

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Chief Executive

10th February 2005

ARTS CAPITAL GRANT AID 2004-2005

Purpose

1. To recommend capital grant aid for Wysing Arts, which has submitted an application and satisfies the existing grant criteria.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

Quality, Accessible Services	Whilst not directly helping this year's priority of promoting electronic service delivery (ESD), the proposal will improve the council's service through the provision of a high quality arts facility within the district offering residents and visitors a positive experience of life in South Cambridgeshire.
Village Life	Whilst not directly addressing this year's priority for affordable homes the proposal sets out to facilitate a more attractive living and working environment for and with residents.
Sustainability	<p>The proposal relates indirectly to the development of quality of design at Northstowe and edge of Cambridge Developments, a priority for 2004-2005, in as much as Wysing facilities and artists can contribute to the public art strategy for these developments.</p> <p>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. As such, they also reflect the importance of the social, economic and environmental well being of local communities.</p>
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.

Background

2. Wysing Arts - a rural arts centre based on an eleven-and-a-half acre site near the village of Bourn - opened in 1992 as an amateur organisation providing seven artists studios and a short summer programme.
3. In 1994 Wysing became a Charity and since late 1996 the organisation has been professionally managed with a thriving year round programme. In November 2002 the organisation was voted 'best place to enjoy the arts' in Anglia Television's 'six of the best' awards, winning £10,000 in prize money.
4. 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.

5. In addition to the outdoor exhibition areas, there are 27 artist's 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.
6. The organisation aim is to encourage new work and enable the wider public to participate in and enjoy the visual arts, through the provision of artists' studios and a programme of arts workshops, residencies, courses and exhibitions.
7. Wysing provided the base for the Bourn Valley composting scheme and 'Wysing Gardeners' an art based horticultural project for 16 local people with learning disabilities and mental health needs.
8. As the only professional arts centre in South Cambridgeshire, a high proportion of visitors are from district (approx. 13,000 per year). The total annual attendances are over 21,000 per year and are growing each year. Wysing has been chosen as a community broadband access point and is experiencing high levels of demand.
9. Wysing Arts has a 25-year lease on the site with a peppercorn rent.
10. A full copy of the capital application, including contact details, is held in the Arts office.

Project Summary

11. Wysing Arts has been successful in securing £905,000 of investment from the Arts Council of England towards the costs of preparing and realising a capital development of £2.7m.
12. Once complete, this will deliver an enhanced programme, significant improvements in the visitor's experience, facilities for participatory activities provide the organisation with increased long-term financial security.
13. Current accommodation is not suitable 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. Wysing Arts 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.
15. Consideration of environmental sensitivity of the design and implementation of the project has been at the forefront. As part of phase 1 (a) of the project, a biomass plant will be installed (supported by a grant from the 'Clear Skies' programme). New buildings will be 'PV' ready', to accept photovoltaic installations at an appropriate time, waste water will be harvested and re-used, design will be sympathetic to the environment and the context and construction methods and materials will, wherever possible, be sustainable.
16. The work is being undertaken in four main phases:
 - Initial phase (complete): The internal and external renovation of the Grade II listed farmhouse.

- Phase 1 (a) (this application): Designing the 'master plan' for the whole site, re-housing open access studios and education space in the refurbished stable block, a new studio block providing more workspace for artists and improvements to access.
 - Phase 1 (b): A new reception block to the north of the existing gallery and associated landscaping and access improvements.
 - Phase 2: Gallery refurbishments, a new education room and a further studio block.
17. The first task for Wysing has been to finalise the master plan for the development of a scheme 'fit for purpose'. The plan will rationalise the physical environment to provide further access and participation in the arts and to create the ideal facilities for people to research, develop and produce creative work.
18. The new studio block and refurbished stable block will provide:
- Improved access for visitors/participants
 - Resource/educational spaces
 - Two work/live studios
 - Fourteen additional studios
 - Re-sited Open Access studios, including six low cost workspaces
 - 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.

