

1 October 2020**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE & COMMUNITIES****CULTURE, LEARNING AND LIBRARIES – INSPIRE: DEVELOPMENT UPDATE
AND FOURTH YEAR REVIEW****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Committee on the development of Inspire in the delivery of cultural, learning and library services across Nottinghamshire and its achievements in the fourth year of operation and outline its response to Covid 19.

Information**Context**

2. Inspire – Culture, Learning and Libraries (Midlands) was established as an independent Community Benefit Society with charitable status in June 2015 and commenced the delivery a range of cultural and learning services on behalf of the County Council from 1st April 2016. The change in operating model was part of the Council's 'Redefining Your Council' strategic vision and identified as part of the 'Strategy for Nottinghamshire's Libraries' approved by full council in December 2011.
3. Inspire has a contractual arrangement with the Council which outlines the scope and range of services to be delivered on the council's behalf. A detailed services specification and performance mechanism has been established and is reviewed and reported on between the Council and Inspire on a regular basis.
4. The high level of service delivery has been maintained and further developed since April 2016.
5. Staff transferred to Inspire on 1st April 2016 and are members of the new Society and have an elected staff member on the Inspire board.
6. In addition to the smooth transfer of staff, senior staff of Inspire have established systems and policies to enable the new organisation to be financially robust, be compliant with legislation, maintain its charitable status, ensure it can meet its contractual agreements and agreed levels of performance.
8. This report and an accompanying presentation by the Chief Executive Officer of Inspire will inform the Committee of progress since April 2019.

Review of Year Four

Performance and Quality Assurance

9. Inspire has met the range of performance requirements laid out within the service specification (attached as **Appendix 1**).
10. Inspire has also achieved several external accreditations and awards to validate its performance. These include:
 - **Business Design Awards** – Transformation of Beeston Library
 - **Customer Service Excellence (CSE)** – Inspire wide accreditation
 - **Family Arts Campaign** – Winner of the Best Family Welcome Award 2018
 - **ILM** – accreditation as approved leaning centre for leadership and management
 - **MATRIX** – Inspire wide accreditation to the national Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) standard.
 - **OHSAS** – Inspire inspection by the British Standards Institution met the ISO 18001 health and safety standard.
 - **TES Awards** – Inspire Learning Services shortlisted – best adult and community learning provider

Finance

11. Inspire achieved £1m savings as it went live in April 2016 including £500,000 from the change to charitable status of the new organisation.
12. The initial 5 year contract period (2016 – 2021) will have delivered in total of £1.2M of savings for the council.
 - Reduction in contract price £443K
 - Absorbed inflationary pressures £762 K
13. Inspire as an independent organisation and employer has been able to drive through greater efficiencies and has been flexible enough within the first contract period to manage financial pressures without reduction of service provision.

Entrepreneurial dividend / grants / continuous improvement

14. Inspire applied to the Arts Council England (ACE) to become a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) to deliver cultural programmes through the library network aimed at children and young people. Inspire was awarded £1M between 2018 – 2022. Inspire is one of only 6 library-based organisations to be awarded NPO status. Due to Covid 19 this award has been extended by a further year. An application to remain an NPO 2023-2027 will be undertaken later this year.
15. Bidding for further grants will be pursued within the framework of the strategic aims of the organisation and where greatest impact can be made. The following additional funding amounts have been awarded -
 1. Miner 2 Major learning and cultural activity 2019-2023 HLF - £850K
 2. Heritage Lottery award – Home Cooked Heritage HLF - £10K
 3. Dementia film screening – NCC LIS grant
 4. Able Orchestra (Jan 2018 to May 2018) – via a partner

5. Flexible Learning Fund (Carers into Caring) Project (Jan 2018 to July 2019) – via consortium across D2N2
6. Way2Way – ESF funded employability project (2020 – 2023) - £741K

Governance

16. The independent Inspire board has been operating since April 2016 and is now fully established. The board has established sub-committees to support the development of the organisation. These include: Music; Culture and Heritage; Learning and Skills; Finance and Audit; Staffing and Standards and Development.
17. Inspire will continue to gain from the wide-ranging skills and experience of board members.

