



## CABINET

Tuesday, 06 September 2022

<b>Subject</b>	First Light Festival - National Portfolio Organisation application and match funding
<b>Report by</b>	Councillor Craig Rivett Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development  Councillor Letitia Smith Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities, Leisure and Tourism
<b>Supporting Officer</b>	Paul Wood Head of Economic Development & Regeneration <a href="mailto:Paul.wood@eastsuffolk.gov.uk">Paul.wood@eastsuffolk.gov.uk</a> 07798 797275

Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN
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Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Kirkley & Pakefield

## Purpose and high-level overview

### Purpose of Report:

To demonstrate the success of the 2022 First Light Festival (FLF) event and wider cultural development and engagement programme. The FLF cultural programme, which is far broader than the festival weekend, is a core element in the wider ambitious development and regeneration strategy for Lowestoft as evidenced with the Lowestoft Seafront Vision and Town Investment Plan. Analysis of the 2019 and 2022 festivals and wider cultural programme clearly shows they are achieving their intended impact and outcome i.e. showcasing Lowestoft as a vibrant and diverse cultural centre and attracting visitors well beyond the town's usual reach and demographic.

This report seeks approval from Cabinet to provide First Light Festival Community Interest Company (FLF CIC) with £500k of match funding over three years to support their National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) application to the Arts Council.

If successful in their application, FLF CIC will receive £660k from the Arts Council and in combination with ESC, and other match funding this will secure the future of the annual festival (and wider cultural development programme) for at least the next three years, 2023 – 2025 inclusive, and allow it to expand and engage even deeper into the local resident, education and business communities.

### Options:

1. Provide FLF CIC with reduced match funding – this would severely restrict the CIC's ability to deliver a regionally impactful, broad based, inclusive cultural programme and festival as set out in the NPO application. It would also severely reduce, in scale and ability, to deepen engagement with the wider Lowestoft community in developing and delivering the programme.
2. Cease any future funding of the FLF CIC - this would result in the CIC's inability to host any form of significant cultural event in the town. At best a much smaller and more localised event could be held but this would not have the wider regional profile and impact that the festival was first developed to achieve. A key objective is to attract audiences that would not normally visit Lowestoft and the 2022 festival was attended by between 30,000 – 35,000 people (final evaluation results still being finalised), a third of which visited the town for the first time. On a broader scale this will also severely limit the wider cultural objectives within the Council's Strategic Plan and in particular how ESC promotes cultural development to achieve a number of the Council's strategic priorities i.e., economic growth, enabling communities, financial self-sufficiency and environmental protection.

### Recommendation/s:

1. That, in support of the Strategic Plan and the Council's emerging cultural strategy, Cabinet approve £500k over the 3 year period, 2023/24 to 2025/26 to support the continuation of First Light Festival CIC's regionally impactful cultural development programme, festival weekend and application for National Portfolio Organisation status. Council funding would be provided on a sliding scale over the three years i.e. £180k for 2023/24, £170k for 2024/25 and £150k in 2025/26 as the CIC

generates additional income through both the festival and as operators of East Point Pavilion.

2. That Cabinet approve the use of the New Homes Bonus Reserve to fund the £500k growth to the revenue budget over the three year period 2023/24 – 2025/26.

## Corporate Impact Assessment

### **Governance:**

ESC is a member of the FLF CIC Governance Board and as such has a strong input into the CIC's strategy and delivery and as a result can ensure its objectives support ESC's Strategic Plan and emerging Cultural Strategy priorities.

