

Report to: **Executive**
Date: **18th April 2024**
Title: **South Hams Festival**
Portfolio Area: **Economy & Jobs**
Wards Affected: **All**
Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: After the call in period for Executive

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Recommendations:

That the Executive AGREES:

- 1. to support the development of a South Hams arts and culture strategy and festival, to be delivered in the summer of 2025;**
- 2. to underwrite the cost of the festival in its first year up to the value of £32,500, in anticipation of a minimum of 50% of the funding being secured through local partners; and**
- 3. that the funding would need to be found from within the Year 2 (2025-26) delivery plan allocation.**

1. Executive summary

1.1 Historically, a company called NDP Circus were commissioned to develop a district-wide festival to be delivered in the summer of 2024. They were tasked with engaging with all of the towns across the District and their key organisations, and pulling together a report for Executive setting out how the Festival would be taken forward. They were also required to pull together a bid for Arts Council funding.

1.2 As a part of the work, NDP Circus were to identify sources of funding that could be used as match for the Arts Council bid, which would enable the festival to take place. However, as a result of their initial work, it has been recognised that trying to deliver a festival in 2024 is not viable, due to timescales, the lack of secured match funding, and the level of engagement required with our communities.

- 1.3 Since the initial work was commissioned, it has become clear that the time required to pull together a district-wide festival for the summer of 2024 would not be sufficient. As a result, the report produced by NDP Circus (Appendix 1), identifies that a more viable option would be to prepare for and deliver a South Hams Festival in the summer of 2025, across all towns. It would also create a far greater opportunity to secure match funding for the festival through Town and Parish Councils, private sector sponsorship, and Arts Council funding.
- 1.4 It is proposed that some gap funding, for example, if they were to be unsuccessful at gaining financial support from Town and Parish Council or the private sector, should be covered by South Hams District Council. Whilst the total gap funding could be as high as £65,000, the Council is recommended to underwrite up to a maximum of £32,500, representing 50% of the potential deficit.
- 1.5 If Executive is minded to support the project, this funding would need to be identified from the Council's year 2 delivery plan budget, across the 2024/25 and 2025/26 financial years.
- 1.6 Success measures for this project will be:
 - i. The economic benefit to the South Hames Economy
 - ii. The cultural value defined by participation and other appropriate metrics
 - iii. Financial sustainability of the project year on year
- 1.7 The project spend profile needs to be developed and shared with the Council. Alongside this, financial monitoring of spend against the agreed budget for the event, including grant and match funding secured from partners, will be required in order that a go / no go decision point can be passed in the Autumn.

2. Background

- 2.1 NDP Circus has previously delivered a successful Totnes Festival, which attracted over £65,000 of Art Council funding, £15,000 of funding from Totnes town Council, and £30,000 through SHDC (from a one-off Covid Recovery Grant with money from central government).
- 2.2 The week-long Festival was delivered in and around Totnes and Dartington, and the highlight was a performance by the Globe Theatre at Dartington Hall. Dozens of the town's businesses took part in and supported the Festival and its various events.
- 2.3 The proposed project would be a significant upscaling of their activities, and would see a similar scale of events being organised in partnership with other groups across all South Hams towns.

- 2.4 It should be recognised that most towns have their own events budgets, events calendars and locally focused delivery organisations, and it would be essential to bring these together to support a South Hams Festival. As a part of this work, NDP Circus will be required to engage with events organisations from each of the towns.
- 2.5 Separate to this project, but closely aligned with this work, South Hams District Council has identified the need for an Arts and Culture Strategy. There is a possibility that if the Festival were to be delivered in parallel with such a strategy, that it could act as a launch platform for wider activities supporting the sector. Officers are exploring opportunities to secure Local Government Association support to deliver an Arts and Culture Strategy through their Economic Growth Adviser Programme.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 If approved, the outcome of this project would be the delivery of a week-long festival across all South Hams towns during the summer of 2025. The festival would bring together a range of community organisations focused on the arts and culture, while also linking with key themes including climate change. The festival would bring together event organisers to help coordinate activities in each area.
- 3.2 To achieve this, key activities will be delivered by NDP Circus. These include:
- Networking and partnership building with key organisations from each town and the parishes
 - The securing of funding from partner organisations and businesses, to provide match for an Arts Council bid
 - The development of a bid to the Arts Council to enable the festival to take place
 - Coordination of a programme of activities to be delivered during the festival
 - Engagement with key groups, including educational bodies, to ensure that the activities will be able to reach as many and as wide a demographic of the resident population as possible
 - Promotion of activities to ensure that the festival is a key driver for attracting tourism to our towns and parishes
 - Work with key partners to ensure that climate change is considered within the festival and that climate change mitigation is a key theme promoted through the festival
- 3.3 Regular reporting will be delivered to the Portfolio Holder for Economy & Jobs and the Head of Place & Economy, to update on project progress and to ensure that the development of the festival is progressing in a timely manner.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

