

SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: Portfolio Holder for Communities and Facilities

To: South Holland District Council 29th July 2021

Author: Emily Holmes, Communities Manager

Subject: The operation of the South Holland Centre

Purpose: To obtain approval to proceed with the implementation of the proposed structure to accompany revised operations

Recommendation(s):

- 1) That Members note the update contained within this report in respect of the reopening plans for the South Holland Centre;
- 2) That Members approve the proposed changes to the staffing structure in respect of the South Holland Centre, and that the Executive Director (Strategy & Resource) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Facilities be authorised to implement the proposed staffing structure and to take any incidental or subsidiary action that may be necessary to enable such implementation.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Current situation

1.2 The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on leisure and culture venues across the country. This unprecedented event for the cultural and hospitality sector as a whole has presented major challenges financially and operationally across the industry; locally, nationally and globally.

1.3 The South Holland Centre closed on 18 March 2020 in line with government instructions at the start of the pandemic. To sustain the venue during its period of closure, the Council has received support from Arts Council England through the Culture Recovery Fund, to protect and sustain cultural arts facilities during the pandemic as they transition to reopening in a more viable way. Fundamental changes in the arts and cultural landscape has led to a need to review the South Holland Centre offer locally as part of the planned reopening process. This includes; customer behavioural changes accessing cultural content through other channels while venues have been closed, social distancing impacting on audience capacity and available product.

1.4 While the South Holland Centre has been closed, the council has sought to ensure the continuation of arts and culture provision within the community. This has been supported by commissioning collaborative community arts projects, which brought arts and culture to residents and supported local freelance artists. Digital arts project 'The March of the Nutcrackers', virtual pantomime, 'online escape room' creative challenge with our partners at LOV and an arts installation in empty shop windows working with Transported are examples of initiatives that have taken place. The South Holland Outdoor Festival planned through the Summer months, is another example of where the council has sought to continue to provide cultural arts provision in a way that accommodates the challenges

presented by the pandemic. The festival will see work take place with local actors to deliver a theatrical guided walking tour.

- 1.5 Whilst preparing for reopening, the council has sought to monitor closely the national, regional and local picture for the sector and the regularly updated guidance in respect of the reopening of cultural venues. Despite the presence of guidance and intelligence from the industry, there are still a number of future unknowns that may impact upon the operation of, and local engagement with, the centre. These include the potential impact of any further variants or an increase in cases and currently there is limited market data or intelligence on customer return rates. It is presently unknown as to how long it will take for the leisure and hospitality industries to begin to recover.
- 1.6 Last summer, a small number of national cinema chains re-opened. This was based on trial opening hours and reduced number of venues across the country. These plans were quickly scaled-back and some cinemas that opened only achieved income levels of approximately 20%. However, during 2021, cinema reopening in national chains have been more widespread and film releases are now more certain.
- 1.7 Return to live indoor theatre performances has not been tested and it is difficult to project potential income levels in the existing market. The vast majority of professional and commercial events will only be financially viable without social distancing measures.
- 1.8 The South Holland Centre's re-opening programme and procedure has been developed using feedback from our customers to encourage return to the venue. Of the 1,847 who responded to the survey, 80% want to see cinema, 50% live music, 44% comedy, 43% musical theatre and 23% community productions. The Summer cinema programme has a large selection of films to choose from and our live events programme from the Autumn is being finalised as more product becomes available. Additionally, customer feedback has helped shape our reopening procedures. Although venues can return to full capacity, 40% of our survey responders would only feel comfortable if social distancing measures are in place.
- 1.9 The funds awarded to the South Holland Centre through the Cultural Recovery Fund were provided to support cultural organisations as they transition to viable and sustainable operating models with a clear remit for venues to review their operations to be more sustainable in the future. The phased approach being taken to reopening is to support the South Holland Centre to reopen and to safeguard arts and cultural provision in the district. To achieve both aims, the South Holland Centre cannot operate in the same way that it did before.
- 1.10 The uncertainty in return to cinema and theatre and reduced income levels would increase the level of public subsidy needed significantly. This is a major risk to the future of the service if alternative operating models are not implemented.
- 1.11 Consequently, this report seeks to agree proposals in respect of the staffing of the centre, which have been designed to meet the resourcing requirements of the centre's programme, whilst providing a cost effective, flexible workforce that can sustain arts and cultural provision in the district.
- 1.12 **Summary of the proposed staffing structure and resourcing changes**
- 1.13 In order to meet the resourcing requirements of the centre's programme, whilst providing a cost effective, flexible workforce, the proposed changes in staffing are:
 - The creation of a new staffing structure as set out in Appendix A (expemt)

