

Portfolio Holder Decision

Music Hub Bid

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Education
Date of decision	2 October 2023
	Signed

1. Decision taken

- 1.1 That the Portfolio Holder for Education approves the submission of a collaborative bid for funding to be made to Arts Council England (ACE) on behalf of Warwickshire County Council Music Service by Coventry City Council acting as the lead partner for Warwickshire County Council, Coventry City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Music Services. For the purposes of establishing a new regional Music Hub from September 2024 and delegates to the Executive Director for People the finalisation of any required agreements with Coventry City Council on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.

2. Reasons for decisions

- 2.1 To ensure that Warwickshire Music Service retains its position and influence in the strategic leadership of new Music Hub arrangements from September 2024, and that through Warwickshire Music, Warwickshire schools, children and families continue to benefit from the Music Education Grant to sustain and develop musical opportunities in schools and communities across the county.

3. Background information

- 3.1 Since 2011, Warwickshire County Council, through its Music Service, Warwickshire Music, has been the lead for Warwickshire's Music Education Hub. Lead Hub Partners receive and manage the Department for Education (DfE) Music Education Grant to support the delivery of the National Plan for Music (NPME) Education.
- 3.2 In June 2022, the DfE published a new National Plan for Music Education (NPME), which included the intention to fund fewer, larger, more strategic Music Hubs, encompassing multiple local authority areas

- 3.3 In March 2023 the DfE, through Arts Council England (ACE), published new geographic arrangements for Music Hubs, which proposed from September 2024, Warwickshire will form part of a new Music Hub encompassing Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Local Authority Areas. This builds effectively on existing relationships between Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Authorities, Music Services and Hubs.
- 3.4 An open application process to lead new Music Hubs from September 2024 began in late July 2023 and will close on 12th October 2023. A successful application will enable Warwickshire's continued receipt of £0.777m of Music Education Grant funding. The outcome of the application process is expected in April 2024.
- 3.5 Warwickshire Music is currently in a transformation process to establish new management and administrative structures to better meet the current and future business and educational needs of the service. Given the capacity pressure placed on the Service, to ensure the effective implementation of a new structure for Warwickshire Music and mitigate against the risk of an unsuccessful application outcome, we believe that Warwickshire is best placed to support not lead a collaborative Hub application.
- 3.6 Coventry City Council through its Music Service, Coventry Music has agreed to lead a collaborative application with Warwickshire and Solihull to establish a new Music Hub.
- 3.7 Upon the successful outcome of the application process in summer 2024, it is proposed that the three Local Authority Music Services will work to establish a new legal entity (possibly a charity) jointly owned by the three Local Authorities to oversee and manage the new Music Hub that will encompass Warwickshire, Coventry & Solihull Local Authority Areas. Each Local Authority Music Service will retain its local identity and independence and will be the Music Hubs Lead Delivery Partner for their Local Authority Area. A report will be taken to Cabinet later in the year to seek approval to work with Coventry and Solihull to establish an appropriate legal entity.
- 3.8 A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will be entered into with Coventry City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council to govern how the parties will work together during the bid process and to work towards establishing a separate legal entity. This will include details of the governance arrangements for the project including financial contributions of each partner.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 WCC's Music Service acting as the lead partner for the Music Education Hub (MEH) receives and manages the Music Education Grant (MEG) for Warwickshire and is also the principal deliverer in the MEH. In 2023-24 Warwickshire's MEG is £0.777m and is used to support and subsidise the delivery of the National Plan for Music (NPME).

- 4.2 Our aim through the proposed bidding and management arrangements for the new Music Hub is to retain funding for Warwickshire at current levels, meaning this is a cost neutral decision for the Council.
- 4.3 There will be costs associated with supporting and developing the collaborative bid, for example: legal costs to establish the appropriate partnership agreement with the other Local Authorities. However, whilst these are not fully known at this moment, it is envisaged these can be managed within existing resources in the current financial year given that the service achieved a surplus of £0.032m over the Music Service's Gross Surplus Target in 2022/23. If there are any longer-term additional costs these will form part of the subsequent Cabinet report seeking approval to enter into the new arrangements.

5. Environmental implications

5.1 None

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Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Education Cllr Kam Kaur

Urgent matter?	
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Kam Kaur

Legal – Sioned Harper

Finance – Brian Smith

Democratic Services – Amy Bridgewater-Carnall

Councillors – Chairs and Spokes Children and Young People OSC – Councillors M
Humphreys, Brown and Roodhouse