Achievements / Highlights

18. These are as follows:
 - Able Orchestra performed with BBC Philharmonic and Halle Orchestras at UK Media City Manchester
 - Adventures in music programme for under 5's delivered in 12 libraries
 - Access to Higher Education course enabled 16 students to move into higher education
 - Adult education (accredited) – 632 learners – 632 achieved a qualification
 - Adult education (non accredited) – 5,610 enrolments (510 online) – 1,134 courses
 - Annual readers day 2019 held at County Hall – sold out
 - Artists and author in residence – support summer reading challenge
 - BIG draw 2019 – 259 school children from special school and touring exhibition
 - Blidworth Library Parish Council partnership increased opening hours by 9 a week
 - Bookstart 99% gifting rate, amounting to a value of over £364K annual investment
 - Children's theatre – Girl of Ink and Stars – original script and production commission and innovative use of immersive sound technology. Toured 20 libraries reaching 843 children.
 - Christmas concert at Royal Concert Hall, 330 Nottinghamshire young singers performed to an audience of over 850.
 - Commissioned rural touring 'Live and Local' and 'Earth and Fire' ceramics fair
 - Community partnership libraries – Sutton On Trent relocation – 10 supported
 - Digital support hub – NHS Connected Nottinghamshire at Mansfield Central Library
 - 3rd Inspire Awards celebrated achievements of learners, partners, volunteers and staff
 - East Leake Library partnership with Borough Council – increased library access by 18.5 hours per week
 - Fun Palace at Worksop Library receiving over 2,500 visitors.
 - Inspire Learning – new district-based prospectus formats and increased distribution
 - Inspire Membership – over 67,000 people are members of the Society
 - Inspire poetry festival – 1,000 attendances
 - Inspire Young People celebrate Mayflower 400 Arts Project (Worksop and Retford)
 - Inspire Youth Arts young people perform at BBC Introducing gig at Metronome
 - Knitted puppets – 550 worry monsters created and donated to charity
 - Leading Libraries national programme – Inspire selected as one of 15 services
 - Library opening hours reviewed and increased by 93.5 hours a week above contract level of 1,487 per week.

- Library Service What's on Guide – new integrated format launched
- Little creatives in libraries and early years settings - 1633 participants
- Mobile libraries – 2 new vehicles commissioned
- Music Hub maintained successful partnerships delivery of music education - eg Big Sing / National Youth Choirs of Great Britain (NYCGB)
- Music Hub providing free opportunities to support Arts Awards for young people
- New eBook service launched
- New mobile libraries commissioned
- Nottingham Playhouse delivering Story Explorers NPO funded theatre
- Out of this world – artist and author in residence at Beeston library – 550 children took part– creating exhibition, silly poems and animated gifs
- Reading Well for Children book collection launched
- Retford Library closed for £1M refurbishment
- Study programme of 260 young people achieves best GCSE results
- Study programme new centre opens in Arnold
- Summer Reading Challenge space theme – 9,075 children took part
- Summer Reading Challenge – 79 volunteers provided 1,158 hours of support
- Train to teach courses launched
- Two hundred events, courses and activities each week in libraries
- 'Voices' project, featuring a poet working with groups of adults with learning disabilities, dementia sufferers, adults with mental health issues and young refugees – exhibition and publication

Customer and Learner satisfaction

19. Across all services areas there is a regular process of gaining satisfaction levels and feedback. Complaints are very low and outnumbered by compliments, both are reported to the Council monthly. Customer and learner satisfaction levels (good or very good) target of 90% is set within the performance specification.

Staff Feedback

20. During the transition process staff were highly engaged in developing the new organisation and its values.

A staff survey was undertaken in late 2017 and achieved a 50% response rate. The survey provides a benchmark for future years and enables senior leaders to focus on areas highlighted by staff. A bespoke Inspire Learning and Knowledge pool is now available to all staff and can be accessed on a range of mobile devices. This provides an e-learning platform and intranet platform to ensure staff are well informed and able to access a range of training, developmental tools and information sources.

A staff well being and 'ways of working' survey was undertaken in July 2020 and will be used to gauge the position of staff post lock down and inform a review of working methods and accommodation in the light of Covid 19.

A staff forum has been established with representation from across all Inspire services. The forum meets as a group and with the leadership team, this enables the staff voice to be heard and to ensure staff ideas and views are taken into account.

