

Barrow Borough Council
Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Thursday, 2 February 2023
HSHAZ Cultural Consortium Project Lead

Report From: Helen Houston, Head of Regeneration & Planning Policy
Report Author: Helen Houston
Wards: Central, Hindpool

1.0 Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this report is to note contract management and performance monitoring arrangements for the High Street Heritage Action Zone Cultural Consortium Lead Contract with Art Gene.

2.0 Recommendation

- a) Note the contract management arrangements
- b) Note the performance management arrangements being used

3.0 Background and Proposals

- 3.1 The Cultural Consortium Lead contract is specifically procured to run alongside the High Street Heritage Action Zone capital programme.
- 3.2 Art Gene are contracted to act as Cultural Consortium lead until the end of the HSHAZ programme on 31st March 2024.
- 3.3 Funding for the HSHAZ Cultural Programme is provided by HM Government and administered by Historic England. Barrow Borough Council do not provide any match funding for the Cultural Programme.
- 3.4 Historic England set out the parameters and suggested structure for the Cultural Programme including that the Cultural Consortium must be made up of local cultural partners with a nominated Consortium Lead, which should not be the Council. As part of the application to government for a HSHAZ for Barrow we identified the partners who would form the Consortium and that Art Gene would be an appropriate lead. This was endorsed by HE and the other partners. The funding for the Cultural Programme Activity is passed to the Consortium Lead from the Council in line with the pre agreed schedule. The lead contact at the Council is the Head of Regeneration & Planning Policy and Historic England have also appointed a lead contact for Barrow. Officers meet with Historic England at regular intervals and provide update reports on activity in line with the milestones set out in the activity schedule.

- 3.5 The funding was awarded on the successful submission of a planned activity schedule for the lifetime of the Cultural Programme. Both the pilot grant and the Cultural Programme submissions were completed by the Consortium Members and council officers in collaboration. An initial contract of £10,000 to run a pilot scheme was awarded in November 2020. Following the success of the pilot scheme delivered by Art Gene, Historic England awarded a further £100,000 towards the full Cultural Programme in February 2021 with a further contract awarded. Due to the guidance set out by Historic England and the specialist nature of the cultural programme as outlined above delivery of the activity was not the subject of a competitive tender process.
- 3.6 Art Gene are the Cultural Consortium lead, but a number of other local arts, culture and community groups are on the Cultural Consortium and contributing to events. These include: Theatre Factory, BarrowFull, Full of Noises, Signal Film & Media, Cumbria Archives Service, Barrow Library, BAE Systems, Barrow BID, Barrow Civic & Local History Society, The Forum, National Lottery Heritage Fund and South Lakes Rock School.

Contract Management

The Council has established a clear and robust internal governance process for the management of its projects. The Heritage Action Zone project is reported to the Council's Corporate Programme Board on a monthly basis. At the commencement of each project, a business case is developed which sets out the aims and objectives of the project, proposed programme of activity, key risks, spend profile and outputs and outcomes. The Board reviews project progress against the original case through BRAG updates. When required, the Corporate Programme Board take mitigating actions to ensure that the projects meet their aims and objectives and deliver the necessary outcomes.

- 3.7 The HSHAZ Cultural Programme contract is managed by the HSHAZ Project Officer and Head of Regeneration & Planning Policy. They ensure that the Cultural Consortium deliver cultural events suitable for the HSHAZ programme, hit the required milestones and deliver the works within budget.
- 3.8 Barrow BC officers hold regular project meetings with Art Gene in line with Historic England's reporting and funding draw down schedule to assess progress and identify any risks.

Performance Management

- 3.9 The project is monitored and performance measured against delivery of events that form part of the HSHAZ programme. Given the organic development of these cultural projects, suitability is based on the views of heritage specialists and regeneration officers and not on prescriptive KPIs. Feedback from event attendees is also sought and recorded during and post events. Lessons learned are recorded and considered when developing new events.
- 3.10 Projects delivered through the HSHAZ Cultural Programme include:
- Duke Street Armchair Walk – a short local history film by Art Gene through the pilot scheme

- Wishbone – a short fictional film by Signal Film & Media
- Follow the Money – a show based on memories of local women working in Barrow’s many banks, by Theatre Factory (Due March 2023)
- From a Pin to a Piano – a pop up sound installation by Full of Noises (Due March 2023)

3.11 The initial £10,000 funding for the pilot scheme has been drawn down and spent.

3.12 £85,000 of the £100,000 for the main Cultural Programme has been drawn down and spent.

4.0 Consultation

4.1 Consultation is not applicable to this report as the report seeks to update Members on the contract management, monitoring and delivery arrangements.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 This report is presented for noting.

6.0 Contribution to Council Plan Priorities

6.1 The HSHAZ Cultural Programme contributes to the below goals of the Council Plan:

- Place: Our Borough is seen as a destination of choice for leisure, culture and sport.
- Place: Town centres are vibrant and well used.

7.0 Implications

7.1 Financial, Resources and Procurement

The HSHAZ Cultural Programme is wholly funded by Historic England. There are no procurement or resources implications from the recommendations.

7.2 Legal

The report details the contractual arrangements to date.

7.3 Local Government Reorganisation

The contract will transfer to Westmorland and Furness Council on vesting day and the contract management and performance monitoring arrangements will continue until March 2024.

7.4 Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

7.5 Risk

Risk	Consequence	Controls Required
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Failure to deliver cultural events (in Historic England's "reasonable opinion") before the end of the HSHAZ programme	Funding clawed back by Historic England	Regular meetings with Art Gene to determine process. Regular reports back to Historic England to highlight where improvement is required
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Contact Officers

Helen Houston: hhouston@barrowbc.gov.uk

Rory Wood: rwood@barrowbc.gov.uk