

**REPORT OF THE ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN, FAMILIES
AND CULTURAL SERVICES****NOTTINGHAMSHIRE RURAL TOURING****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for a change to the management of the Rural Touring Scheme in Nottinghamshire from April 2015.

Information and Advice**Background**

2. Managed by the Arts Service, Village Ventures, the rural touring scheme for Nottinghamshire, works with local volunteer promoters to bring high quality performance from professional companies and artistes to village halls and other community venues across the County.
3. Supported by district council partners, over 100 performances take place in the County every year. In addition to co-ordinating the Village Ventures scheme, the Arts Service also runs two other similar schemes, under contract, for Lincolnshire and Leicestershire.
4. Financially the scheme is multi-faceted with support from all three county councils, nineteen district and borough councils together with investment from Arts Council England. Additional income is raised from promoter fees and box office receipts. Arts Council England (ACE) funds the schemes on a three year agreement whilst the local authorities express support in principle and confirm their contribution annually. The current three year agreement with the Arts Council ends on 31 March 2015.
5. Following our application to Arts Council England (ACE) in March 2014, the three schemes were awarded funding as a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). The funding award of £395,602 over three years, beginning in April 2015, will support the continued development of the programme and the network of over 600 volunteer promoters over the three counties. This application, submitted following consultation with all partners, was based on status quo in terms of support from the local authorities. This funding success was reported to the Culture Committee on 9 September 2014.
6. Each of the three county schemes is charged £25,000 pa to cover all the management including programming, contracting, marketing, promoter support, audience development and financial management. Leicestershire and Lincolnshire County Councils contract the Arts Service to provide this service outside of Nottinghamshire.

Current Position

7. Despite involvement in the new ACE application the increasing financial pressures on all local authorities has impacted on support for the schemes in 15/16 and beyond. In Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire the county councils and all the districts and borough councils have confirmed their support at the current level but in Leicestershire the picture is very different.
8. In October 2014 we were informed that Leicestershire County Council and two of their district councils were to cut all support for the scheme resulting in a 65% reduction in provision in Leicestershire and a loss of £25,000 to the management contract. This has made the management of the schemes by the Arts Service unviable in its present form and has put in jeopardy the ACE funding at its current level.

Proposal

9. Working with the Arts Council the Arts Service has been exploring alternative models which will protect the Nottinghamshire provision together with the scheme in Lincolnshire.
10. Similar schemes operate with local authority and Arts Council support in Derbyshire and across the West Midlands managed by an independent non-profit organisation, Live & Local. We have explored the amalgamation of the schemes across the East and West Midlands and the Arts Council has agreed to continue funding the schemes in Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire under this new arrangement.
11. This amalgamation will allow savings to be made on administration whilst ensuring the volunteer promoters receive the same level of support and the level of provision is not reduced in Nottinghamshire or Lincolnshire. It is believed that this model will also help to secure the longer term sustainability of the schemes.
12. The new management model would require no additional financial support beyond the current level of £21,000 per annum for which there is an allocation within the Arts Service budget for 2015/16.
13. The Council has worked with Live & Local on various joint projects over the last five years, and have always found them to be a highly professional organisation, with extensive experience of rural touring. As current clients of the Arts Council they adhere to all financial regulations and are committed to equality and to supporting capacity building within local communities.
14. We are confident that the Nottinghamshire promoters will receive the same professional level of support they have enjoyed under the Council's management and we will be working with the Arts Council and Live & Local over the next six months to ensure the handover is seamless.

Other Options Considered

15. There are a limited number of options available. Reducing the programme to cover the shortfall in administration costs was deemed unacceptable and was not seen as value for money by the Arts Council funding.

16. Reducing the scope of the schemes and focussing solely on provision in Nottinghamshire did not meet the Arts Council criteria for funding and would result in the loss of Arts Council investment and a further reduction in provision.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

17. The new management arrangements will ensure continued investment by the Arts Council in rural touring in Nottinghamshire and protect the quality and level of provision offered to the volunteer network across the County.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. 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 only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, 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

19. The financial implications are detailed in paragraph 12.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That the proposed new management arrangements for the Arts Council funded Rural Touring Scheme be approved.

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Constitutional Comments (LM 20/03/15)

20. The Culture Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (SS 20/03/15)

21. The financial implications of the report are set out in paragraph 12 above.

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.

Service Update for the period 9 June to 17 August 2014 – report to Culture Committee on 9 September 2014

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C0604