- That all roles will have front facing responsibilities when customers are in the building for a programmed event which means that there will be better application of resources to deal with peak demands in different areas of the business
- That roles are re-shaped to include combination of back office and customer focused roles, including management roles
- That specialist roles also undertake some non-specialist duties and tasks within the week which enables a more effective use of staff time whilst on site
- That the staffing requirements through both annualised hours and the utilisation of casual posts, will flex and change based on the needs of each programme item and its production
- That staff who are redeployed into other roles within the council are able to also have casual roles at the South Holland Centre, retaining skills within the organisation that can be called upon as needed

1.14 Full details of the proposed changes to staffing structure are contained within exempt Appendix A. This section of the report is exempt under paragraphs 1,2 and 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

2.0 OPTIONS

Option 1 – To proceed as per the report recommendations (Recommended). Under this option, council will agree to accept the recommended changes to the staffing structures and agree delegations, allowing the implementation of the revised structure in Appendix A to proceed. The proposed staffing structure will enable a flexible approach to be applied to the programme at the South Holland Centre whilst uncertainty in the industry remains and the sector recovers. This option is recommended for the reasons and benefits outlined below.

Option 2 – Do nothing – not agree the recommended changes (Not recommended). This option is not recommended, as it will not enable the council to adopt a resourcing structure for the centre which is in keeping with the requirements of the current programme, nor will it enable the council to operate with a cost effective workforce.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

3.1 To enable the centre to be staffed and resourced in a way which meets the resourcing requirements of the centre's programme, whilst providing a cost effective, flexible workforce that could sustain arts and cultural provision in the district of the South Holland Centre.

4.0 EXPECTED BENEFITS

4.1 It is anticipated that Option 1 would provide the following benefits:

- The revised structure supports new ways of working which support the South Holland Centre to reopen and to provide a key cultural offer for the district. It is flexible and staffing levels will expand and contract as necessary, operating in a more cost effective way.
- Gives certainty to the team who have been through a period of extended change and have not been able to undertake their usual duties or roles since March 2020
- The revised structure and ways of working mitigate the reduction in income that is expected while the arts, culture and hospitality industry recovers.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Corporate Priorities

5.1.1 The services provided through the South Holland Centre contribute towards the Council's priorities; 'Your Place' and 'Your Health and Wellbeing' as well as supporting the wider town centre offer.

5.2 Constitution & Legal

5.2.1 Any service proposals which affect the establishment and have the **potential** for any redundancy activity must first be approved by Full Council which can delegate the implementation of proposals. This delegation is outlined in the recommendation.

5.2.2 This process has been undertaken in line with the Council's Managing Change Policy

5.3 Financial

5.3.1 The report carries with it staffing and finance implications and these are considered in Appendix A.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 There is potential for redundancies for South Holland Centre employees. Mitigations are in place with opportunities for redeployment into vacant posts across the authority, as well as vacant posts in the new structure at the South Holland Centre.

5.4.2 The new structure contains roles which combine functions and tasks, retaining specialist skills and knowledge within the Centre mitigating risk of loss of skills.

5.5 Equality and Diversity

A key element of the Arts Council England requirements is to improve diversity of workforce, governance, audiences, visitors and participants. Matters of equality and diversity have been considered in preparing the proposals contained within this report. Officers have not identified any equality and diversity implications in respect of the report recommendations.

5.6 Staffing

5.6.1 The report recommendation carries with it a series of staffing implications and these are considered in Appendix A.

5.7 Consultation

5.7.1 Staff and Unions have been consulted in accordance with legal requirements and the outcome of this is set out in Appendix A.

5.8 Contracts

5.8.1 Any changes to terms and conditions of service is a contract issue.

6.0 Wards affected

6.1 All wards

7.0 Acronyms

7.1

SHC	South Holland Centre
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
LOV	Lincolnshire One Venues

Background papers

Lead Contact Officer

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Key Decision:	N
Exempt Decision:	Y - partial

This report refers to a Discretionary Service

Appendices attached to this report:

Appendix A	Exempt
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