

Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA409726253

Submitted: 22 March 2022 12:49 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy or decision: Funding for Cultural Organisations

Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): It is proposed to fund three of Essex's Arts Council England's (ACE) National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) over the next four years, Firstsite, Mercury Theatre and Essex Cultural Diversity Project (ECDP). Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture in England. The National Portfolio Organisations are the group of organisations who receive regular funding from ACE and in return provides the backbone of creative and cultural provision across the country.

These organisations closely align with ECC's priorities and have significant outreach activity programmes which cover a broad geography across Essex. Supporting these organisations will help ECC deliver against the priorities and aims of Everyone's Essex.

Firstsite - Founded in 1993, Firstsite is an art gallery situated in Colchester, Essex which moved to purpose built accommodation around ten years ago. In September Firstsite won the Art Fund Museum of the Year Award 2021 and creates exemplary exhibitions, commissions and hosts events in the gallery, within East Anglia, nationally and online.

The Mercury Theatre in Colchester is an artistic powerhouse in the East – a vital, vibrant, welcoming centre of culture for the people of Colchester, Essex and beyond. The Theatre engages with the community via a broad range of young people, seniors and SEND programmes whilst presenting new work and nurturing local talent, all taking place alongside blockbuster performances and the much-loved pantomime.

Essex Cultural Diversity Project (ECDP) has a vision to energise cultural diversity in the arts and heritage, and a mission to create opportunities, stimulate opportunities and provide a focal point for the development and coordination of cultural diversity through arts and heritage activity.

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?: Strong, Inclusive and Sustainable Economy, High Quality Environment, Health, Independence and Wellbeing for All Ages, A good place for Children and Families to Grow

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Enable inclusive economic growth: Good jobs, Levelling up the economy

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help people get the best start and age well: Minimise waste

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help create great places to grow up, live and work: Healthy lifestyles

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Transform the council to achieve more with less: Educating outcomes, Family resilience and stability, Levelling up outcomes for families

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?: a new policy (or decision)

Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates: Z:\9.

Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents: Z:\9.

Assessing the equality impact

Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision): Supporting the proposed cultural NPO organisations will positively affect a broad and large range of Essex residents and communities across the county. All three organisations generate significant income to the Essex economy attracting large visitors and audiences, whilst delivering far reaching community programmes, including Holiday Hunger, Special Education Needs and Disabilities and Tackling Inequalities.

Arts Council England National Portfolio status is a mark of excellence and ensures each organisation is sustainability funded and supported. ECC have an opportunity to therefore capitalise and harness the exemplary cultural expertise in Essex via these three NPOs, guiding any relevant and appropriate work towards the fulfilment of the Everyone's Essex strategy.

Funders and partners look to ECC's support and funding as a mark quality. Funding from other funding bodies can also be dependent on there being investment from ECC as this demonstrates a high level of commitment and confidence from the authority in support of their cultural infrastructure. ECC's support will therefore enable these organisations to lever greater funding, and more confidently approach funders and partners with the endorsement of ECC.

Does or will the policy or decision affect:

Service users: No

Employees: No

The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities: Yes

Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?: All Essex

Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?: Yes

Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?: No

Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?: Yes

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Description of impact

Description of Impact. If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank. You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page: Age, Disability - learning disability, Disability - mental health issues, Disability - physical impairment, Race

I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics: I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

Describe any actions that have already been taken to mitigate negative impacts on any of the protected

characteristics: The cultural organisations between them work with all of the above on creative, engaging and hugely beneficial programmes, including SEND, LGBTQ+, ethnic minority groups, youth projects and work in care homes and with those living with dementia.

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Mercury Theatre - Dementia friendly performance / older peoples and youth groups. • The Mercury believe theatre has the power to change young people's lives. The skills and confidence that come from participation in the performing arts can be applied to a young person's school, career, and life. The Mercury's fun programme of activities is designed to develop self-confidence, imagination, empathy, concentration and communication.

The Essex Cultural Diversity Project have delivered programmes with families and young people including summer holiday activities with groups including the Chelmsford Muslim Society for over 80 children from diverse backgrounds.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Examples include ECDP providing specialist support for Essex Book Festival to help diversify the programme and develop new audiences. This includes supporting the Festival to engage effectively with young people, particularly through organising events aimed at children and young people, giving emerging authors and creative practitioners the chance to reach new diverse (and younger) audiences. Supporting 10 diverse practitioners and 300 young people to engage in activities.

