

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

### Gravesham Borough Council

**Report to:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 30 September 2024  
**Reporting officer:** Assistant Director (interim), Community Support  
Cultural Manager  
**Subject:** Arts Council England Place Partnership Funding Bid

**Purpose and summary of report:**

To provide Cabinet with details of the Arts Council England’s Place Partnership funding opportunity and to seek approval to submit a full application based on the proposals set out in this report.

**Recommendations:**

For Cabinet to:

1. Give approval to submit a funding bid application for £382,500 to Arts Council England to develop a Place Partnership project as set out in this report and subject to:
  - a. The Portfolio Cabinet Member taking the position of Chair of the Cultural Compact
  - b. Gravesham Borough Council branding to continue to be used
  - c. The Arts & Culture team continuing to deliver as they currently do
  
2. Approve match funding of £67,500 over the 4 years of the project (£16,875 per annum) from existing budgets

<b>Key Implications:</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Legal</b>	<p>This report relates to the submission of an application for funding from Arts Council England to support the development of a Place Partnership project.</p> <p>If the application is successful, grant funding agreements will be required by ACE and will set out the conditions and monitoring of the spend of grant funding in line with the funding application submission.</p> <p>Similarly formal agreements will be developed with consortium members and the Place Partnership will be included in the Council’s Register of Partnerships</p>

	Due to the value of the funding application being proposed, Cabinet approval is required prior to bid submission as per the Council's Constitution, Annex 2: Procedural Rules; Section 6.2
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	<p>The proposed application will be for a project total of £450,000 across 4 years. This sum is made up from £67,500 from existing Arts &amp; Culture Budget: Code G260/34272 (match funding) at £16,875 pa, plus £382,500 grant funding from Arts Council England.</p> <p>Additional funding will be sourced by other members of the partnership throughout the project duration to further develop and enhance the project and outcomes.</p>
<b>Balancing the Budget</b>	<p>a. Does the report form part of the balancing the budget delivery plan? No</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, when will the projected savings be recognised in the budget? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question a, should it form part of the plan? No</p>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	<p>This report relates to Corporate Objective 2 - #One Community Strong Community. Cultural Hub: realise the potential within Gravesham's visitor economy through the promotion and development of our creative arts, cultural and heritage offer</p>
<b>Climate Change</b>	There are no direct implications

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Arts Council England (ACE) are the national development agency for creativity and culture, and invest public funds from Government and the National Lottery to help support the sector and deliver against their strategy – Let's Create.
- 1.2 Place Partnership funding is available for strategic place-based interventions that:
- are intended to make a long-term difference to the cultural and/or creative life of the local community;
  - make clear step changes in provision in that place;
  - are informed by robust needs analysis and responds to relevant local strategies;
  - is led by a consortium of partners we are relevant to delivering the project.
- 1.3 Grant funding for Place Partnerships typically range from £100,000 up to £1m
- 1.4 Gravesham's creative economy is large and diverse - Gravesham is home to over 400 creative businesses, many micro and many small, but growing and

enthusiastic about Gravesham. However, the Council cannot support those existing businesses, or new ones that we attract into the Borough, alone. Gravesham needs a stronger, community-led approach that can achieve wider reach across all creative sub-sectors.

- 1.5 The Council also needs to develop its' brand proposition and offer, as both a place to enjoy arts and culture, and somewhere for creative businesses to call home. Work is already underway to reposition Gravesend as a growing destination that aims to double its share of Kent visitor numbers, but there is lack of funding and expertise to support an ongoing programme of campaign-based activity to establish Gravesham as a leading destination for arts and culture in Kent.
- 1.6 The sector also relies heavily on short-term grant funding and does not have the level of wrap around support to enable businesses (and individuals) to sustain and grow.
- 1.7 Whilst Gravesham Borough Council has developed and funds a programme of larger cultural events, including the Light Festival and Fringe Festival, these are reliant on annual funding applications to Arts Council England (to supplement existing budgets); for which there is no guarantee funding will be achieved.
- 1.8 Indeed during this year, our application for funding to deliver the Fringe Festival was rejected; however due to work developed by the Cultural Manager to increase involvement of venues and delivery partners, the event was successfully delivered - albeit on a smaller scale than previously.
- 1.9 Without a change to the way these larger events are delivered, we will struggle to increase capacity, grow our reach and sustain delivery. Arts Council England's Place Partnership model could therefore be the route to achieve the assurity needed and address these challenges.

## **2. The Proposal**

- 2.1 Throughout 2024, Officers have been in dialogue with ACE about how to scale up our support for the sector, programme of events, develop skills, and secure funding to create a stronger and sustainable network of delivery and grow capacity.
- 2.2 Through these discussions, a clear case has been developing for Gravesham to consider applying for funding to support the development of a Place Partnership focussing on creating a Cultural Compact as a delivery a route for developing the sector and presenting an ambitious programme of festivals and events, that not only achieves the above objectives, but also supports the advancement of our visitor and local economy.
- 2.3 A Cultural Compact is a partnership designed to support the local cultural sector and enhance its contribution to development. It places a special emphasis on cross-sector engagement beyond the cultural sector itself and the local authority.
- 2.4 Strong and sustained collaboration between strategic place-based partners can support collective, coordinated action to grow a place's cultural ecosystem, to drive lasting social and economic benefits. Towns with a clear vision for culture supported by business, local authorities, education and the cultural sector can align activity and funding and leverage new resources. Cultural Compacts represent a step-change approach to working in partnership across sectors. These partnerships typically bring together local authorities, businesses, education providers, cultural, youth and community leaders

