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**To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee**

**Date: 18 December 2019**

**Subject: Culture Coventry Trust**

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## **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and achievements of Culture Coventry Trust (including the outcomes from grant funding), monitoring arrangements and future plans.

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 To consider the content of the briefing note and to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities concerning ways in which the Council's investment in Culture Coventry can make an increased contribution to agreed priorities.

## **3 Background**

- 3.1 Culture Coventry trust (CC) was established in 2013 and is an independent limited company with charitable status, with a Board of five trustee-directors. CC manages the Coventry Transport Museum, Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Old Grammar School and Lunt Fort, and has responsibility for the management of the city's collections of art and archives, and for the running of the Tourist Information Centre.
- 3.2 The charitable objects of CC are:
- the advancement of education for the public benefit in the knowledge of the history and development of British road transport by collecting and conserving road transport items of aesthetic, historic, constructional or engineering interest or importance.
  - the advancement of education of the public in relation to arts, culture, heritage and science in Coventry.

## **Finance**

- 3.3 The Council is the main funder of the Trust providing annual grant of £2m. The current grant funding agreement runs until in March 2021.
- 3.4 In addition, CC is currently repaying two loans from the Council, dating from 2017. These were approved in order to enable CC to meet its pension liability to 19/20, and to improve the cashflow of the company while it underwent business improvements necessary for a sustainable future. Debt repayment on both loans to date is in accordance with agreed profiles.

- 3.5 The CC three-year business plan was approved by the by its Board in February 2018. This followed a major review of costs and staffing structures and the development of a series of business improvement measures including the introduction of charging at the Coventry Transport Museum which was introduced in July 2019.
- 3.6 Investment is being made by CC into facilities to address historic under-investment. This will include improvements to the Museum's permanent offer and temporary exhibition offers. CC is currently being managed on an interim basis by staff from CVLife, the city's principal sports charity, supplemented by a senior finance officer seconded from the Council until March 2020.
- 3.7 The Sport, Culture & Destination service is currently undertaking a review of all grants, intended to sharpen processes and ensure grant agreements are fit for purpose. .The review will focus on the agreement of outcomes that will be achieved by Culture Coventry through grant support from the Council.

## **Governance**

- 3.8 CC's trustees are currently engaged in discussion with trustees of CV Life to consider the options for future organisational structure, including assessing the desirability of creating a single trust to manage both sport and culture, establishing a shared services company, or recruiting a dedicated and suitably qualified independent management team for CC.
- 3.9 The trustees will share their analysis with the Council over the coming months and officers have requested to be involved in the modelling of any future operation, to ensure it meets the Council's needs in relation to management of the city's cultural and heritage assets, and the legacy of City of Culture 2021.
- 3.10 The trustee group is considering the vision and objectives of the city for sport, arts and heritage, the possible governance options and the financial implications of the different organisational structures. Officer recommendations to Members are expected before the end of the financial year.
- 3.11 Officers in the culture service monitor the delivery of the trust against the obligations set out in its grant agreement with the Council. This includes observing the bi-monthly meetings of trustees. In addition, officers meet regularly with the trust's senior managers to review performance against its financial plan. This arrangement enables officers to manage the risks associated with funding the trust, in the light of historic financial and operational under-performance.
- 3.12 The current Council review of all cultural grants is likely to create more robust monitoring arrangements for financial and cultural aspects of the operation, and to review the Collections Loan Agreement under which CC is responsible for the management of the city collections.

## **Attendances**

- 3.13 The Lunt Roman Fort focusses mainly on educational visits, with some general public admissions. The Old Grammar School (refurbished in June 2015) has since been used exclusively for conferencing and events with visitor numbers between 200 and 300 per year. Attendances at sites operated by CC (Coventry Transport Museum, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and the Lunt Roman Fort) are detailed below. The downward trend of visitor

numbers is a challenge for the trust. It should be noted that nationally DCMS sponsored museums nationally have demonstrated a 3% decline in visitor numbers.

Table One – Culture Coventry Visitor Numbers

	<b>Coventry Transport Museum</b>	<b>Herbert Art Gallery and Museum</b>	<b>Lunt Roman Fort April-August</b>
2016/17	396,573	247,327	6979
2017/18	377,088	226,841	7152
2018/19	360,484	231,103	5345

3.14 The collections managed by Culture Coventry are the Transport Collection (designated collection status granted in 1998), Social and Industrial History, Visual Arts, Archaeology and Natural Sciences. The Council’s statutory archives function is also delivered by the trust.

