaries-industrial-strategy/>

Anyone wishing to inspect background papers should, in the first place, be directed to Committee & Electoral Services who will make the necessary arrangements.

¹ Advertising & Marketing, Architecture, Crafts, Design, product, graphic & fashion design, Film, TV, video, radio & photography, IT, software & computer services, Publishing, Museums, Galleries & libraries, Music, performing & visual arts.

IMPLICATIONS

APPENDIX 1

Legal	No direct implications at this stage.
Finance and Value for Money	No direct implications from the Cultural Development Fund to the council at this stage. The council has been asked to contribute to the bid developmen of the Creative People and Places Fund to the sum of £3,000. This has been found from arts development budgets.
Risk Assessment	No direct implications at this stage.
Equality Impact Assessment	Screening for Equality Impacts
	Question
	a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No
	b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. Yes as the aim of this funding will be to invoplve all communities in the dleivery of projects.
Corporate Plan	Objective 2: Stronger Gravesham
Crime and Disorder	No direct implications at this stage.
Digital and website implications	No direct implications at this stage.
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	No direct implications at this stage.