The Mercury meanwhile will maintain rate of 10% all tickets sold as concessions are for young people / Have an annual target of 600 community and education sessions across Colchester and Essex with 12,000 participants / Maintain Teachers Forums for Primary and Secondary Schools with a target of 40 members schools / Maintain level of 145 young people enrolled in youth drama classes weekly / Continue to create opportunities for access to the arts particularly for children and young people. This includes community involvement in Mercury Company productions and an ongoing commitment to overall community activities / Work with older people will continue during the period through senior matinees and other specific engagement activities.

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The Mercury Theatre delivers specific programmes for young people, activities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and various senior clubs, choirs and programmes.

ECDP meanwhile recognises that it is clearly the case that many creative practitioners and cultural workers, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, D/deaf or disabled people, and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, continue to struggle to develop and sustain financially viable careers. ECDP work head-on to address this through support and networking for emerging artists and creative practitioners, including opportunities for commissioned work. ECDP provide formal and informal advice and mentoring for diverse artists every year and we use our experience of working with partners, securing funding and identifying creative opportunities to support others – this is often delivered through our Salons and networking events.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: The Mercury will ensure the Mercury recruits and attracts a diverse workforce.

Target (as at 2020/21 levels):

70% female

5% disabled

2% minority ethnic

5% lesbian and gay

Maintain rate of 7% of tickets sold to disabled people and carers.

Maintain level of accessible performances for disabled and D/deaf people – 10 performance across:

- British Sign Language Interpreted (BSL users)
- Captioning (for D/deaf and Hard of Hearing users)
- Audio Described (Blind and Partially Sighted users)
- Relaxed/Dementia Friendly Performances (for those with sensory impairments and conditions)

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The very nature of arts and culture improve mental health and wellbeing. Engagement with a diverse and broad range of communities and audiences will enhance mental health and community cohesion.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Mental health improved via festivals, performance, exhibitions and specific mental health programmes.

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The Mercury Theatre will provide dementia, autism and BSL performances.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: The Mercury will deliver a level of accessible performances for disabled and D/deaf people – 10 performance across:

- British Sign Language Interpreted (BSL users)
- Captioning (for D/deaf and Hard of Hearing users)
- Audio Described (Blind and Partially Sighted users)
- Relaxed/Dementia Friendly Performances (for those with sensory impairments and conditions)

Race

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Essex Cultural Diversity Project (ECDP) has a vision to energise cultural diversity in the arts and heritage, and a mission to create opportunities, stimulate opportunities and provide a focal point for the development and coordination of cultural diversity through arts and heritage activity.

ECDP was established in 2008 following a feasibility study commissioned by Arts Council England and Essex County Council to investigate the need for an arts programme focused on cultural diversity in Essex. The study found that work was urgently needed to support BAME artists and arts organisations, as well as strategic organisations to address cultural diversity in the arts and heritage sectors.

Now a registered charity, ECDP works across cultural sectors, building partnerships with artists, arts organisations, museums, and libraries to promote culturally diverse work.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: ECDP will engage a diverse audience for the 2022 programme.

A programme of commissions that employ diverse creative practitioners

- Brentwood in partnership with Brentwood Borough Council
- Maldon in partnership with Maldon Council and other local partners
- Saffron Walden in partnership with Saffron Walden Museum and Uttlesford District Council
- Firstsite Colchester – a programme of engagement with diverse communities through a collaboration with the Firstsite Gallery and the Singh Twins.

Support for diverse artists through Salon events – 4 in 2022-23 supporting 40 artists/creative practitioners

Stand up for Diversity events – 3 in 2022-23 supporting 120 artists develop their profile and gain new partnerships

Working with Rochford District Council, Maldon District Council, Uttlesford District Council, Brentwood Borough Council and Essex County Council to develop commissions that engage diverse audiences and focusing on locally relevant issues.

Promotion of Essex's wealth and diversity and talent through ECDP website, social media, ECDP TV and Radio (award winning).

Commission Essex based artist Lata Upadhyaya to create artwork of suitcases themed around the Ten Pound Poms stories of people who migrated to Australia

Working with Essex Record Office Archives and communities across Essex.

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your EqlA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date EqlA completed: 22/03/2022

Name of person completing the EqlA: Andrew Ward

Email address of person completing the EqlA: Andrew.Ward@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Place and Public Health

Your service area: Culture, Heritage and Green Spaces

Your team: Marketing and Business Development

Are you submitting this EqlA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: louise.fitton@essex.gov.uk