

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet 12 October 2006  
**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director/Arts development Officer

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### ARTS CAPITAL GRANT 2006-2007

#### Purpose

1. To recommend capital grant aid for Wysing Arts Centre, Bourn, for the completion of phase 1 of major building works.

#### Executive Summary

2. This report refers to phase 1 of the building works at Wysing Arts Centre as approved by Cabinet on 10 February 2005.
3. Wysing Arts Centre is now within £40,000 of the £1,400,000 required for phase 1a of the works and is working to raise this before the contractors' start works in November 2006.
4. The recommendation is to award a grant of £20,000, representing 50% of the shortfall, in order to facilitate the completion of works.

#### Background

5. Wysing Arts Centre is based on an eleven-and-a-half acre site near the village of Bourn. A Charity since 1996, the organisation is professionally managed with a year-round programme of activity open to the public.
6. Each year the participatory workshop programme involves over 25 schools, 200 families, 1500 children, and 2000 adults. The exhibition programme now offers audiences the chance to see a range of innovative projects seven days a week 365 days a year.
7. In addition to the outdoor exhibition areas, there are 27 artists' studios, a gallery, various meeting/resource rooms, education/rehearsal studio, and ceramics and sculpture studios, together with residential accommodation. Sixteen of the twenty-four studio artists renting low cost units are residents of South Cambridgeshire.
8. The organisation encourages new work and actively promotes public participation in and enjoyment of the visual arts, through the provision of artists' studios and a programme of arts workshops, residencies, courses and exhibitions.
9. Wysing provide the base for the 'Wysing Gardeners' an art based horticultural project for 16 local people with learning disabilities and mental health needs.
10. As the only professional arts centre in South Cambridgeshire, a high proportion of visitors are from the district (approx. 13,000 per year). The total annual attendances are over 21,000 per year and growing each year.
11. Wysing Arts Centre has a 25-year lease on the site with a peppercorn rent.

12. A full copy of the capital application, including contact details, is held by the arts development officer.

### **Considerations**

13. Current accommodation is unsuitable for visitors, which includes families, disabled and older people. Physical access to many of the buildings is difficult and two of the barns are in a particularly poor condition.
14. Once complete, the capital project will deliver an enhanced programme and an improved visitor experience. It will also make the Centre easier to manage and generate more income, providing the organisation with increased financial security.
15. Wysing Arts Centre was recently selected by the Arts Council as one of two ambassadors for the visual arts in the eastern region, in recognition of the organisation's ability to identify emerging talent. The organisation are seeking to create a 'landmark development' providing the facilities to further enable the development of participants and audiences, with appropriate physical access and facilities. The building will coherently bring together the different aspects of the organisation's work; artistic, social and environmental.
16. Consideration of environmental sensitivity of the design and implementation of the project has been at the forefront.
17. The work is being undertaken in four main phases:
  - (a) Initial phase (complete): The internal and external renovation of the Grade II listed farmhouse.
  - (b) Phase 1 (a) (this application): Re-housing open access studios and education space in the refurbished stable block, a new studio block providing more workspace for artists, a media room for teenagers and improvements to access.
  - (c) Phase 1 (b): A new reception block to the north of the existing gallery and associated landscaping and access improvements.
  - (d) Phase 2: Gallery refurbishments, a new education room and a further studio block.
18. The new studio block and refurbished stable block will provide:
  - (a) Improved access for visitors/participants
  - (b) Resource/educational spaces including a media space for teenagers
  - (c) Two work/live studios
  - (d) Fourteen additional studios
  - (e) Re-sited Open Access studios, including six low cost workspaces
  - (f) Landscaping and improved access (on/off site)

### Two Open Access Studios

19. Two adjacent studios with a focus on ceramics and sculpture but suitable for other uses. Both will have the potential to become one space for larger workshops with a dividing screen. Within each studio there will be an artist in residence who will also

maintain the spaces and provide one to one help/assistance depending on the type of project. A large outdoor, part covered work area will form part of these studios. These studios will continue to provide an environment with a range of different users working alongside each other young/old/diverse/professional/beginner. There will be provision for 3 workspaces in each studio.

#### Six workspaces

20. Purpose built within the Open Access studios space for six artists. Aimed at those needing a workspace for good storage and access to shared equipment for part of the week or those on low incomes. Calculations have been done on £10.00 per week.

#### One work/live studio (100m2)

21. An individual studio, which will include a separate sleeping area with access to a kitchen/dinner and bathroom in the same building.

