

The North Yorkshire Council

Corporate Director of Community Development

15th May 2024

Early Years Innovation in Museums Programme Application

Report to the Corporate Director of Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT
1.1 To request approval from the Corporate Director – Community Development, to authorise submission of an application to the Early Years Innovation in Museums, a research and development funded programme from the Art Fund and Nesta for a maximum of £65,000 over two years 2024-26

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Skipton Town Hall has recently been shortlisted for the Art Fund Museum of Year 2024. As a result of this success, the Art Fund have now encouraged an application from Skipton Town Hall, North Yorkshire Council for the Early Years Innovation in Museums programme.
- 2.2 The Early Years Innovation in Museums programme is a two-year research and development scheme from the Art Fund and Nesta.
- 2.3 Eight lead museums will be selected, with each receiving a maximum of £65,000 for the entirety of the two-year programme.
- 2.4 The aim of the programme is to design a high quality and effective early years intervention in museums using museum spaces and collections/programming within venue. This will support local, low-income families with children aged 2-4 years, so that they can spend quality time together, creating building blocks for physical, emotional and cognitive skills.
- 2.5 An additional delivery partner museum will join in year two. Scarborough Museums Group are our proposed partner for the expansion of the programme if successful.
- 2.6 The scheme will build a foundation of evidence and experience to support future development, funding and scaling into both a North Yorkshire wide and national initiative.
- 2.7 The programme is due to commence in June 2024 and conclude by June 2026.
- 2.8 The benefits of the project are that it:
 - Complements Skipton Town Hall's shortlisting for another of the Art Fund's programmes, the Museum of Year 2024 Award as well as the national Kids in

Museums awards for both Most Accessible Museum 2023 and Overall Best Museum 2023.

- Has ease of delivery and builds on the skills and ability of the core team in Skipton.
- Enhances existing NYC assets and support for a key target audience.
- Includes partnership opportunities, which will contribute to stronger legacy for the programme for the benefit of local people and related services.

2.9 If the application is successful, the spending profile for the programme will be defined before activity commences. This will be developed with the support and collaboration of the Finance Team.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 In summer 2023 Art Fund and Nesta partnered with three museums to explore how playful museums sessions can best support families with children under five, by enhancing caregiver child interactions, growing parent/caregiver skills and confidence and engaging families who experience barriers in accessing arts and culture. These pilot schemes were encouraging and evidenced that museums have the potential to play important roles in supporting developmental outcomes in children under five. Therefore the Art Fund and Nesta are expanding the programme for an additional eight partner museums, to be selected on a competitive basis.

3.2 In 2023 Skipton Town Hall was amalgamated into the new North Yorkshire Council culture team, within Community Development. The venue was awarded Overall Best Museum 2023 from the national programme Kids in Museums and has been shortlisted for the Art Fund Museum of the Year prize for 2024.

4.0 APPLICATION TO THE EARLY YEARS INNOVATION IN MUSEUMS

4.1 Applications for the Under Fives programme are encouraged from museums that have strong experience of and best practice in working with early years families.

4.2 The programme will develop, test and scale a new early years intervention in museums. It aims to encourage a wider range of families to use and visit museums more often. The interventions will support early child development and enhance parent-child interactions.

4.3 The intervention will develop a six-to-eight-week programme of facilitator-led, playful sessions for parents and caregivers and their children aged 2-4 years old to enjoy time together.

4.4 The objectives of the sessions are to -

4.4.1 Support warm and confident interactions and relationships between parents/caregivers and their children that help them to communicate and engage in shared activities in ways that promote children's social and emotional development and enrich family life.

4.4.2 Empower and build understanding, confidence and skills that can be embedded at home.

- 4.4.3 Foster learning by doing, with sessions facilitated by the existing on-site learning team and freelance professionals.
- 4.4.4 Engage and support priority families in cohorts of around 12 families per group.
- 4.4.5 Deliver a six-to-eight-week evidence-informed curriculum for each family cohort via one weekly 2.5 hour session for six to eight weeks.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

To not apply for the programme organised by the Art Fund, who are also running the Museum of the Year Award 2024. However this would contradict their encouragement to apply. The winner of the Museum of the Year award will be announced on 10 July 2024. The deadline for this application is 15 May 2024 and there will be no opportunity for consideration unless an application is submitted and any chance of the possible £65,000 investment will be lost.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 6.1 The programme is complementary to the successful track record of Skipton Town Hall, having been shortlisted for the Art Fund's Museum of the Year Award 2024 and the Kids in Museum awards in 2023. This will impact North Yorkshire Council's other cultural hubs as the successful elements of the programme can then be scaled to each venue following the programme. Scarborough Museums Group has been identified as a delivery partner for year two of the programme and further exchange of learning of best practice will emerge as an additional benefit. The work will also be reflected in the forthcoming cultural strategy and link to Council priorities around health and locality working.
- 6.2 Delivery of the programme will need support from colleagues in Finance, Legal and Procurement.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Provided that approval is granted to submit the bid, and if the application is successful, the total grant awarded will be a maximum of £65,000 over two years to each lead museum to cover the costs of participating fully in the programme.
- 7.2 Whilst no additional funding will be required of NYC to support delivery of the project, any future revenue for the developed areas will be assessed as part of the detailed programme and kept by North Yorkshire Council to reinvest for the benefit of this key family audience.
- 7.3 The spending profile for the programme is not required before submission of the full application and this will be developed with the support and collaboration of the finance team if the bid is successful.

7.4 Providing that the programme is successful, future under-fives programmes will be developed into an affordable paid for service with additional social value for participating families.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications arising from submission of the funding bid. Grant terms are not available at the present time but will be reviewed by Legal Services when released, should the bid be successful. In the event that the bid is successful, any contracts entered into in respect of the grant funding will be in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, and if relevant the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. If any of the grant terms and conditions represent an unacceptable risk for the Council then the grant offer would be declined.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Skipton Town Hall recognises its responsibility to meet their statutory public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 in carrying out their duties as part of a Local Authority and recognises that the protected characteristics under the Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 If successful, Skipton Town Hall will commit the programme to North Yorkshire Council's Climate Change Strategy 2023 to 2030, specifically by working with partners that reduce North Yorkshire's emissions and through careful consideration of transport options. Low waste and the circular economy ethos will be adopted through our work with local families and businesses.

10.2 Sustainability is a key part of Skipton Town Hall's vision and the venue seeks to work with all stakeholders in a way that protects the natural environment and recognises the dependency on the natural world responsibly.

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 That the Corporate Director of Community approves the application for The Early Years Innovation in Museums programme from the Art Fund and Nesta, so that Skipton Town Hall can have the opportunity to bid for the funding available to enhance the offer for the key under five family audience for the next two years.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 For the Corporate Director of Community to authorise submission of an Early Years Innovation in Museums application for a maximum grant of £65,000 over two years, starting in June 2024.

Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	
Date	

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

- Art Fund information on Early Years Innovation in Museums Early Years Innovation in Museums Lead museum application guidance
- Arts Fund completed application form
- Letter of support from Interim Director, Scarborough Museums Group
- Draft letter of support from Jo Ireland, Assistant Director, Culture and Leisure, North Yorkshire Council

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Presenter of Report – approval requested by email.