### **ESC policies and strategies that directly apply to the proposal:**

East Suffolk Economic Strategy

Lowestoft Cultural Strategy 2025 'Celebrating Culture on the Edge'

Lowestoft Town Investment Plan

South Beach Masterplan

Lowestoft Seafront Vision

### **Environmental:**

The First Light Festival CIC has a strong Environmental ethos, and agenda which sets out policy and procedures to meet environmental legislation and approved codes of practice, including:

- To reduce impacts from pollution, emissions, and waste
- To encourage more sustainable forms of transport
- To sustainably manage the use of all resources, energy, water, and procurement
- To raise awareness and encourage participation in environmental matters
- To assist performers and festival goers to participate in the festivals in an environmentally sensitive way

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

An equalities impact assessment was completed for the September 2021 Cabinet report (Cab Ref: ES/0870) which demonstrated that the FLF will have an overall positive impact on the ten characteristic groups. Since the impact of the FLF and wider cultural development programme for 2023 – 2025 does not change the 2021 assessment it has been agreed not to submit an updated version but instead refer to the earlier assessment.

The festival is free entry, which removes any financial barriers to access, especially for residents from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The festival programme provides opportunities for everyone to engage and enjoy music, dance, film, talks, walks, sports, and workshops. Furthermore, a wide range of local community organisations, which include many of the protected characteristic groups, are directly involved in the

development and delivery of the annual festival and broader cultural development programme.

The upper and lower promenade are accessible, and the festival programme takes place on both promenades. In June 2022, a new board walk was installed on the South Beach, which aids access for wheelchair users. Furthermore, the First Light Festival CIC have an Equality and Diversity Policy. Anecdotal evidence (full evaluation report will be available shortly) from the 2022 festival shows that the event was attended by a very diverse audience, in terms of age, ethnicity, socio-economic group and abilities. This diversity of involvement and attendance is something which will be built and extended in the future development of the wider cultural programme and festival weekend over the next three years.

#### **Financial:**

It was agreed by Cabinet on 7 September 2021, to provide the First Light Festival CIC with a grant of £200k, £114k from the Business Rates Pilot Reserve and £86k general fund to support the hosting of the 2022 First Light Festival, this provided 48% match funding. ESC's financial support for the 2019 and 2022 festival weekends resulted in significant financial benefits for the town and local suppliers, with up to 65,000 attendees over both weekends. Local accommodation providers reported 100% occupancy over the 2022 weekend and many of the concessions were local companies who experienced very high trading levels. Furthermore, East Point Pavilion's opening coincided with the 2022 festival, and it also experienced very high levels of trading with the festival providing excellent exposure which has contributed to continued healthy trading since its June opening.

The new match funding request of ESC, in support of anticipated NPO funding, for the next three annual festivals (2023, '24 and '25) and associated cultural development activity outside of the actual festival weekend is £500k. This will reduce ESC's match funding to 43% over the next three years and is predicated on a successful award of £660k from the Arts Council covering the same period. ESC's grant of £500k is an additional budget requirement and will be funded from the Council's New Homes Bonus Reserve.

The ESC grant will be tapered over three years as follows:

- £180k in 2023/24
- £170k in 2024/25
- £150k in 2025/26

This tapering reflects the CIC's transition to greater financial self-sufficiency, which has been encouraged by ESC and also their ability to increase earned income over the festival weekend and through their operation of the East Point Pavilion.

If the NPO application is unsuccessful, ESC will continue to work closely with the FLF CIC to secure other external funding. Likely sources include a project grant application to Arts Council, this is the route which secured previous Arts Council financial support and discussions with Suffolk CC to maintain their current funding commitment. ESC's 3 year, £500k commitment will act as strong leverage in securing other external funding as most

external funders will want to see a strong demonstration of local match funding.
<b>Human Resources:</b> No impact.
<b>ICT:</b> No impact.
<b>Legal:</b> A grant agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the grant will be agreed with FLF CIC. This will set out the roles and responsibilities of the CIC and the Council and the KPIs expected to be achieved.
<b>Risk:</b> A key risk is the lack of finance to deliver a regionally impactful, diverse and inclusive cultural programme and festival weekend in Lowestoft. This would also impact severely on ESC's wider cultural development and engagement approach, which supports multiple Strategic Plan priorities. The Council's £500k commitment will mitigate this risk and even in the event of an unsuccessful NPO application the level of local match funding committed will acts as strong incentive in securing alternative external funding.  The grant agreement with FLF CIC will mitigate against any liabilities raised against the Council, as the CIC will have overall accountability and responsibilities for the festival and related activity. The CIC, as part of its governance and preparations for hosting the annual festivals, has developed and regularly updates a comprehensive risk register.