3.15 Culture Coventry introduced admission charges at the Transport Museum in July 2019 for visitors. The charges do not apply to GoCV card holders and entitle the ticket-buyer to annual admission.

Table Two – Coventry Transport Museum Admission Charges

<b>Annual Ticket Type</b>	<b>Price</b>
Adults	£14
Concessions (Senior & Student)	£10.50
Junior (5 - 16 years)	£7.00
4 or under	Free
Essential Carer	Free
Family (2 adults + 2 children)	£35
Small Family (1 adult + 3 children)	£28
Go CV card holders	Free

3.16 Since charging was introduced, the number of visitors attending has fallen in comparison with the same period in the two preceding years. As described above, visitor numbers is general are falling.

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>
Visitor Numbers July to October	81,244	125,803	139,475

3.17 CC had anticipated reduced visitor numbers in its financial forecasts due to customer sensitivity to the introduction of charging. The current visitor numbers are in-line with the forecasts within the CC business plan, it is expected that this resistance will lessen in future years. If visitor numbers follow the current trend, the total visitors for the first year of

charging will be in the region of 244,000, which is a significant reduction on the previous total.

- 3.18 The Go CV card is a loyalty scheme that commenced in June 2019. Coventry residents or those paying Council Tax to Coventry City Council, are eligible for the scheme, which entitles the account holders to access discounts at the Transport Museum, The Wave and CVLife sports facilities.
- 3.19 CC is analysing its ticket buyers in relation to the balance of local and non-Coventry attenders, age and GoCV use, to inform future modelling. Prior to the introduction of charging, it was estimated that local residents comprised 30% of the overall visitor number. Data collected in the first four months indicates this has reduced to 20%.

### **Culture Coventry Programme**

- 3.20 Culture Coventry is one year into the current four-year business plan; the first year has been one of experimentation and learning across the various programmes. Key areas of research and development have been
- digital as a tool to engage, provide access and as art
  - co-creation to better reflect the voices of Coventry and provide meaningful interaction with the people of Coventry
  - national and regional audience development through better PR management and high profile art shows; stronger learning programmes
  - better programming of high quality contemporary art in partnership with the local arts ecology and wider national collections.
- 3.21 In 2019, Culture Coventry reapplied to Arts Council England for accreditation of the three museums within the Trust's portfolio. The quality mark is linked directly to funding from the Arts Council and demonstrates to the wider sector that the Trust will operate the museums in accordance to best practice guidelines in collections care, ethical operation, provision of access and learning programmes. The process involved reviewing and developing policy, strategy and action plans for the next four years, in line with the current business plan. The results will be published in 2020.
- 3.22 The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum (HAGM) is currently developing a new approach to co-creation that is embedded in a vision to bring high profile contemporary art to Coventry. Learning from flagship projects, Artists' Rooms and Journey With The Waste Land, the trust has formed an informal framework for co-creation that places the work of participants alongside the work of international artists. The remodelling of galleries on the first floor will enable the new framework to be embedded into the way of working and strengthen the HAGM's position, not only as a place that shows the best the country has to offer, but also demonstrates best practice in cultural democracy.
- 3.23 As a cultural leader in the city for engaging children and young people, the improved temporary programme has been utilised to grow cultural learning opportunities for secondary school students that will improve the quality of access to students looking to progress within the creative industries. Last year, the HAGM became the regional lead for the national Articulate programme and will host the regional heats in 2021. This work has led to increased engagement with secondary schools.
- 3.24 The support of local emerging artists has developed through a regional commissioning model in partnership with New Art West Midlands. The new programme will see twelve newly-graduated artists mentored by an up-and-coming curator for a year. During this year the twelve artists will enter a competition from which six will be commissioned and their work displayed in a touring show. The HAGM will host the curator and the pilot show. In addition, a Coventry Arts Forum has been set up, which convenes on a monthly basis to

support the city's arts organisations and artists. Collectively the forum supports training, shared programming opportunities and disseminates national information and case studies. This groups acts as a one stop place for visual arts discussions with the City Council and City of Culture Trust.

