

FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

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| Applicant name: | Greater Easterhouse Arts Company | |
| Application Reference number: | G201001050 | |
| Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2) | £108,750 | £104,250 |
| Officer's recommendation | | |
| <p>Summarise the key points of your assessment and draw out the strengths and weaknesses of the application taken together with any comments you have received from source evidence (portfolio of evidence/ internal / external consultation). Highlight any specific risks <i>Note: The amount of information you provide here should be sufficient for the decision maker to reach a decision. As with all previous commentary boxes please do not exceed 250 words</i></p> | | |
| <p>Comments: The applicant is Greater Easterhouse Arts Company (GEAC), a charity and organisation limited by guarantee which manages and programmes Platform in Easterhouse, a location generally acknowledged to be 'hard to reach' in terms of cultural activity. Platform has been open and operational for little over a year but has already established an audience for cultural activity in the area, this is evidenced in the attendance figures and up-take of the Local Links ticketing scheme.</p> <p>The essence of activities proposed in their Strategic Plan are to nurture existing audiences and build upon the strengths of existing programmes, whilst recognising the importance to attract new audiences and those from further afield.</p> <p>This application for FXO funding is seeking support to 3 new programmes of activity; the development of a new annual children's music festival called Flutter Echo, to expand their children's theatre programme (specifically for nursery years and 10 years +), the introduction of a regular music programme, and the cost of two new posts to support the new activity.</p> <p>The application has a clear relationship with three of the FXO priorities by; demonstrating <i>artistic vision and leadership</i>; by seeking opportunities to remove barriers to <i>access</i>; and through a commitment to <i>continually improving engagement with the public</i>. The application also meets a fourth priority in part, as although Easterhouse is not geographically isolated, there is <i>limited provision</i> and there are many barriers to people travelling to other areas to participate in arts activities. It also contributes to SAC Drama priority, '<i>development of theatre for children</i>'; and to a lesser degree fits with the Cross Artform Activity priority of, '<i>the development of collaborative working and artistic practice which crosses artform boundaries</i>', in their plans to bring artforms together for the Flutter Echo festival.</p> <p>The Financial Compliance Officer has rated the project as MEDIUM in risk and MEDIUM for value for money.</p> <p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear artistic vision and demonstration of artistic leadership ▪ Excellent management/staff track record – especially Arts Manager ▪ Excellent partnership working, especially with Glasgow City Council and in the delivery of the Bridge facility ▪ Strong reputation for delivery of high quality programme ▪ Flutter Echo (Children's Music Festival) will be the first of its kind in Scotland ▪ Education and outreach fully integrated with main programme ▪ Community Engagement Plan and audience development/marketing plans demonstrate a commitment to continual improvement of engaging with the public ▪ Aspiration to continue working with nationally and internationally recognised artists | | |

- Programme proposed has identified 'gaps in the market'
- Adequate provisions for governance in place

Weaknesses

- Some lack of detail in Strategic Plan (Business Plan) and the proposed programme
- Challenges in developing an audience for the proposed music programme in competition with other Glasgow City Centre venues

The application has been rated HIGH in terms of artistic leadership and public engagement, and MEDIUM in terms of governance, management and finance. The overall priority recommendation is MEDIUM, but it should be noted that there are few identified weaknesses or concerns in relation to this application.

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| Officer's overall priority recommendation | | MEDIUM |
| Lead Officer signature: | | Date:31 January 2008 Revised: 20 March 2008 |
| Print name: | Amy Wilson | |

Stage 2: Heads of Departments prioritise applications with advice from Specialist Advisors

1. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the application identified by the Specialist Advisors? Please summarise their comments below. What were their ratings of the importance of the application in being supported?

Comments:

The Specialist Advisors panel that considered this application included Kirsteen Macdonald, Susan Nickalls, Sita Ramamurthy, Louise Butler, Steve Slater, Alan Riach, Wendy Niblock and Sally Wilson. The panel commented:

They considered this a strong application with a clear artistic policy directing **Greater Easterhouse Arts Company's (GEAC)** plans. The application and business plan demonstrated a strength of partnership working to achieve their plans and values of inclusion were strongly embedded in the application and evident throughout the programme plans. A long-term approach to arts development and regeneration was evident within the area of deprivation, along with excitement and energy coming through the proposed programme. The panel considered the application and GEAC to demonstrate an inspirational approach locally, nationally and internationally.

The panel considered this application as a high priority for support.