<b>External Consultees:</b>	<p>The FLF CIC works with a large number of organisations to develop and host the annual festivals. This collaboration necessitates ongoing consultation on all elements of festival and programme development, examples of organisations involved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts Council</li> <li>• Suffolk Art Link</li> <li>• Suffolk Libraries &amp; Museums</li> <li>• Dance East</li> <li>• CEFAS</li> <li>• Marina &amp; Seagull theatres</li> <li>• Lowestoft Rising</li> <li>• Lowestoft Cultural Leadership Group</li> <li>• Access Community Trust</li> <li>• East Coast College</li> <li>• Lowestoft primary and high schools</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the CIC undertakes an evaluation of festival goers and for the 2022 festival 443 survey responses were received.</p>
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## Strategic Plan Priorities

Select the priorities of the <a href="#">Strategic Plan</a> which are supported by this proposal: (Select only one primary and as many secondary as appropriate)		Primary priority	Secondary priorities
<b>T01</b>	<b>Growing our Economy</b>		
P01	Build the right environment for East Suffolk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P02	Attract and stimulate inward investment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P03	Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P04	Business partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P05	Support and deliver infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T02</b>	<b>Enabling our Communities</b>		
P06	Community Partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P07	Taking positive action on what matters most	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P08	Maximising health, well-being and safety in our District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P09	Community Pride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>T03</b>	<b>Maintaining Financial Sustainability</b>		
P10	Organisational design and streamlining services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P11	Making best use of and investing in our assets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P12	Being commercially astute	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P13	Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
P14	Review service delivery with partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T04</b>	<b>Delivering Digital Transformation</b>		
P15	Digital by default	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P16	Lean and efficient streamlined services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P17	Effective use of data	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P18	Skills and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P19	District-wide digital infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>T05</b>	<b>Caring for our Environment</b>		
P20	Lead by example	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P21	Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P22	Renewable energy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
P23	Protection, education and influence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>XXX</b>	<b>Governance</b>		
XXX	How ESC governs itself as an authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**How does this proposal support the priorities selected?**

**T01 Growing Our Economy theme of the Strategic Plan,**

P02: Attract and stimulate inward investment

The FLF has clearly demonstrated that it showcases Lowestoft in a high profile and positive light. One of the objectives of FLF was to positively change perceptions of the town and in so doing will attract additional inward investment, especially within the cultural and

creative sectors through public and private investment but also in other growth sectors such as clean energy/ maritime/ marine science.

#### **P03: Maximise and grow the unique selling points of East Suffolk**

Culture and the creative industries are a strategic priority and are increasingly seen as a driver for the local economy. The First Light Festival uses Lowestoft's USP as the most easterly town and its landscape and celebrates the changing tides, light and darkness, sun, and stars for a unique shared experience with music, dance, film, talks, walks, sports, and workshops as well as local and regional food, drinks and produce.

In 2019 ESC's investment of £90k resulted in a £900k return on investment in terms of direct local financial benefit. In 2022, £200,000 invested by East Suffolk Council delivered approximately £690,000 of visitor spend, three times return on investment. This is a much narrower measure than the direct local financial benefit indicator cited for 2019 and once the full evaluation report is completed this overall figure will be available. The fact that 2022 attendances and anticipated overall local financial benefit outstripped 2021 is even more impressive when the adverse weather conditions are taken into account.

As a result of the wider cultural development programme and the FLF weekend the profile of Lowestoft is being raised significantly and positively. This included a significant lifestyle piece in the Telegraph which heavily promoted Lowestoft as tourism destination and characterised the town as a vibrant and contemporary resort.

