

CAMBRIDGESHIRE CULTURE AND THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTY'S SCHOOL ART COLLECTION

To: **Children and Young People Committee**

Meeting Date: **8 September 2015**

From: **Adrian Loades, Executive Director: Children, Families and Adults Services**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/a** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **The purpose of this paper is to inform the Committee of the discussions that have been taking place about the County's School Art Collection and to invite comment on the proposal to sell the majority of the Collection.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to approve the proposal to sell the majority of the County's School Art Collection and use the proceeds to invest in the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund for the benefit of children and young people.**

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Set up in 1947, the County Council's School Art Collection was founded and driven by painter and educator Nan Youngman, art adviser to Cambridgeshire's Director of Education, Henry Morris. Since then, the Local Authority has encouraged and supported schools to borrow from the collection, introducing pupils to original works of art in the classroom and developing engagement with the arts.
- 1.2 The collection now consists of over four hundred art works, which are mainly pictures with a very small number of sculptures. The collection is currently stored at Cambridgeshire Music, Papworth Everard and is managed by the Cambridgeshire Culture Steering Group.
- 1.3 In 2006, Members decided to sell some of the more valuable paintings from the Council's School Art Collection to establish the 'Cambridgeshire Culture Fund' with the intention that profits should be used to offer cultural opportunities for children and young people in the County. To date, the Fund has supported over 100 cultural initiatives through schools and other partners.
- 1.4 The estimated value of the collection was £15 – 20K in 2006. At this time, Christie's Auction House, placed a maximum value of £100 per work for most pieces, with a further 6 pieces valued at up to £500 and 2 at up to £1000.

2.0 CURRENT USE OF THE COLLECTION AND PROPOSAL TO SELL

- 2.1 In 2009, all art works were professionally photographed and a CD catalogue and online booking system was introduced to manage art work loans. In that year, 85 pictures were borrowed by 19 schools, indicating an initial interest which has since steadily declined. In 2015 there were no requests to borrow art works from the collection despite termly reminders to schools.
- 2.2 The Cambridgeshire Culture Steering Group has consulted with schools about the declining use of the collection and has received feedback that:
 - art subject leaders have a preference for digital images which are freely available on the internet and which can be displayed on classroom whiteboards;
 - some of the work in the collection is seen as too old-fashioned to be relevant and stimulating to pupils today;
 - schools have greater access to original art works from alternative sources and many have established their own permanent collections;
 - schools would rather have support to develop local, sustainable cultural projects through the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund than borrow art works from the collection.
- 2.3 As a result of the declining use of the collection:
 - the majority of the art works remain in permanent storage;
 - there is no return, in terms of outcomes for children and young people, on the ongoing costs associated with storage, maintenance and preservation of the collection;
 - three options for making best use of the resource have been developed by the Steering Group and tested with schools and stakeholders.

- 2.4 The three options were:
- a renewed effort to encourage and support schools to borrow from the collection – this has had no effect;
 - a proposal to distribute the collection on long-term loan to Cambridgeshire's schools - there has been no appetite from schools for this option;
 - proposals to sell the majority of the collection to support the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund – schools have responded positively to this.
- 2.5 Following consultation on these options, the Group proposes that:
- the majority of collection is sold at auction;
 - the high specification storage unit that houses the collection should also be sold at auction (purchased for £20,000);
 - loaned works (23) are returned to their owners;
 - a small legacy collection, to include the works by Nan Youngman, is kept and offered to schools and to Council offices;
 - a legacy website is created featuring the catalogue of art works, the history of the collection and examples of the projects supported by the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund.
- 2.6 The Group further proposes that the revenue raised from auction is invested in the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund to support a broad entitlement to cultural activities for all children and young people in Cambridgeshire. The Fund is well placed to secure 'match' funding from a variety of sources, including grant funding and private sector investment, and has recently submitted a proposal, with a range of partners, which is likely to secure funding of between £300,000 and £420,000 from a commitment of £54,000.
- 2.7 Christie's Auction House has been commissioned to provide an up to date valuation of the collection. Whilst the full valuation report will not be available until the end of October, the initial review of the catalogue suggests that the value of the collection has increased to around £50,000, primarily due to a rise in popularity of the artist Robert MacBryde, who painted two of the pictures in the collection.
- 2.8 Christie's has also been asked to provide advice on the auction process and have recommended that 11 of the pictures should be sold as individual lots with the remaining art works sold in lots of 20-30 pieces.
- 2.9 Works of art that remain unsold will be returned to the Council for sale, donation or disposal locally.

3.0 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

- 3.1.1 The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:
- Releasing revenue into the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund gives opportunities for joint cultural activity which has led to private sector investment and better links between businesses and their communities.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

- 3.2.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- By converting an unused asset into revenue to support project work there will be more opportunities for young people in Cambridgeshire to engage with cultural activity. There is a positive correlation between cultural activity, standards of health and independent living.

3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

- 3.3.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The Cambridgeshire Culture Fund supports both universal projects and projects targeted at vulnerable groups of children and young people who may have limited opportunities to engage with cultural activities. Research demonstrates the strong link between a broad cultural experience and achievement in school.

4.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

- 4.1.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The School Art Collection is currently an unused resource with some associated maintenance costs. Selling the collection will provide revenue to sustain and grow the Cambridgeshire Culture Fund.

4.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

- 4.2.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- There may be some reputational risk associated with the sale of an asset which has been held by the Council on behalf of children and schools since 1947.
 - It is possible that the value of some art works in the collection may increase over time and that the collection, if retained, could release a higher value in the future. They could, equally, reduce in value.

4.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 4.3.1 There are no significant implications within this category.

4.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

- 4.4.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- There has been extensive consultation with schools and key partners, see 2.2 above.

4.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

- 4.5.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The Cambridgeshire Culture Fund supports projects in all parts of the County.

4.6 Public Health Implications

- 4.6.1 The following bullet point sets out details of implications identified by officers:
- The Cambridgeshire Culture Fund supports a broad entitlement to cultural

activities, including sports and physical activities, for all children and young people in Cambridgeshire. Improved engagement with physical activity and improved educational outcomes will have a positive impact on standards of public health.

SOURCE DOCUMENTS GUIDANCE

Source Documents	Location
None	