6 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.

2 work/live studios (100m²)

21. Individual studios, which will include a separate sleeping area with access to, shared kitchen/dinner and bathroom in the same building.

10 individual purpose built studios (271m²)

22. Substantial clear height and storage are a given, 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' growing reputation has and will enable us to attract and retain talented individuals.
23. In the selection of the artists we will be seeking to maintain a cross-section of vibrant artists working in a variety of art forms that fit with our vision. There will be increased

dialogue between other artists including artists in residence. Exchanges between other studio groups will be encouraged and may form parts of some of the 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.

Consultation

24. Cabinet visited the site in October 2002 and received a presentation from the centre's Director and Wysing Board members, instigated by Arts Council England, East, the main stakeholders of the project.
 - (a) The Arts Council of England has appointed consultants Jackson Coles to oversee all aspects of the capital process and particularly project costs.
 - (b) 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.
 - (c) Wysing have consulted CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) which has appointed an 'enabler' to work with Wysing for the life of the building project.
 - (d) The building design process has completed RIBA stages A and B with Plowman Brown Architects and C and D with the project architects.
 - (e) 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.
 - (f) 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

25. Development Control comments:
26. This project has been the subject of consultation between Wysing Arts and Bob Morgan for some time, and has been discussed at Second Delegation meetings in Development Control on several occasions.
27. As a flagship arts facility in the District, Wysing Arts seems appropriate as a site for interesting and innovative architecture that will create a strong sense of place. However, there are considerable constraints on the site in planning terms, given its location in the rural area. Current policies in the Structure and Local Plans require essential need to be demonstrated for new development in the countryside. Another consideration would be whether there would be a net increase in floor area of development on the site which may lead to increased activity/ visitor numbers, or increased spread of buildings around the site that would increase its effect on the appearance of the area. Residential accommodation, such as live/work units, will require justification as part of the vision for the facility. New car and coach parking areas will require sensitive handling and landscaping if they are not to be visually obtrusive, and the comments of the Local Highway Authority will be required in assessing any proposal. The setting of the listed building should also be respected. These issues have been discussed in detail with the scheme architect, and a submission for planning permission for Phase 1 of the development is expected shortly.

28. Strategic Development Officer comments:
29. Wysing Arts proposals to provide a 'landmark development' in accordance with sustainable design and construction principles is to be welcomed. The inclusion of a biomass boiler, a waste water 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.

Financial Implications

30. Wysing Arts are requesting a staged financial contribution over three years towards the capital scheme of £205,000 from South Cambridgeshire District Council. The total budget for the capital scheme (including phase 2) is £2.7m. In 2002-2003 the organisation were awarded £60,000. A further £70,000 was committed in 2003-2004. This application is for the balance of £75,000.
31. The sum of £205,000 for phase 1a and 1b was included in the Capital Programme for the period 2001-2005.
32. The Arts Council of England (ACE) has earmarked a grant of £905,000 (also for use during phase 1a and 1b) towards realising the development. The organisation has raised an additional £85,000 in its own restricted funds. In addition, a capital fund raising campaign is underway to secure the balance of the cost of the project.
33. Wysing Arts have declared that no additional revenue commitment – in the form of an increased arts partnership award - will be requested from South Cambridgeshire District Council as a result of the capital works.
34. The current balance of the Arts Capital budget for 2004-2005 is £78,000.

Note

35. An initial payment of £30,000 was made to Wysing in May 2004 to help meet the requirements of RIBA stage D. This included architects fees, structural engineering design, mechanical services design, quantity surveyors fees, traffic consultancy, technical acoustic survey, and site investigations such as asbestos, geo-technical, site and buildings and utility services survey. £66,091 has been spent on the project to date.

Recommendation

36. That Cabinet approve the third and final stage of the award of £75,000.

Background Papers: Application and supporting papers

Contact Officers: Andy O'Hanlon, Arts Development Officer 01954 713343