- 4.1 The Council has considered other courses of action that could be taken to try to deliver a district-wide festival:
- Direct delivery – The Council could look to directly deliver the project. The challenges with this approach, include finding the capacity within the local authority to deliver the scale of work required to coordinate such a festival, and our lack of existing relationship with the local arts and culture focused organisations. This would mean having to spend a significant amount of time building relationships from scratch to try to move a project forward which we have no experience of delivering previously.
 - Split the funding and provide it to each town – A decision would need to be made as to which organisation could coordinate a week of events in their towns, and their capacity to develop the programme of activity. It is unlikely that this would be effectively coordinated across all of the towns if this approach were to be taken, resulting in a risk of 5 smaller individual festivals being delivered which compete with each other rather than work in a complimentary manner.
- 4.2 NDP Circus have a track record of delivering arts and culture focused activities in the Totnes area, and of successfully drawing down significant levels of Arts Council funding to deliver previous festivals. It is recognised that coordinating an event across all 5 towns is a significant upscaling of their previous activities, which is why there would be an expectation of them to work with arts and culture organisations from each of the towns in a coordinating role to ensure that activities can be delivered across the District.
- 4.3 An impact report of the 2022 Totnes Festival is attached as Appendix 2 of this report.

5. Success Criteria

- 5.1 It is important that the value and benefit of a project such as this can be measured. Direct metrics are not always available, and proxy measures may need to be used.
- 5.2 The economic, cultural and financial sustainability should be used as success criteria, and appropriate metrics will need to be selected, such as participation, for reporting purposes back to the Council.
- 5.3 It will be the responsibility of NDP Circus to ensure appropriate metrics are selected, measured and reported on as part of the project.

6. Proposed Way Forward

- 5.4 The detailed NDP Circus proposal is attached as Appendix 1 of this report.
- 5.5 It will be important to ensure that money provided to the project is not just used to support NDP Circus as an organisation to become the dominant arts and culture focused organisation across the South Hams at the expense of other local groups. Any contract put in place with NDP Circus would ensure that local partner organisations in each town were supported to help coordinate activities in their towns and parishes.
- 5.6 It is possible that other event organisations will be displeased that they have not been given the opportunity to be the lead organisation for this project proposal. This will need to be carefully managed, to avoid negativity about the festival, and between potential partner organisations and the District Council. It will be important for members to help play a role in this, and to reassure local organisations that we are keen to ensure that they are able to benefit from this project.

7. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Details and proposed measures to address
Legal/Governance		There are no direct legal implications of the recommendations within the report.
Financial implications to include reference to value for money		It is recommended that the Executive agree to underwrite the cost of the festival in its first year, up to the value of £32,500, in anticipation of a minimum of 50% of the funding being secured through local partners. It is also recommended that the Executive agree that the funding would need to be found from within the existing Year 2 (2025-26) delivery plan allocation.
Risk		
Supporting Corporate Strategy		Economy and community
Consultation & Engagement Strategy		
Climate Change - Carbon /		

Biodiversity Impact		
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		
Safeguarding		
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		
Other implications		

Supporting Information

Appendices:

Appendix 1: NDP Circus Proposal

Appendix 2: Impact Report for Totnes Festival 2022 / 2023