

# Record of Decision taken by Executive Councillor

**Decision title: Grant Funding Taunton Theatre Association**

**Executive Councillor making the decision: Cllr Caroline Ellis**

**Author Contact Details: Lisa Redston, Economic Development Manager**

**Date of Decision: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

## **Details of decision:**

The continuation of grant funding of £132,000 for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 to Taunton Theatre Association (TTA).

The grant will enable the delivery of accessible art and cultural events and performances, festivals, exhibitions, cultural and artistic education activities from the Brewhouse Theatre and through community outreach activities.

Funding will be subject to the terms and conditions set out in a revised Funding Agreement, which includes submission of an annual business plan to SWT.

The Funding agreement sets out the requirement of a 12 month notice period for termination of the agreement by either TTA or SWT. The aim of the notice period is to provide opportunity for TTA to secure alternative sources of funding to ensure continuation of the services, or to safely wind down the service reducing costs of cancellation of performances and to ensure employed staff are adequately supported.

As the notice period requirement for SWT to withdraw all funding for TTA is 12 months, this will place a financial obligation on SWT for the following financial year, which will need to be taken into account during annual budget setting processes.

## **Reasons for proposed decision:**

The activities of TTA support the delivery of SWT Council's draft Culture and Arts Strategy. The grant enables TTA to secure other local, regional and national funding to enable provision of a central hub in Taunton for Culture and Arts activity.

The grant will support the delivery of SWT's Covid Economic Recovery priorities by enabling local employment in the Culture and Arts sector (including volunteering and employment opportunities for young people), supporting a vibrant and diverse town centre offer for Taunton and improving links between the day and night-time economies.

The activities set out in the TTA-Brewhouse Business Plan promote inclusive access to Culture and Art opportunities including through community outreach activities.

## **Alternative funding options sourced:**

TTA has worked hard to secure regional and national funding available to the Culture and Arts sector to address the financial impacts of Covid 19. This funding has safeguarded the

continuation of an offer from the Brewhouse, enabled adaptation of the offer including online activities, with an overall strengthening of the offer.

Continuation of core funding by SWT will ensure a strong arts and culture offer in our County Town.

The below has been completed:	Name(s)	Date
Relevant ward councillor(s) consulted.	Councillor Francesca Smith (Chair) Councillor Sue Lees (Vice-Chair) Councillor Lee Baker Councillor Christopher Booth Councillor Simon Coles Councillor Caroline Ellis Councillor Marcia Hill Councillor Richard Lees Councillor Libby Lisgo Councillor Derek Perry Councillor Martin Peters Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts Councillor Alan Wedderkopp Councillor Danny Wedderkopp Councillor Brenda Weston	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
<b>The following are if appropriate / applicable: Yes/No. If yes the implications should be attached to this decision notice.</b>		
Finance implications	<p>Yes – SWT S151 officer has been consulted on proposed funding for 21/22 and ongoing financial obligations as a result of the 12 month notice period requirement to withdraw SWT funding.</p> <p>The General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22, approved by Full Council on 18th February 2021 includes provision for this grant funding for 2021/22 within the 'Culture and the Arts' budget SEO11G.</p> <p>The decision will commit SWT to the Funding Agreement and termination terms and conditions, including the requirement for a 12 month notice period (with associated funding) to terminate the Funding Agreement.</p>	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021

	<p>This obligation will need to be taken into account during the annual budget setting processes.</p> <p>An assessment of the grant in relation to the UK's International Obligations on Subsidy Control (replacing EU State Aid Regulations from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021) has been completed.</p> <p>The assessment concludes that the grant is not prohibited under new UK subsidy control regulations.</p>	
Legal implications	Shape Legal has been consulted and has advised on the content of the Funding Agreement, including specific conditions relating to termination and financial obligations of the Council.	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Links to corporate aims	<p>Our Environment and Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shape and protect our built and natural environment, supported by a refreshed Local Plan and develop our heritage, cultural and leisure offer including a clear vision and delivery plan for the Taunton Garden Town</li> <li>• Encourage wealth creation and economic growth throughout the District by attracting inward investment, enabling research and innovation, improving the skills of the local workforce and seeking to ensure the provision of adequate and affordable employment land to meet different business needs</li> <li>• Support the town centres throughout the District to meet the challenge of changing shopping habits</li> <li>• Support the enhancement of arts and culture provision within the District</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Climate and Sustainability implications	TTA is committed to promoting carbon neutrality and sustainability through its core activities as set out in the revised Brewhouse and TTA Business plan.	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Community Safety Implications	Provision of accessible opportunities for culture and arts activities, especially engaging communities with outreach programmes, can offer preventative, diversionary activities that support community safety and reduce anti-social behaviour.	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Equalities Impact Safeguarding Implications	As above, provision of accessible opportunities for culture and art activities removes inequalities in accessing art and culture. TTA is committed in their business plan to offering a rich range of activities that promote understanding of the importance of protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expression. The terms and	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021

	conditions of the Funding Agreement strengthen this by setting out an obligation whereby TTA must take into account Equality legislation when delivering its activities.	
Risk management	The legal and financial obligations have been noted by SWT's s151 Officer and Portfolio Holder. Risks of early termination by either party have been mitigated through various clauses in the funding agreement.  SWT has an officer and Member observer to the TTA Board meetings and regular monitoring of TTA activity ensures early intervention should any risk be identified.	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021
Partnership implications	The Funding Agreement strengthens partnership working arrangements between TTA and SWT Council.	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Any conflicts of interest declared by Leader or Executive Members consulted on the proposed decision. If Yes provide confirmation from Chief Executive to grant dispensation for the Leader's / Executive Member's views to be considered.**

No conflict of interest

**Decision Maker**

**I am aware of the details of this decision(s), considered the reasons, options, representations and consultation responses and give my approval / agreement to its implementation.**

Signed: 

**Name: Cllr Caroline Ellis**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

Note – This decision record is for decisions taken by Executive Councillors. The decision(s) can be implemented following publication and the period for any call-in has expired.

**Note:** A copy should also be sent to the Governance Team – [governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk](mailto:governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk)