

## FLEXIBLE FUNDING ASSESSMENT

<b>Applicant name:</b>	West Lothian Council	
<b>Application Reference number:</b>	G201001053	
<b>Amount Requested (Year 1/Year 2)</b>	£106,000	£109,000
<b>Officer's recommendation</b>		
<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><b>Comments:</b></p> <p><b>Overall comments</b></p> <p>The application is from West Lothian Arts Services which is part of West Lothian Council's (WLC) Education and Cultural Services. The application is for the programme of activity at the Howden Park Centre for 2009 – 2011. HPC is expanding and developing its programme after refurbishment and will be the hub of artistic activity for West Lothian. It is raising quality and taking a strong participatory approach to the upgraded venue. WLC has a good track record in terms of delivering participatory activity through the Arts Education team at the council.</p> <p>How the application relates to the flexible fund criteria –          Although the centre is taking a strong participatory approach and moving towards a higher standard of programming the weakness in relation to meeting fund criteria is that this project would not make a unique contribution to excellent vision and leadership in the arts in Scotland. The application makes some general contributions to specific artform priorities but does not address any of these to a significant degree (see question 2).</p> <p>At this stage there are a number of additional areas of concern which make this application a low priority overall. The key to these areas is mainly timing as the Trust and Management Board with responsibility for running the venue and programme is not yet in place and the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with WLC has not been created. This situation leaves strands of the application underdeveloped (particularly in terms of how the centre will operate and how staff will work together to deliver the programme). It also means there is no track record as of yet for the work and management of the venue through the Trust. This application also raises the general question of best use of Scottish Arts Council resources in supporting the development of the arts in Scotland and where responsibility lies for funding programmes in mid scale (but strategically important) local authority venues.</p> <p>In addition to this the SAC capital grant for the refurbishment of HPC carried a condition of no expectation of revenue funding from SAC (although this does not preclude application to this fund).</p> <p>There were also a number of financial documents missing from the application at the time of submission.</p> <p><b>Key strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key hub for artistic activity in West Lothian</li> <li>• Covering a range of art-forms</li> <li>• Participatory nature of the work</li> <li>• Access Plan for audience development</li> <li>• Expanding provision and programming responding to demand</li> </ul>		

- Developing as a family friendly venue
- Organisations working in partnership to maximise value for money and reach
- Developing as a high quality touring venue
- A range of new facilities available
- Public 'ownership' of the space
- Use by community groups

**Key weaknesses**

- Not presenting a unique excellent vision or leadership in terms of the arts in Scotland
- Some compulsory financial information initially not supplied with application
- Capital grant condition of no expectation of revenue funding for HPC from SAC
- Trust responsible for management of programme not in place yet
- Service Level Agreement not in place at this time
- Business plan underdeveloped and not created by Trust
- No track record for Trust as they have not formed yet
- Concerns and issues raised by SAC staff commenting on the application
- Comments from SAC staff place as a low priority
- Financial assessment placed at overall low priority and high risk due to capital grant condition

The decision to rate this application as a low priority for flexible funding is based on: the application not meeting the key criteria in terms of vision and leadership; a range of issues as described above in relation to underdevelopment of the application and lack of track record due to the Trust and Board of Management not being in place; the Capital grant condition of no expectation of revenue funding and the concerns, issues raised and low priority rating of those SAC staff who have commented on the application.

<b>Officer's overall priority recommendation</b>		<b>LOW</b>
Lead Officer signature:		Date: 28/01/08 Revised: 20/3/08
Print name:	Chrissie Ruckley	

## 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:

The application from **West Lothian Council** (WLC) lacked clarity given that it came from the local authority but focused on a programme of activity in the refurbished Howden Park Centre when it re-opens. The panel recognised the importance of local authority arts provision but did not consider WLC's cultural strategy to have close relevance to the criteria for flexible funding. The panel did not consider that the application demonstrated a clearly artistically driven approach or a strong, distinctive creative vision for future.

The panel rated the application as low 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 application is from West Lothian Arts Services which is part of West Lothian Council's (WLC) Education and Cultural Services. The application is focused on a programme at the Howden Park Centre, currently under refurbishment and supported through Scottish Arts Council capital funding.

#### Comments:

##### 1. *Fit with FXO criteria:*

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

The application from West Lothian Council has not adequately demonstrated excellence in artistic vision or a distinctive role in artistic leadership.