Covid 19 – response

21. In liaison with the County Council all face to face Inspire services had closed by 20th March. Hundreds of planned events, exhibitions, activities and courses were cancelled, with original commissions delayed or made digital. The ASK Inspire information helpline supported customers and virtual users. Well-being calls from ASK and local libraries were undertaken with many library users who were shielding and isolated, providing information and a friendly voice.
22. Staff reporting, communications and welfare measures were established by 20th March. Inspire staff participated in the County Council skills audit and senior Inspire staff attended Place Department risk and emergency meetings. Building management checks and arrangements for essential maintenance established for the Inspire estate of 67 sites.
23. Although face to face services were suspended several areas of service delivery were maintained in many cases through a rapid development of virtual services. The Inspire web site was reengineered and now provides a platform for both original and third-party content. This can be found at www.inspireculture.org.uk/online. Use of technology in providing the study programme, adult education courses, music teaching service and youth arts, often for the first time, was quickly established. Heritage and Archives delivered a virtual celebration of the 75th anniversary of VE day, alongside Inspire music services providing music for the day created by Nottinghamshire young musicians. The Inspire picture archive was opened for individuals to record their VE day experience and experiences of lock down for a historical picture record to be created.
24. The reopening and recovery of face to face services is underway, with libraries and archives being allowed to reopen from the 4th July as part of the national recovery plan. Nottinghamshire Libraries reopened with social distancing and a reduced service offer from the 6th July with 57 libraries out of 60 open to the public by mid-August.
25. Inspire has also undertaken a review of its service offer in terms of economic and community recovery.
26. In supporting the economy Inspire will be working with the County Council and other partners to support business and job seekers. This will include the Way2Work programme, creation of job clubs, re focus of learning courses on business skills and development of a business innovation and information service with support from the British Library. This is in addition to the current provision of ICT, Wifi, printing, desk and meeting spaces used by small or new business start-ups.
27. Inspire as a provider of the young people's study programme will offer supported internships within the organisation and as an employer will participate in the governments kick start employment support scheme which will offer 6 months of paid work experience for 18-25-year olds.
28. Inspire will continue to support individuals and communities as they recover. This ranges from access to ICT for job seekers and those accessing support and benefits, to facilitating opportunities for people to meet safely online and face to face. Inspire will launch its membership volunteering and engagement programme 'Community Makers' during 2020/21 in order to enable greater use of local skills and support to help communities to re connect and recover. A focus on well-being activity, reaching those who are isolated at home and creating libraries as places of welcome and connection will be prioritised across Inspire in the coming period.

29. Inspires financial position has been reviewed in the light of the impact of Covid 19. Current forecasts indicate a balanced position at the end of the current year having mitigated the loss of income through available government financial support.

Relationship with the Council and Stakeholders

30. The Council has a good working relationship with the organisation and maintains two nominated places on its main board. The Council also has board observer status for senior officers.
31. An agreed communications protocol between the Council and Inspire was approved by the former Culture Committee and is working well.
32. Other funders, Arts Council England, Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency, continue to engage in a positive ways with Inspire.
33. Good working relationships have been developed with a range of organisations, including – Nottingham Playhouse, Lakeside Arts University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University, First Arts Creative People and Places, The Royal Concert Hall Nottingham, NYCGB, The Harley Foundation, UNESCO City of Literature, BFI / Broadway Cinema, BBC Radio Nottingham, Business in the Community, Fun Palaces, York Explore, LibrariesUnlimited and Suffolk Libraries.

Other Options Considered

34. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

35. To ensure the Committee are updated on progress.

Statutory and Policy Implications

36. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

37. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That Members consider the update on the development of Inspire in the delivery of cultural, learning and library services across Nottinghamshire and its achievements in the fourth year of operation and agree to receive future performance updates on these services.

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Constitutional Comments (AK 10/09/20200)

38. The report falls within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee by virtue of its terms of reference

Financial Comments (SES 08/09/2020)

39. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

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.

Launch of Inspire – report to Culture Committee 19 April 2016

Inspire communications and marketing activity protocol – report to Culture Committee 1 November 2016

Culture, Learning and Libraries – Inspire development update and first year review – report to Communities and Place Committee 22 June 2017

Inspire review and Forward Plan 2020 - October 2017
www.inspireculture.org.uk/uploads/documents/IAR_for_web.pdf

Culture, Learning and Libraries – Inspire development update and second year review – report to Communities and Place Committee 14 June 2018

Culture, Learning and Libraries – Inspire development update and third year review – report to Communities and Place Committee 4 April 2019

Inspire Inspiration and impact review of 2018/19 - October 2019
<https://www.inspireculture.org.uk/about-us/annual-review/>

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.