2. Summarise the role of the organisation within the infrastructure of the sector. Assess to what extent the organisation's vision will contribute to the department's and to Scottish Arts Council's aims: (to fulfil artists' potential, to increase participation, to place creativity at the heart of learning)

Comments:

The applicant is GEAC, the organisation which manages and programmes Platform in Easterhouse, Glasgow, an area of high deprivation. Although Platform has only been open and operational for little over a year, it has grown out of long-term arts development in the area. Platform has already established an audience for cultural activity in the area, evidenced in the attendance figures and up-take of the Local Links ticketing scheme. GEAC received Scottish Arts Council capital funding and

has been in receipt of project funding, for example through the pARTners lottery scheme. It also receives strong support from Glasgow City Council.

1. Fit with FXO criteria:

1.1 Excellent artistic vision and leadership; role within sector/support to artists

GEAC demonstrates a strong commitment to artistic leadership with the application, demonstrating a clear artistic policy.

1.2 Improving your engagement with the public

GEAC strongly meets the criteria of *public engagement*, providing high quality arts activity within a community often marginalised from arts activity. Education and outreach are fully integrated with the main programme and the application demonstrates a commitment to continual improvement of engaging with the public.

1.3 Good practice in the governance and management

GEAC is a charity and company limited by guarantee which manages and programmes Platform in Easterhouse. The organisation demonstrates good practice in finance, governance and management, though some areas of the Strategic Plan are lacking in detail.

1.4 Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access

One of GEAC's key mission statements is to, '*inspire local people to be all they can be by removing barriers to participation*'. This ethos is reflected in the programme of activities, the physical design and within their commitment to staff.

1.5 Raising other income at least 25%

GEAC meets the matched funding requirement.

2. Fit with Departmental priorities

The application demonstrates a commitment to the development of collaborative working and artistic practice which crosses artform boundaries, in strong alignment with the Cross Art Form priority for Flexible funding. It also contributes to the Drama priority, '*development of theatre for children*';

3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims

GEAC contributes significantly to the Scottish Arts Council's Aim 2; '*to increase participation in the arts*' and the plan of work set out in the application also address the other aims, particularly Aim 1 '*to support artists to fulfil their creative and business potential*' through the development of new work, and Aim 3 '*to place the arts at the heart of learning*' through partnerships in formal and informal education.

3. Based on the lead officer's assessment and the subsequent meeting with Specialist advisors, please rate the application (High, medium, low) summarise your reasons for assessing the application as you have (drawing out the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and highlighting any specific risks)

Comments

1.1 Application rating

I concur with the Specialist Advisors panel and recommend this application as **high** priority for support.

1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating

I believe that GEAC demonstrates exceptional practice in its artistically focused approach to community engagement.

1.3 Strengths of application

- strongly meets the criteria for Flexible funding and the cross arts priority
- clear artistic vision and commitment to working with artists/ companies of the highest quality
- considered approach to partnership working and the long-term approach to arts development
- strong commitment to engaging and dialogue with their audiences.

1.4 Weaknesses of applications

- Some lack of detail in Strategic Plan (Business Plan) and the proposed programme

1.5 Specific risks associated with the application

The Assessing Officer highlights the potential challenges in developing an audience for the proposed music programme in competition with other Glasgow venues. This is referred to in the Business Plan but is not fully addressed. I consider that more research is required to inform the development of the music programme and positioning this in Glasgow.

1.6 Development areas identified

Flexible funding would enable a significant increase in the programme at Platform. The organisation would need to ensure the valuable approach currently employed would be maintained as this is developed, and strong planning will be imperative.

1.7 Recommended level of support

Given the comments above on further researching the proposed music programme, and the competitive funding environment, I recommend flexible funding at a lower level than requested and suggest £80,000 in 2009/10.

4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme

Comments:

1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?

Greater Easterhouse Arts Company Ltd, is based in the Easterhouse area of Glasgow.

1.2 Where will the audience come from?

All audiences are anticipated to come from Glasgow.

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| Head of Department's overall priority recommendation | | HIGH |
| Head of Department's signature: | | Date: 14 February 2008 Revised 26 February 2008 |
| Print name: | Anita Clark | |

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| Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts) | | |
| 1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made. | | |
| Comments: Strong overall fit with FXO criteria. The amount reflects the competitive funding context. Support of £70,000 annually is proposed. | | |
| Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation | | High |
| Chair of Meeting signature: | | Date: 2 April 2008 |
| Print name: | Iain Munro | |

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| Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit) | | |
| Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why. | | |
| Comments: Agree with Stage 3 recommendation. Support of £70,000 annually is proposed. | | |
| Directors recommendations to Joint Board | | High |
| Acting Chief Executive signature: | Jim Tough | Date: 10 April 2008 |

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| Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions | | |
| Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why. | | |
| Comments: The Joint Board accepts the Stage 4 recommendation. | | |
| Joint Board Final Decision | | APPROVE |
| Date: 24 April 2008 | If approved for support, enter sum awarded | £70,000 |

End of Assessment