

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: New Communities Portfolio Holder 14 December 2010

AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

COMMUNITY CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAMME 2010 – 2011 ARTS CAPITAL GRANT: COTTENHAM VILLAGE COLLEGE

Purpose

1. This is a deferred item from the Portfolio Holder meeting of the 4 October 2010 relating to an application for a community-based public art project costing £25,000 as part of a major capital development at Cottenham Village College.
2. This is not a key decision because Cabinet has agreed the programme of scheme delegations and these decisions are within the budgets described above.

Recommendations

3. That the New Communities Portfolio Holder approves a grant of £10,000.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Council has a public art policy that welcomes public art as a vehicle to strengthen local identity, express links within the community and leads to interpretive and educational activity. This scheme meets all these requirements.
5. The budget described above exists for the purpose of delivering the Council's policy. The grant is no more than 40% of the total cost of the scheme and represents good value.
6. A recent precedent exists for this award. Melbourn Village College received a grant in 2008/9 of £6,160 against total project costs of £16,160 (38%). for a community-based glass art work to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary.

Background

7. The Portfolio Holder deferred this item pending further information regarding the number of members of the public involved in the project and public access to the artwork.
8. The glasswork will be made of 400 glass panels (A5 sized), which will be suspended to a hanging system to represent a tree canopy. The aim is to involve at least 400 members of the public in designing the glass panels. The process for making the glasswork is skilled so involvement in this element would be through specific workshops led by artist Wendy Briggs. The workshops will be offered to specific groups who will be using the new building space including members of the Fen Edge Community Association and Adult Learners from the community programme. There

will also be a series of 4 daylong open workshops for members of the public to be involved in the glass making. The workshops will be teaching specific skills in glasswork and so are aimed at adults with a keen interest in working alongside the artist to create the work.

9. In terms of engaging with the wider public, the Artist has devised an open access style activity for local residents, students and community groups to submit design ideas that will be used on the glasswork. Fifteen hundred postcards have been produced and will be distributed through various local networks and at events. Residents will be invited to submit a drawn design for the glass panels on the postcard around the theme of leaves and trees. The aim is to collect 400 designs that will be hung in the new exhibition space to represent the glass panels. The postcard display will form a temporary exhibit to draw attention to the glass making stage of the project.
10. The project will be fully documented and levels of community engagement monitored by the Arts Development Manager. This will be informed by recorded feedback and participant surveys.

Timescale

11. The external capital fund available to the College is dependent on contracts being issued and work begun before the end of March 2010.

January – February	Postcard project launched and professional hanging system installed.
March	Temporary installation of postcard project in place ready for building opening.
April – Sept (or longer)	A series of glass workshop sessions with as many groups as possible until 400 pieces are produced and installed.

Access

12. With the exception of the Christmas bank holiday period the building is available for public use between 7am – 10pm every day. There will be a full programme of adult and family learning classes running throughout the year (open to all ages and interests) and we accept bookings for specific events at any time.
13. During the school day visitors can access the new building through an entrance which is separate to the main school. Visitors are welcome to come and view the artwork which will be part of a curated exhibition space. The artwork will be installed above the main entrance foyer through the length of the open public space.
14. The intention is to run the building as a community amenity, offering a restaurant/ café, hair and beauty and other services available to the public.
15. The Architect and Design Team for the build have worked with the artist on the concept for the artwork regarding the appearance of the interior space as well as commissioning some specific artworks to be installed in the public space. The new space offers the potential for a year-round curated exhibition space.

16. The total cost is £25,000, with £13,000 coming from the Village Collage and a further £2,000 coming from stART resources. The local Arts Development Manager has already been heavily involved in advising the applicant and would take on a project management role. The costs include the artist's fee, management and community liaison. Fees include marketing, promotional materials and documentation.

Considerations

17. In the past, funds for specialist arts equipment and capital projects, including public art and building works, have been awarded to properly constituted community groups that can show the greatest benefit to residents.
18. Arts capital grants rarely exceed 40% of the total costs of items/projects.
19. The scheme has been assessed on the existing approved criteria (amended in May 2010 and available from the Resource Officer, Sustainable Communities, on request), plus the following:
- a) value for money
 - b) how it meets identified local need
 - c) how it fits with SCDC priorities
 - d) ability to start work in next 9-12 months (June - September 2011)

Options

20. To approve the grant at the recommended amount, to refuse the grant, or approve a grant at a different level with conditions for the applicant attached.

Implications

21. Match funding for the scheme will not be available beyond this financial year and building works, which incorporate this scheme, are due for completion by April 2011.
22. The activity cannot take place if the grant is not awarded. This could have a significant impact on specific user groups and local residents.

23. Financial	The application is within the current capital budget which stands at £15,000
Legal	The application complies with current legislation.
Staffing	Officer resources to manage application process and to give advice and guidance to applicants.
Risk Management	Minimal risk – some negative reaction to grant decisions may prompt adverse media comments. The process requires applicants to inform Officers of any changes to the planned projects ensuring that any deviation from the grant application are managed. Also, Building Control Officers are required too assess the works undertaken before final grant sign-off can take place.
Equality and Diversity	Applications are welcome from all community groups wherever projects fits the criteria.
Equality Impact	Yes

Assessment completed	The partial EQIA (April 2009 and available on Council website) found the Arts Service accessible to all residents.
Climate Change	The application criteria include statements that encourage the use of design features that reduce the carbon footprint of the facility in question.

Consultations

24. Cllrs Edwards, Harford and Wotherspoon have been consulted.
25. A statement in support has been received from Cllr Harford.
26. Cllr Wotherspoon has visited the site. He considers that the building itself has been specified to such a high standard that it needs no adornment, and normally advises new occupants of a building to wait twelve months before settling on a scheme of interior decor. However, he was immensely impressed by the enthusiasm and determination demonstrated by the Deputy Head who has been championing the whole project. He notes that there has been very close collaboration between the architect and the designer, who has to all intents and purposes become something of an artist in residence. He comments that 'This persuades me that the project has been well thought through'. On the basis, therefore, of the dedication of the people involved, he would not oppose the award of the grant.
27. Cllr Edwards is giving the proposal further consideration; commenting that in the current financial climate all applications for grant funding should be given extra scrutiny.
28. The local Arts Development Manager is the project manager for this scheme, which is fully supported by senior Village College staff and college user groups including The Fen Edge Community Association.

Effect on Strategic Aims

Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
The project proposed would enhance the quality of the environment, arts services and the learning environment for a range of groups and individuals served by Cottenham Village College.
Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.
The project proposed would improve local amenities and offer a safe and healthy place for users.
Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
The proposed project actively promotes pride of place, local identity and belonging.
Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.
The proposed project will directly create employment in a setting specifically created for training and skills.
Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.
The proposal actively supports and enables the expression of local rural voices to be heard.

Conclusions / Summary

29. This item was deferred from the last Portfolio Holder meeting pending further information. Councillors have been invited to visit the site and to meet the applicants.
30.
 - 1500 postcards inviting design ideas will be distributed in the local community
 - 4 day long open access workshops with artist Wendy Briggs
 - A series of 10+ targeted workshops with specific user groups until 400 glass pieces have been produced
 - Opportunity for local residents to get involved and work with the artist over a period of 8+ months
31. Further discussions and site visits have since taken place and, although not currently unanimous, there is local support for this project.
32. The application for £10,000 meets the terms of the Council's policy on public art and falls within the budget available.
33. Should the award not be made the match funding will be lost and the project will not go ahead.
34. It is recommended that the grant be awarded in full subject to monitoring of community engagement as indicated at paragraph 10.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Application, letters of support.

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