- 2.5 An Expression of Interest has been submitted which proposes a 4 year project that will improve visibility of the existing creative industries in the Borough, enhance the festival programme, increase the visitor destination offer and maximise economic impact.
- 2.6 The Place Partnership approach will directly support the Council's objective within the Corporate Plan to realise the potential within Gravesham's visitor economy through the promotion and development of our creative arts, cultural and heritage offer.
- 2.7 The Place Partnership would deliver 3 primary areas:
  - Programming - of large events supported by a number of smaller community-level events.
  - Capacity Building - partners working together to widen participation, improve the health and wellbeing of residents; & increase the viability of creative business through support initiatives and skills development
  - Profile raising – increasing awareness of Gravesham as an arts destination & place to locate creative business.
- 2.8 The Place Partnership will not replace the existing Arts & Culture Team, nor will the Partnership direct the work of that team or use of existing Council budgets.

### **3. Financials**

- 3.1 The proposed application will be for a project total of £450,000 across 4 years. This sum is made up from £382,500 funding from Arts Council England, supported by £67,500 from the existing Arts & Culture Match Funding Budget, which is specifically designed to be used for opportunities such as this to leverage additional external funding into the area.
- 3.2 Throughout the term of the project, additional funding will be sourced by other members of the partnership to further develop and enhance the project and outcomes.

### **4. Governance and risk**

- 4.1 If successful, the Council would be the Accountable Body and holder of the funds from ACE. However, delivery of the project would be through the Cultural Compact partnership approach, as required by ACE.
- 4.2 ACE would require the Council to enter into a legally binding agreement and accept the terms and conditions for the grant. A copy of the standard Terms and Conditions are attached at Appendix II
- 4.3 A Board would be created and comprise representatives from the above, who would be responsible for developing and overseeing project delivery and performance monitoring, including agreeing budget allocations and forward plans.
- 4.4 ACE would need to approve a partnership agreement drawn up between the Council and other partners involved in the project. This agreement will seek to ensure that the Council and all partner organisations can meet ACE's terms and conditions of grant, follow branding guidelines, provide all financial monitoring and any other information required, and deliver the project on time and within budget.  
[Partnership agreement guidance | Arts Council England](#)

- 4.5 The Council would also arrange for the Cultural Compact to be included in the Council's Register of Partnerships.
- 4.6 A risk assessment relating to this proposal is attached at Appendix III. Risk management would form part of the regular reviews undertaken by the Board.

## 5. Exit Strategy

- 5.1 The project will be developed with sustainability at the fore. As part of this there will be a requirement for the Cultural Compact to set out the legacy objectives, which should include sustainability of activity & funding as a core outcome.
- 5.2 A refresh of partner agreements would be required to reflect activity beyond the timeframe of the ACE funded project. This should include details of each partner's commitment, including financial support.
- 5.3 Should the consortium not achieve the desired outcomes and cease as a delivery body, Gravesham Borough Council would retain full control of its event programme budgets and therefore the ability to continue delivery on a localised scale.

## 6. Timetable

- 6.1 The initial expression of interest can take up to 8 weeks for consideration and decision, after which, a full submission will be required. Typically decisions for full submissions would be received within 12 weeks.

- 6.2 The current draft time table is set out below:

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| • October 2024            | Submission of Expression of interest              |
| • December 2024           | Decision received                                 |
| • January – February 2025 | Full submission worked up & submitted             |
| • March – May 2025        | Development of Consortium, drafting of legals etc |
| • May 2025                | Decision received                                 |
| • June 2025               | Formal launch of Consortium (June 25 – June 28)   |

## 7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix I – Outline of proposal
- 7.2 Appendix II – Standard Terms and Conditions
- 7.3 Appendix III - Risk Assessment

## 8. Background Documents

- 8.1 ACE Place Partnership Projects: [Place Partnership projects and Project Grants - Information sheet.pdf \(artscouncil.org.uk\)](https://arts council.org.uk)

**Lead Officer:** Anita Tysoe, Assistant Director Community Support (Interim)

**Email:** [Anita.tysoe@gravesham.gov.uk](mailto:Anita.tysoe@gravesham.gov.uk)

<b>Secondary Implications</b>	
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Risks associated with this project are as set out in Appendix III
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i>
	<p>Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <a href="#">personal data</a> or <a href="#">special category data</a> or <a href="#">criminal offence data</a>?</p> <p>No</p> <p>If yes, you should complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment and/or seek advice from the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<p>Does the content of this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against those with a protected characteristic?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Gender reassignment</li> <li>• Marriage and civil partnership</li> <li>• Pregnancy and maternity</li> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Religion or belief</li> <li>• Sex</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> </ul> <p>No</p> <p>If yes, you need to complete an equality impact assessment</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered</i></p>
<b>Other Considerations</b>	How will your report support or affect the following:
	Socio-economic impact: Outputs from this project could result in skills development, potential access to work opportunities
	Crime and Disorder: The project will deliver a range of activities and events which could include diversionary activities
	Safeguarding Children & Adults: There are no direct impacts
<b>Consultation &amp; Engagement</b>	<p>Have you, or will you, consult &amp; engage in relation to this paper?</p> <p>Some consultation with potential partners has taken place</p> <p>Consultation with the community would form part of the project delivery objectives</p> <p>Please liaise with the Community Involvement team for assistance <a href="mailto:community.involvement@gravesham.gov.uk">community.involvement@gravesham.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>Involvement of other services</b>	Have any other departments been involved or engaged with during the creation of the report:  Finance  HR  Legal
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