#### **T02 Enabling our communities**

##### **P09 - Community Pride**

The socio-economic profile of Lowestoft highlights significant challenges for a large proportion of the population. Many residents suffer from income and employment deprivation, which has resulted in low levels of cultural participation and engagement, as well as a lack of optimism surrounding the town. The festival helps break down barriers and reach less engaged groups, mitigating against the disconnect between the existing creativity in the town and potential participants.

The First Light Festival and broader cultural development programme forms part of a wider cultural regeneration, which can tackle some of the socio-economic challenges, including promoting more cohesive communities and maintaining healthier lives. The First Light Festival 2019 attracted up to 35,000 visitors with of 443 people who responded 90% agreeing that 'the festival has left them feeling more positive about Lowestoft'. 93% said First Light Festival is good for Lowestoft's image and 93% said First Light Festival is welcoming for the whole community.

#### **T03 Maintaining Financial Sustainability**

##### **P11: Making best use and investing in our assets**

Lowestoft South Beach is one of the most appealing beaches in the country with its wide expanse of golden sand. A key aim of the festival is to promote the beach and surrounding resort to a much wider regional audience as research has shown that the town's reach is limited both in numbers and socio-economic class. As part of the FLF programme ESC has invested heavily in reimagining and redeveloping the previously deteriorating East Point Pavilion as a contemporary food, beverage and venue offer – this is now operated by FLF CIC and complements the festival programme with a year-round leisure/ cultural offering.

##### **P13: Optimising our financial investments and grant opportunities**

The First Light Festival CIC has previously been awarded a total of £69,999 from Arts Council England and Suffolk County Council, with a further unsecured £91,586 from grants and trusts and a further £53,000 from earned income. For the 2022 festival this external funding was matched by ESC to deliver a highly ambitious post lockdown programme. With the prospect of securing £660k through the award of Arts Council's NPO status, an ever more ambitious festival (and out of season) programme will be delivered over the next three years. By maximising the leverage of this external funding ESC, through our proposed £500k investment, are supporting the delivery of a much more impactful cultural development programme which supports several of the Council's Strategic Plan priorities.

### **T05 Caring for our Environment**

P21: Minimise waste, reuse materials, increase recycling

The FLF CIC has an environmental policy which seeks to reduce the impacts from waste and encourages the 'reduce, reuse and recycle' approach. This is targeted at both festival performers and attendees.

P23: Protection, education and influence

The FLF environmental policy includes an objective to raise awareness and encourage participation in environmental matters as part of the FLF programme.

