



**Thriving Council
Committee**

**Date: Thursday 24
September 2026**

Subject: Trinity Ars Centre – Creative Foundations Fund

Report by:

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Executive Summary:

This report requests approval to submit a Full Application to Arts Council England's Creative Foundations Fund for investment in Trinity Arts Centre. The bid seeks £598,000 of external funding towards a programme of capital improvements that will increase accessibility, expand audience capacity, improve visitor facilities and reduce ongoing operational costs through energy-efficiency measures. The application requires £100,000 of match funding, which can be provided through a combination of cash and eligible in-kind contributions. Following a successful Expression of Interest, approval is now sought to proceed to the final application stage

Appendices to Report

1. Expression of Interest Submission
2. Outcome Letter

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- (a)** That Members of the Thriving Council Committee approve the submission of a full application to Arts Council England's Creative Foundations Fund and approve the allocation of £100,000 match funding, subject to the application being successful.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Arts Council England Creative Foundations Fund (CFF) is a capital funding programme that helps creative and cultural organisations in England improve, repair, modernise and future-proof their buildings and equipment. The fund is aimed at ensuring cultural venues can continue delivering services to the public while becoming more sustainable and resilient

Further information can be found at [Arts Council England Creative Foundation Fund](#)

1.2 Funding Criteria

- Building repairs and restoration.
- Replacement of outdated infrastructure and systems.
- Energy efficiency improvements and decarbonisation work.
- Accessibility improvements.
- Renewal or upgrade of cultural assets.
- Essential equipment purchases (Strand 1 only).
- Projects that prevent asset failure and improve long-term sustainability.

1.3 Funding Levels

The Creative Foundations Fund Round 2 is divided into two strands:

Strand	Grant Value
Strand 1	£100,000 to £1,000,000
Strand 2	Over £1,000,000 up to £10,000,000

The Trinity Arts Centre applied to strand one.

2 Trinity Arts Centre Expression of Interest

- 2.1 The Centre Manager submitted an expression of interest (EOI) to the fund on 7 August 2026 for £598k with a match fund of 14.3%, the equivalent to £100k Please see appendix one for details.
- 2.2 The Council was notified on 7 September that the EOI was successful, and the Council has been invited to submit a full application by 23 October 2026.

3. Project Ambitions

3.1 Key priorities include;

- increasing and improving auditorium capacity and flexibility to attract touring productions and maximise income.
- Upgrading sanitary facilities to meet modern standards; enhancing accessibility for customers and artists with mobility needs.
- Investing in renewable energy solutions to reduce operating costs and improve environmental sustainability.
- A new building management system is also required to improve heating and cooling efficiency, helping to reduce energy consumption and provide greater operational resilience.

4. Key Milestones

Milestone	Date
Expression of Interest Submitted	Completed
Invitation to Full Application Received	7 September 2026
Full Application Deadline	23 October 2026 (12 noon)
Funding Request	£598,000
Funding Decision	TBC by Arts Council England
Design Development	Subject to funding approval
Construction Start	TBC
Project Completion	TBC

5. Match Funding Sources

The £100k match funding will be allocated from a range of sources, including the Trinity Arts Centre Levy, the Strategic Asset Management Plan (works already identified and budgeted), crowd funding and further funding applications (Theatres Trust £20k).

6. Alternative Options

Members may choose from the following alternative options. These have been considered alongside the recommended option to approve submission of the full application and the associated £100,000 match funding requirement should the bid be successful.

The recommended option remains to proceed with the full application because it offers the opportunity to secure significant external capital investment for Trinity Arts Centre, reduce future operational costs and improve the long-term sustainability and accessibility of the venue.

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	Do nothing: do not submit a	This is not recommended because the

	full application to the Creative Foundations Fund.	Council would lose the opportunity to secure £598,000 of external investment following a successful Expression of Interest. It would also delay essential improvements to accessibility, capacity, visitor facilities and energy efficiency, leaving existing operational and maintenance pressures unresolved.
2	Submit a reduced or revised application with a smaller scope of works.	This is not recommended at this stage because the current proposal has already progressed successfully through the Expression of Interest stage and reflects the key priorities needed to improve the venue. Reducing the scope may weaken the final application, reduce the impact of the project and leave priority works unfunded.
3	Proceed with the full application but seek to identify alternative match funding sources only.	This is not recommended because the application timetable is limited and delaying confirmation of match funding could create uncertainty for the bid. The proposed approach provides a clearer funding position while still allowing eligible in-kind contributions and other funding opportunities to be explored as part of the final application.

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation to submit a full application. If the application is successful, any grant funding agreement, procurement activity, contract appointments or property-related permissions required to deliver the capital works will be reviewed in accordance with the Council's governance, legal and procurement requirements.

Financial: FIN/81/27/TC/SSc

The financial implications for this report would be the £100k match funding if the application were successful.

The match funding to be financed from:

- Trinity Arts Centre Levy Reserve £30k (current balance is £50k)
- Maintenance of facilities Reserve £50k (current balance is £382.6k)
- A potential further funding application £20k (Theatres Trust) – if unsuccessful, this would increase the use of the Trinity Arts centre Levy Reserve up to £50k.

A review of the VAT implications has confirmed that the proposed £698k spend on Trinity Arts Centre would not breach our partial exemption limit.

Staffing:

There are no direct staffing implications arising from the submission of the full application. Existing officer resource will be required to develop and submit the application and, if successful, to support project delivery, procurement, monitoring and grant reporting. Any additional staffing requirements will be considered as part of project planning.

LGR implications:

There are no specific Local Government Reorganisation implications arising from the recommendation. The proposal supports investment in an existing Council-operated cultural asset and would improve its long-term resilience.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

The project is expected to have positive equality and accessibility implications. Proposed improvements include enhanced accessibility for customers, performers and artists with mobility needs, alongside improvements to visitor facilities. Equality considerations will be kept under review as the project scope is developed.

Data Protection Implications:

There are no direct data protection implications arising from the recommendation. Any personal data processed as part of project delivery, consultation, procurement or grant monitoring will be managed in accordance with the Council's data protection policies.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The proposal presents climate-related opportunities, particularly through investment in energy-efficiency measures, renewable energy solutions and a new building management system to improve heating and cooling efficiency. These works are expected to reduce energy consumption, support operational resilience and contribute to the Council's wider sustainability objectives.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations:

There are no direct Section 17 crime and disorder implications arising from the recommendation. Any construction-phase risks relating to site security, public safety or anti-social behaviour will be considered through normal project and contractor management arrangements.

Health Implications:

The project is expected to have positive health and wellbeing implications by improving access to cultural activity, enhancing the visitor experience and supporting continued use of Trinity Arts Centre as a community cultural venue.

Risk Assessment:

Key risks include the application being unsuccessful, project costs exceeding available funding, match funding not being fully secured, delivery timescales changing and disruption to venue operations during any works. These risks will be managed through project governance, cost control, procurement planning, grant monitoring and regular reporting if the funding application is successful.

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

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No

X

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

X

No

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