#### Ten individual purpose built studios (271m2)

22. These spaces will provide substantial clear height and storage, together with basic services. They may be used by painters, sculptors or ceramicists/potters, textile artists, jewellers etc and will be capable of some adaptation by the users. There will be a range of sizes of unit, and the spaces will be flexible. Wysing Arts Centre intends to attract and retain talented individuals.
23. In the selection of the artists they will be seeking to maintain a cross-section working in a variety of art forms. Exchanges between other studio groups will be encouraged and form part of planned international residencies. Five of the units will be rented to South Cambridgeshire residents and Wysing will ensure that overall, 50% of the studio artists are resident in South Cambridgeshire.
24. The new studio block and refurbished stable block will provide:
- (a) Improved access for visitors/participants
  - (b) Resource/educational spaces including a media space for teenagers
  - (c) Two work/live studios
  - (d) Fourteen additional studios
  - (e) Re-sited Open Access studios, including six low cost workspaces
  - (e) Landscaping and improved access (on/off site)

#### **Options**

2. The choice before Cabinet is to award or decline to award a further grant to Wysing Arts Centre.

#### **Financial Implications**

3. The sum of £205,000 for phase 1a and 1b was included in the Capital Programme for the period 2002-2005. This was made up as follows:

2002-2003	£60,000
2003-2004	£70,000
2004-2005	£75,000
Total	£205,000

4. The Arts Council of England (ACE) has earmarked a grant of £905,000 (for use during phase 1a) towards realising the development. The organisation has raised an additional £250,000 through its capital fundraising campaign from local donors and trusts and charities.
5. Wysing Arts have declared that no revenue commitment will be requested from South Cambridgeshire District Council as a result of the capital works.
6. The current balance of the Arts Capital budget for 2006-2007 is £82,000.

#### **Other implications**

Legal	None
Staffing	None
Risk Management	None
Equal Opportunities	None

#### **Consultations**

7. The portfolio holder for community services visited the venue on Monday 18 September and met the director and assistant director of the centre.
8. The previous Cabinet visited the site in October 2002 and received a presentation from the centre's former Director and Wysing Board members, instigated by Arts Council England, East, and the main stakeholders of the project.
9. The Arts Council of England has appointed consultants Jackson Coles to oversee all aspects of the capital process and particularly project costs.
10. Detailed discussions have taken place with the Council's Planning Department regarding the parameters within which Wysing should develop the building and that guidance has informed plans for a 'distinctive' building.
11. Wysing have consulted CABA (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) which has appointed an 'enabler' to work with Wysing for the life of the building project.
12. In November 2003 the design team, selected from an international shortlist, was chosen to complete the work. Hawkins Brown Architects (<http://www.hawkinsbrown.co.uk>) were appointed and will work closely with Wysing's Project Manager for the remainder of the development.
13. As part of the preparation for a capital fund raising campaign, there has been extensive consultation with the local community (including the parish council).

#### **Officers' Considerations**

14. Development Control Officer comments:

This capital scheme has been the subject of consultation between Wysing Arts Centre and Development Services for some time. Issues relating to the setting of the current listed building, the impact of car and coach parking, landscaping and the quality of design and building works amongst other matters have been discussed in

detail with the scheme architect, and planning permission was approved in June 2005.

15. Strategic Development Officer comments:

Wysing Arts' proposals to provide a 'landmark development' in accordance with sustainable design and construction principles are to be welcomed. The inclusion of a biomass boiler, a wastewater recycling system and the future provision of a PV system will ensure the development serves as an important exemplar project for sustainability within the district.

**Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives**

16.	Affordable Homes	No direct effect. The scheme offers limited accommodation to artists visiting the District.
17.	Customer Service	Good customer service is a priority for the organisation concerned, as it is for the Council.
18.	Northstowe and other growth areas	The proposal relates indirectly to the development of quality of design at Northstowe and urban fringe developments, a priority for 2006-2007, in as much as Wysing facilities and artists can contribute to the public art strategy for these developments.
19.	Quality, Accessible Services	This capital scheme prioritises quality, accessible, services for residents of South Cambridgeshire District.
20.	Village Life	The proposal sets out to facilitate a more attractive living and leisure environment for residents.
21.	Sustainability	The values and principles that underpin the arts and sustainable development are synonymous given both are dependent upon public engagement and participation and both concern quality of life issues.
22.	Partnership	The partnership between the Council and a wide range of other supporters, including Arts Council England, East, the business community, and charitable trusts, is crucial to the success of this venture.

**Recommendations**

23. That Cabinet approve, subject to match funding of £20,000 by Wysing Arts Centre being raised, a final contribution of £20,000. This will take the total grant award for phase one to £225,000.

**Background Papers:** Application for grant aid

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