

Agenda Item

REPORT OF **Head of Communities and Place**

To: **Full Council**

Subject: **The Plough Arts Centre**

Date: **19/06/23**

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To resolve whether to support the decision of Community and Resources Committee, in January 2023, to agree to an unbudgeted contribution of £10,000 per year for three years towards the running costs of the Plough Arts Centre and if so how that commitment is funded.

1. INTRODUCTION

The decision of Community and Resources Committee (C&R) to approve a contribution of £10,000 per year for three years to the Plough Arts Centre was made subsequent to the approval of the Council's 2023/24 budget and was therefore not included within. Full Council should consider whether it supports the C&R resolution and how that commitment might be funded.

2. REPORT

The Plough Arts Centre report and supporting documentation that was presented to Community and Resources Committee is attached as Appendix 1.

The minutes of the Community and Resources Committee meeting record the following in relation to the debate on the item:

The purpose of the report, presented by the Head of Communities & Place, was to update Members on the Plough Arts Centre and to consider whether it is possible to provide the organisation with revenue support.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Christie, the Head of Communities & Place clarified the position regarding the bid submitted by the Plough to become a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) and to receive core support of £120,000 per year for three years. The bid set out that the organisation would receive Local Authority Grants, but it did not state which Local Authority.

It became apparent during the discussion that Members were wanting to provide core funding to support the organisation but were also mindful of the Council's financial position.

The following proposals were put forward;

It was proposed by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Laws that the Council provide a contribution of £10k per year for three years.



Councillor Christie proposed to support the Plough and for each Councillor to give £250 from their Councillor Grants for three years and that would give a total of £9k. There was no seconder for this motion.

Councillor Hodson proposed an amendment to Councillor Brights motion –

“To contribute £10k this year and to review the position this time next year.”

This motion was seconded by Councillor Hurley.

Councillor Newton proposed a minimum of £10k for three years and this to be reviewed on an annual basis. There was no seconder to this motion.

Following further discussion, a vote was taken on the amendment proposed by Councillor Hodson and seconded by Councillor Hurley.

(Vote: For 4, Against 7) The motion was lost.

A vote was then taken on the proposal by Councillor Bright, seconded by Councillor Laws and -

Resolved:

That a contribution of £10k per year for a period of three years be approved.

(Vote: For 9, Abstentions 2) The motion was carried.

Subsequently the decision of Community and Resources Committee to approve a contribution of £10,000 per year for three years to the Plough Arts Centre was the subject of call in by the Chair of Internal Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

At a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Internal) on the 16th March 2023 the decision of Community and Resources Committee was considered and debated.

The minutes of that meeting record the following:

Councillor Watson clarified the reason for his call-in which was to scrutinise the figure of £10k and not to agree to £25k which was not affordable to the Authority.

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin referred to conversations she had had with Senior Officers in relation to the call-in procedure and confirmed she had been advised that an alternative recommendation increasing the funding for the Plough could be proposed. She spoke passionately giving reasons as to why the Authority should be supporting the Plough.

The Head of Legal clarified the call-in process - if an alternative recommendation was made at this meeting it would need to go back to Community & Resources Committee to ascertain whether they agree with the alternative recommendation. If they did not agree it would then go to Full Council for resolution.

The Financial Manager addressed questions and concerns and reported on the impact this would have on the Council's financial position. In February the Council approved the budget, this did not include financial support for the Plough, therefore it will be for Members to determine how the support will be funded.



During the debate it became evident that although Members supported the Plough, they were also mindful of the Council's financial position.

The Head of Communities & Place responded to comments made regarding monies given to the Burton Art Gallery which he advised was not funding but is by way of a Service Agreement.

Councillor Watson emphasised strongly the affordability aspect for the Council, should funding support be given.

Following the debate, it was proposed by Councillor Langford, seconded by Councillor Harding that the decision of Community & Resources Committee stands.

It was proposed by Councillor Inch, seconded by Councillor Watson that funding support is not given to the Plough.

Councillor Cottle-Hunkin proposed that a contribution of £25k is given to the Plough. There was no seconder for this Motion.

Following further discussion Councillor Inch withdrew his motion.

A vote was taken on the proposal by Councillor Langford, seconded by Councillor Harding and –

Resolved

That the decision made by Community & Resources Committee for a contribution of £10k per year for a period of three years stands.

(Vote: For 6, Against 2, Abstentions 1)

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

As set out in C&R report

Financial Implications

As set out in the C&R report

Human Resources Implications

As set out in C&R report

Sustainability Implications

As set out in C&R report

Equality/Diversity

As set out in C&R report

Risk Management

As set out in C&R Report

Compliance with Policies and Strategies



As set out in the C&R report

Lead Member Views

As set out in the C&R report

3. CONCLUSIONS

Community and Resources Committee resolved:

That a contribution of £10k per year for a period of three years be approved.

It is now for Full Council to resolve upon whether that unbudgeted resolution should be supported and, if so, how the Council should fund the commitment.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members consider whether to support the Community and Resources Committee resolution that a contribution of £10k per year for a period of three years be approved.

If members are minded to support the Community and Resources resolution then it is possible to ring-fence and set aside £30k from the draft 2022-23 budget surplus, which will be reported to the next Community & Resources Committee.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations:	Chief Executive, Head of Legal and Governance, Finance Manager and S151 Officer
Contact Officer:	Sean Kearney
Background Papers:	

