



Report to: Cabinet Meeting - 4 November 2024
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Rowan Cozens – Heritage Culture & the Arts
 Director Lead: Matt Finch – Director - Communities & Environment
 Lead Officer: Carys Coulton-Jones – Business Manager - Heritage & Culture, Ext. 5773

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open Report, Non-Key Decision
Report Title	Music Development – Heritage, Culture & the Arts
Purpose of Report	To update Members on the progress of this element of the Community Plan and seek approval to deliver the proposed plan using the budget previously identified.
Recommendations	That Cabinet: a) approve the proposal for music development through use of the existing community plan objectives budget within the Heritage & Culture Business Unit; and b) acknowledge the requirement for a carry forward into 2025/26 to complete delivery of the proposals
Alternative Options Considered	The revised Community Plan, 2023-27, placed an increased emphasis on music in the district and this was supported with additional, non-recurring money in 2024/2025. Doing nothing was therefore not deemed to be a viable option, whilst the nature of the funding meant it was not possible to recruit permanent resources.
Reason for Recommendations	These recommendations align to objective 7 of the Community Plan – to celebrate and invigorate community spirit, pride of place and a sense of belonging – and in particular the actions to ‘champion and promote the arts, culture and heritage through the enjoyment of music and arts’ and to ‘explore opportunities for having themed music and art events that focus on individual communities that celebrate diversity in the district’.

1.0 Background

1.1 In 2023, the creation of the new Portfolio for Heritage, Culture & the Arts and the revised Community Plan Objectives placed increased emphasis on music as a way of showcasing excellence in the district, bringing communities together and supporting wellbeing and increased civic pride.

- 1.2 During the budget setting process, in light of this revised remit, an additional £80,000 was included in the budget for Heritage and Culture for additional activity in this area, endorsed by Cabinet in February 2024 and approved by Full Council in March. Whilst most community plan objective budgets have been allocated in future years, this budget was only committed for 2024/25 to enable a period of testing and piloting.
- 1.3 In May 2024 the first 'Alive with Music' event was programmed. The purpose of this event was to bring music professionals, community musicians and music groups together and start the conversation around how the future of music development could be shaped through partnership working. The evening included speakers with different perspectives on the role music can play in community and commercial settings and as a career and performances from musicians from across the district. At the end of the event, guests were consulted on their ideas for the development of the music agenda and feedback forms were collected.
- 1.4 This feedback was collated and reviewed by the Heritage & Culture Business Unit team and five themes were identified for further development. Desk research was undertaken to provide a view of the existing offer before developing a costed plan for the next six months.
- 1.5 A follow up 'Alive with Music' event was programmed for October 2024. Hosted at the Palace Theatre and therefore having a larger capacity, this was an opportunity to open the event up more widely and a social media campaign encouraged music providers from across the district to get involved. At the event, the Business Manager for Heritage & Culture presented the draft proposal and asked guests to feedback their views. This feedback will be analysed and fed into the detailed plan going forward.

2.0 Proposal/Details of Options Considered

- 2.1 The draft proposal is attached at **Appendix A**, with indicative costings at **Appendix B**. Key elements include the recruitment of a temporary freelance music network co-ordinator to drive this piece of work forward at an operational level over the next six months. Creation of a Newark & Sherwood Music Forum will both help to emphasise the importance of music and bring interested parties together to co-create opportunities for collaboration. This forum should be open to everyone, community-led and would sit alongside other existing groups such as Newark Heritage Forum, the Tourism Action Group and Newark's Cultural Consortium, all of which have input from or are led by NSDC officers. Over the period, existing budget will be available to test the feasibility of initiatives, delivered by the Music Network Co-ordinator and overseen by the Business Manager - Heritage & Culture.
- 2.2 The current proposal covers a six-month period, therefore will extend into 2025/26 and the cost plan also includes some pre-existing commitments to support the expansion of the theatre programme through two pilot classical music performances and the first time a West End touring production (Blood Brothers) has visited Newark. The costs over six months are estimated at £51,010, leaving £28,990 uncommitted at this stage. Members should note that any underspend has been pre-approved to be carried forward in to 2025/26 to allow the Music Network Co-ordinator at least six months in post, with the potential to extend this role if there is evidence of need and to give more time to develop the plans further. During 2025/26 a further report will consider the longer-term plan for this remit based on the experience and data gained by the co-ordinator and the updated Community Plan.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection; Digital & Cyber Security; Equality & Diversity; Financial; Human Resources; Human Rights; Legal; Safeguarding & Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

Financial Implications FIN24-25/4490

- 3.1 The approval has been made for the extension of time delivery through a Management Carry Forward of unused budget from 2024.25 to 2025.26 up to the original amount of £80,000.
- 3.2 There are no financial implications that affect the General Funds MTFP, relating to this request.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None