## **Background and Justification for Recommendation**

1	Background facts
1.1	In January 2019 Cabinet gave approval to develop plans for a wide-ranging cultural festival in Lowestoft in support of its strategic objectives. The festival was organised and delivered by First Light Festival Community Interest Company (CIC) with membership drawn from several arts organisations from Suffolk and Norfolk, with Wayne Hemingway as the creative lead.
1.2	<p>In September 2021, following a two year hiatus, as a result of the pandemic, Cabinet approved plans and funding for the second full First Light Festival which took place in June 2022. During 2020 and 2021 an online only and much smaller scale events took place respectively. The Evaluation Report for the 2022 Festival, showcased that there is a clear need for further investment in creative culture in the area, and a large audience has already been established through the success of the festival. The festival was recognised as a key element of cultural regeneration, tourism, and place – making for the area.</p> <p>Key achievements and outcomes from the 2022 festival include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 35,000 attendees over the weekend (up from 30,000 in 2019)</li> <li>• 6 jobs created</li> <li>• 297 Arts professionals involved (up from 248)</li> <li>• £210,106 of external investment obtained (up from £172,400)</li> <li>• Worked with 29 arts organisations (up from 16)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 voluntary organisations involved (up from 10)</li> <li>• Worked with 9 schools and colleges</li> <li>• 100% occupancy of local B&amp;Bs and hotels on the night of the festival, as well as the festivals camping and campervan sites.</li> <li>• All 16 traders reported excellent sales.</li> </ul>
1.3	<p>A critical feature of the FLF cultural programme is the engagement with and involvement of local organisations. To give a flavour of how extensive this local collaborating is the following groups will be involved in co-developing and delivering the 2022 programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 Lowestoft based community groups</li> <li>• All Lowestoft schools and East Coast College (22 organisations in total)</li> <li>• 2 Lowestoft based organisations supporting people with special needs</li> </ul> <p>In addition to the above FLF CIC also works very closely with a wide range of local businesses, particularly micro and SMEs, to develop and deliver the cultural programme.</p>
1.3	<p>The First Light Festival has been the flagship cultural event in Lowestoft since the inaugural festival in 2019. It has changed internal and external perceptions of the town and put Lowestoft on the national and international map as an energetic and creative place. It has re-imagined the South Beach and celebrated Lowestoft's unique position on the east coast and is central to Lowestoft's place making ambitions particularly in relation to the Seafront Vision and more broadly sits within the Lowestoft Town Investment Plan 2021-2031 in driving the cultural ambitions of the town.</p> <p>Below are examples of the impact in 2022 of the 443 people who responded to a survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 93% said First Light Festival is welcoming for the whole community</li> <li>• 92% said First Light Festival encourages participation in community life and events</li> <li>• 90% said First Light Festival enhances the sense of community in Lowestoft</li> <li>• 97% said First Light Festival is good for Lowestoft's image</li> <li>• 70% of those surveyed had been to First Light before and 30% were new attendees</li> <li>• 53% of those surveyed were visiting Lowestoft specifically for First Light Festival</li> <li>• 19 pieces of regional and national print and online coverage, with an approximate reach estimated at 1.4 million for print and 4.9 million for online.</li> <li>• 3 pieces of TV regional broadcast, including BBC Look East filming their 18.30 show from South Beach the day before the festival</li> <li>• 12 radio interviews on regional broadcast</li> </ul>
1.4	<p>In 2020, as a result of COVID-19 the festival became an on-line event including live streaming, with videos views of over 16,000 and a digital reach of almost 50,000</p>

	people. A smaller scale event (Longest Days of Summer) was held in June 2021 which was attended by approx. 6,000 people, with a further 3,000 people engaged, including 2,500 pupils from 13 Lowestoft schools, home schooled pupils, East Coast College's Art Foundation course and community groups. It also had a digital reach of more than 30,000 people. The festival worked in partnership with the North Lowestoft and London Road High Street Heritage Action Zones to engage with businesses through the bird boxes art trail installations. A further 500 people took part in the Beach of Dreams project which included a 500-mile walk from Lowestoft to Tilbury Fort in Essex.
1.5	

## 2 Current position

2.1	The 2022 festival programme, with more than 140 free activities, built on the learning of the previous years increasing in size and scope, with a diverse mix of renowned performers, community projects and a focus on supporting and showcasing new talent. Live streaming with sign language and captioning created free access for audiences unable to engage in large scale events; the volunteering programme works to ensure that in excess of 40% of volunteering roles are taken up by residents from the deprived Kirkley and Pakefield wards; the new for 2022 Planet Positive Zone with University of Essex/ClientEarth champions conversation and action about the climate crisis; with place-based partners the launch of the reimagined and redeveloped East Point Pavilion has started a new chapter for Lowestoft's seafront with a contemporary food and drink offer and music/ events venue.
2.2	

## 3 How to address current situation

3.1	To ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the First Light Festival, the CIC has applied to the Arts Council for National Portfolio Status. If successful FLF CIC will receive £660k over 3 years (2023/24 – 2025/26 inclusive), along with continued match funding from ESC and increasing income streams from the festival and East Point Pavilion, this will allow the CIC to host three more annual, free to attend festivals. The decision on NPO status will be made in October 2022. If unsuccessful, other external funding sources will be pursued such as a project grant application to the Arts Council. Previous Arts Council funding for FLF has come via this route. ESC's £500k commitment over 3 years will act as very useful leverage in making such applications an attractive proposition.
3.2	From 2023-2026, FLF CIC's plans will build a momentum of activity that aims to dissolve the many barriers to taking part in cultural activities that exist in Lowestoft, transforming the town into a place alive with creative energy and making an outstanding contribution to the Arts Council's Cultural Communities Outcome. The First Light Festival will develop year on year to become an exceptional, nationally significant festival, engaging with tens of thousands of people, supporting Lowestoft's journey to becoming a thriving town and cultural

