

Subject:	GRANT TO THE ASTOR THEATRE
Date:	19 February 2019
Decision to be taken by:	Councillor Trevor Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Property Management and Environmental Health
Report of:	Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Trevor Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Property Management and Environmental Health
Decision Type:	Executive Non-key
Call-in to be Suspended:	No
Classification:	Unrestricted
Delegated Authority:	Paragraph D2 (Specific Powers Delegated to Members of the Executive) of Section 3C (Responsibility for Executive Functions) of Part 3 (Responsibility for Functions) of the Constitution: 'To determine applications to the Council for revenue or capital grants.'
Purpose of the report:	To provide a cinema facility at the Astor Theatre, Deal.
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder for Property Management and Environmental Health approves a grant of £7,000 to Deal Arts Management CIC for the purchase of seating and cinema projection equipment.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Astor Theatre is owned by Dover District Council (DDC) and let on a long-term lease to Deal Town Council (DTC) which sub-lets the theatre to Deal Arts Management CIC (DAM). This grant would allow DAM to increase the current community cinema offering, including more weekly film screenings and Saturday morning pictures for children.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Astor Theatre operates as a theatre/arts space, and will continue to do so. This grant is not intended to change the character of the theatre, but is being offered to allow the theatre/arts space to widen its offer and screen more films. This is consistent with the uses clause in the lease of the property from DDC to Deal Town Council.
- 2.2 DDC has been in informal discussions with Deal Town Council regarding the provision of equal grants of £3,500 from DDC and DTC. DTC have not agreed to be a match funder of this project. However they have not raised any objections to the project or raised any concerns with regard to the lease between Deal Town Council and DAM.

2.3 The equipment purchased with the grant will be the property of Deal Arts Management CiC. If the equipment is still serviceable DDC hope that they would just leave the equipment on the premises for the benefit of whoever takes them over, but recognises that they would not be under any legal obligation to do so.

2.4 This grant is in addition to the annual grant of £5,000 currently provided by DDC.

3. **Identification of Options**

3.1 The Council has three options:

1 Decide not to give a grant to DAM

2 Award a grant to DAM of £3,500 if DTC agree to match it with an equal grant.

3 Award a grant of £7,000 to DAM.

4. **Evaluation of Options**

4.1 Option 1

4.2 Declining to give a grant would leave Deal with no cinema provision other than the limited offer currently provided at the Astor. Without this grant Deal will be dependent upon the completion and re-opening of the Regent Cinema for any future cinema.

4.3 In the light of the time taken for the Regent project so far, this is not the recommended option.

4.4 Option 2

4.5 DTC have not agreed to match the DDC funding, and so this option has the same drawbacks as Option 1. For this reason this is not the recommended option.

4.6 Option 3

4.7 This option will result in an increased cinema offer for Deal. For this reason, this is the recommended option.

4.8 Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 confers a specific power on the Council to contribute towards the expenses of doing anything necessary or expedient for the provision of an entertainment of any nature and the provision of a theatre or other premises suitable for the giving of entertainments.

5. **Resource Implications**

5.1 The grant will be funded from the Council's contingency budget.

6. **Corporate Implications**

6.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: The S151 Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comment (LS).

6.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

6.3 This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15>.

7. **Background Papers**

None.

Contact Officer: Mike Davis, Strategic Director (Corporate Resources)

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