- 3.25 Coventry Transport Museum (CTM) has been preparing to become a "destination venue" in readiness for charging. The temporary programme has been overhauled and now tells a story of innovation with the intention to become a museum of engineering in line with competitors such as Think Tank and the Space Museum in Leicester. The programme will provide opportunities for immersive and experiential access to engineering-based enquiry and will reflect the innovation that Coventry is known for.
- 3.26 Brose Ltd continues to sponsor the CTM learning team, in order to develop its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) based programme and ensure that schools have a high-quality learning experience that fits with the national curriculum and supports classroom-based learning. The Brose sponsorship allows CTM to support young people in understanding engineering career pathways before they choose their GCSE subjects.
- 3.27 The family learning programme has also benefited from the additional STEAM expertise and has created interactive workshops that allow children and young people the opportunity to work alongside adults and explore engineering techniques and principles through creative practice.
- 3.28 The collections team has been working on growing the running collections so that there is a wider pool of vehicles that can be taken out to various motoring events across the region with the ambition to participate in some national car events. These events create profile of the collections. They also create a sense of destination for enthusiast nationally.
- 3.29 The Lunt Roman Fort is one of the most important and popularly used educational resources within the portfolio managed by CC, with around 5,000 children per year from 200 schools enjoying interpretative experiences of the Roman era. In addition to this, the summer holidays and annual Lunt Roman Festival attract a further 1,500 visitors to the site. The Fort is in need of capital investment, for the reconstruction of the ramparts and entrance tower. CC is investigating possible sources of funding in order to ensure that the unique educational experience can continue.
- 3.30 Lunt Roman Fort continues to be a popular learning site, being fully booked all season by schools across the region. In response to feedback from our local schools, the Trust has developed an outreach package to be delivered to Coventry schools during the closed season. School holiday activity attracts visitors to the site during non-term time and is the only time, apart from the festival that the site is open to general visitors.
- 3.31 The Lunt festival had a hiatus in 2018, in order to allow new team members an opportunity to understand the site. The festival was reintroduced in summer 2019 with a renewed partnership with Britannia (Horrible Histories). In future there will be an emphasis on growing the diversity of the festival to reflect the diversity of both the Roman Army at the time and the diversity of Coventry and its residents.
- 3.32 The Old Grammar School plays an important role in the creative events programme, in particular the autumn season, as the venue lends itself to the Day of the Dead festival. The Trust has annual programmes that include; Nightmare and Nibbles; The Rocky Horror Picture Show; Tales from Two Tables; Screening Human Rights and ar film festival, Horror Pictures.
- 3.33 Coventry Archives has now become embedded into the HAGM creative programme. This approach has grown the number of people who access the Archives. The recent Radical Drawing exhibition, which draws on the Courtauld Institute's collection of 20<sup>th</sup> century drawings demonstrates the connection a local company had with international art collecting

in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. As a result, HAGM was able to interview ex-employees and place this context within the exhibit.

- 3.34 In addition, the Archives support public events such as store tours, local author book-signings and family history workshops.
- 3.35 As part of the Trust's digitisation programme CC has worked in partnership with Coventry University and the local group Photo Miners. This has enabled hidden collections of maps, building plans and pictures of Coventry to be digitised in time for UK City of Culture 2021. Culture Coventry's aim is to digitise 10,000 images by 2021.
- 3.36 Culture Coventry has successfully attracted £450k of funding from Arts Council England to improve the environmental controls within the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum and reduce the carbon footprint of the building. These capital works will provide greater control of the conditions the Council's collections are displayed in and reduce the on-going running costs of the museum.
- 3.37 In August 2019, the Council received a £8.51m capital grant allocation from Arts Council England to support projects which create production space, expand and improve cultural and heritage venues ready for UK City of Culture in 2021 and providing a lasting legacy of the title.
- 3.38 CC's project included within the application is to improve the galleries within the HAGM, creating additional gallery space by re-purposing a paint store and improving three adjoining galleries. The investment will improve the flow of visitors around the building and create a "dialogue" between the four gallery spaces.
- 3.39 The improvements will enable CC to attract and showcase nationally and internationally significant work and increase the number of national partners working in the gallery. They will improve the visitor experience in response to customer feedback and create a platform for learning and engagement work to be exhibited alongside core programming.

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