	focus for its hinterland of towns and villages. This vision is a central element of the broader Lowestoft Town Investment Plan which seeks to regenerate, develop and change perceptions of the whole town.
3.3	FLF's unique brand will be amplified each year, attracting nationally renowned performers; the diverse repertoire and inclusive multi-arts programme reflects the Lowestoft community and the wider county and the collaborations with local partners including Seagull and Marina Theatres, Suffolk Artlink, Dance East, Britten Pears Arts and Suffolk Libraries and Museums offers them an unparalleled platform to showcase their work. The 'New Dawn, Apply to Play' project will build on its success to showcase and develop local musical talent, connecting aspiring young musicians to industry experts, offering a programme of mentoring and industry advice from Access to Music, Wild Paths Festival and Brownswood, and radio exposure from BBC Introducing.
3.4	FLF will work with Lowestoft's art students, the emerging visual arts community. By 2025/6 installations and sculpture on the beach will be a central part of First Light Festival with seafront installations extending over the summer timeline. Large scale community and cultural education projects will be integral to First Light's festival programme and build the community into its DNA, engaging the town in high quality cultural activities that connect Lowestoft to national and global issues, working with inspiring partners to share expertise and cascade opportunity.
3.5	<p>To maintain momentum and profile over the autumn and winter low season months, FLF CIC will work with Access Community Trust's Lowestoft Young Film Programmers project for a winter film programme and the Lowestoft young film-makers annual film festival. During the 2023/24 – 2025/26 period FLF CIC will work with partners on the Melting Pot initiative, a health inequalities research project, using the Pavilion as a regular base to engage with families through creative and well-being activities to identify and respond to Lowestoft's health needs. Working with Suffolk Libraries and National Literacy Trust the Pavilion Project will support reading development with regular storytelling sessions and book events and for 2025/6 the CIC will establish an annual October half-term children's book festival.</p> <p>The CIC will also support other activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creative writing development working with East Coast College.</li> <li>• offer the towns' makers space and support to develop work and showcase/ sell their creations at regular mini-festival events supporting artisanal skills and entrepreneurship</li> </ul>
3.6	In complete alignment to the Let's Create strategy, FLF CIC's ambitions mean that year on year, Lowestoft grows in confidence so that by the end of the period, local communities are knitted into a creative ecosystem of life-affirming activities, with the midsummer First Light Festival a magnificent, town-wide celebration, that reflects back to the town and the wider world, Lowestoft's flourishing creativity and talents.

4 Reason/s for recommendation	
4.1	Without ESC's financial support to match fund the Art's Councils potential funding award the annual FLF would need to be hugely scaled back, lack any regional impact and severely curtail the ability to engage a vast array of local community groups and young people. This is a critical element of the festival's objectives, FLF cannot merely host a large cultural event in the town to change resident's perceptions of their place but instead they need to be an integral part of the development and delivery of the festival. Following the second full summer festival, the CIC is developing a strong brand and profile for Lowestoft which is achieving its overall ambition of using cultural development to celebrate the town and change the narrative in a positive way about its aspirations and place within the region.
4.2	A further significant consideration is the role this cultural programme can play in addressing the cost of living crisis. The festival is a major 'free to attend' event and therefore provides residents with an opportunity to engage in a significant cultural event/programme without taking a chunk out of their ever depleting household disposable income. Furthermore, it provides a significant boost to local businesses, particularly micro and SMEs who are especially exposed to fuel price inflation and the wider inflationary impact on their customers. Finally, this programme is continually raising the positive profile of Lowestoft as a place to invest which clearly has a direct impact on the economic prosperity of the town and its residents.

## Appendices

### Appendices:

None.

### Background reference papers:

None.