##### 1.2 *Improving your engagement with the public*

The application from West Lothian Council articulates a strong approach to encouraging participation in the arts.

##### 1.3 *Good practice in the governance and management*

The Trust and Management Board which will have responsibility for running Howden Park Centre has yet to be established and the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with WLC is not in place. There is no track record for the work and management of the venue through the Trust.

##### 1.4 *Practical implementation of your equal opportunities policy; widening access*

West Lothian Council is working with the Adapt Trust on issues of access for the new Howden Park Centre. The ethos of inclusion and access is evident throughout the proposal with programmes designed to attract specific target groups.

##### 1.5 *Raising other income at least 25%*

West Lothian Council has met the matched funding requirement.

## *2. Fit with Departmental priorities*

The proposed programme expands across artforms but has not clearly demonstrated the Cross Art form priority for the development of collaborative working and artistic practice which crosses artform boundaries.

## *3. Fit within Scottish Arts Council aims*

The proposed programme at work at Howden Park Centre will contribute across the Scottish Arts Council's aims.

**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 Assessing Officer and the Specialist Advisor panel in rating this application as a **low** priority for support.

#### *1.2 Reasons for assessing at this rating:*

The application does not meet the criteria for flexible funding, particularly in excellent artistic vision and leadership. As the Trust which will run the Howden Park Centre is not yet in place, flexible funding would be premature at this stage.

#### *1.3 Strengths of application:*

- aspirations in the application to raising quality and taking a strong participatory approach to the upgraded Howden Park Centre
- WLC has a good track record in terms of delivering participatory activity through the Arts Education team at the council.

#### *1.4 Weaknesses of applications:*

- lack of a clearly artistically driven approach
- Trust and Management Board with responsibility for running Howden Park Centre is still to be established
- the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with WLC is not in place
- no track record as of yet for the work and management of the venue through the Trust

#### *1.5 Specific risks associated with the application:*

As the Trust that will manage the Howden Park Centre and the service level agreement with WLC are not yet in place, this is an underdeveloped application. Additionally, the following conditions were attached to the capital grant made for the refurbishment of Howden Park Centre:

- The applicant confirms their understanding that there can be no guarantee of future revenue/project funding for activities at HPC for either the Trust or WLYT by SAC
- Confirmation that if the Trust failed to reach the income levels detailed in the Business Plan, WLC would underwrite any operating loss to ensure the continuing use of the centre as an arts venue.

#### *1.6 Development areas identified:*

As noted above.

#### *1.7 Recommended level of support:*

Flexible funding is not recommended.

**4. Please comment on the geographic reach of the programme**

**Comments:**

*1.1 Where will the activity/programme take place?*

Howden Park Centre is based in West Lothian.

*1.2 Where will the audience come from?*

The application states that 89% of the audience is drawn from West Lothian.

**Head of Department's overall priority recommendation**

**LOW**

Head of Department's signature:

Print name:

Anita Clark

Date: 14 February 2008  
Revised: 26 March 2008

<b>Stage 3: Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) make recommendations to Directors (Acting Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive and Co-Directors of Arts)</b>		
1. Summarise the reasons why the final rating has been made.		
<b>Comments:</b> Weak overall fit with FXO criteria in the context of a highly competitive funding round. Not recommended for support.		
<b>Collective Heads of Department (Arts Development Managers) priority recommendation</b>		LOW
Chair of Meeting signature:		Date: 2 April 2008
Print name:	Iain Munro	

<b>Stage 4: Directors make recommendations to Joint Board (strategic fit)</b>		
Record the Directors' recommendation and confirm the suggested level of support. If the recommendation differs from Stage 3, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> Agree with Stage 3 recommendation.		
<b>Directors recommendations to Joint Board</b>		LOW
Acting Chief Executive signature:		Date:10 April 2008
Print name:	Jim Tough	

<b>Stage 5: Joint Board's decisions</b>		
Record the Joint Board's recommendation. If the recommendation differs from Stage 4, please summarise the reasons why.		
<b>Comments:</b> The Joint Board agrees with the Stage 4 recommendation.		
<b>Joint Board Final Decision</b>		REFUSE
Date: 24 April 2008	If approved for support, enter sum awarded	£

**End of Assessment**