

# ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

## WELCOME BACK CULTURAL EXPERIENCES & EVENTS COMMISSION – JUNE 2021 – MAR 2022.

### INDUSTRY

Events, Theatre, Street Arts, Outdoor Arts, Music, Cultural Industries.

### LOCATION OF CONTRACT

Ashford Town Centre (core), Kent.

### VALUE OF CONTRACT

£24,000

### PUBLISHED DATE

12 May 2021

### CLOSING DATE FOR QUOTES

28 May 2021

### CONTRACT START DATE

7 June 2021

### CONTRACT END DATE

31 March 2022

### CONTRACT SUITABLE FOR SMEs?

YES

### CONTRACT SUITABLE FOR VCSEs?

YES

### DESCRIPTION

#### Welcome Back Fund for Ashford:

Ashford Borough Council has been allocated funding from the Welcome Back Fund, a share of £56 million provided to councils across England from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to support the safe return to high streets and help build back better from the pandemic. This funding builds on the £50 million Reopening High Street Safely Fund (RHSSF) allocated to councils in 2020 and forms part of the wider support government is providing to communities and businesses.

Part of the Council's action plan for [Town Centre Reset](#) and [recovery](#) focusses on the development of new events and cultural activity to help animate the town centre, safely attract visitors back, contribute to local community cohesion and generate an economic impact for businesses. As well as helping to boost tourism, improve green spaces and provide safer options for the public to reunite with friends and relatives, a successful cultural 'offer' could also help the Council achieve several of its wider place-making, regeneration and cultural infrastructure ambitions for the town.

To understand the scope and the activities that is covered by the ERDF fund, along with the regulatory requirements to adhere to including financial recording, publicity compliance and evaluation guidance, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/welcome-back-fund>

### **What we are looking for:**

We are looking for a well-coordinated, neatly branded and high quality series of free music, theatre and arts events to take place across the period of the contract, within multiple open public spaces, in Ashford Town Centre between June 2021 and March 2022. The programme must be new (not existing), and any event, activity or celebration must respect the most up to date social distancing guidelines at the time, as per the Safer Public Places guidance. Public spaces are defined as those under the control of a public sector organisation.

We require the services of an established and experienced organisation, with a proven track record in this field, to provide the concept, and lead on all aspects of project management, delivery and review in accordance with the ERDF guidance.

This commission is a one-off campaign, but may have the potential to develop as a future or continued programme within future corporate or town centre action plans, should the work meet the set outcomes. These are:

- **Promoting a safe public environment for a local area's visitor economy:** Boosting the look and feel of the town centre through effective artistic programming and marketing.
- **Place-making:** Raising the cultural profile of the town – locally, regionally and nationally, increasing civic pride, community cohesion and media profile.
- **Growth priority:** Supporting Ashford's regeneration, as well as its work to support, diversify and reimagine our high street and town centre offer.
- **Economic recovery:** Bringing life through visitor numbers, associated spend, and economic impact.
- **Accessibility:** Reaching out to and engaging with a wide cross section of people, attracting new audiences, providing a safe and memorable experience and develops a sense of ownership of the town centre.
- **Legacy:** Has the potential to grow in future years, or act as a catalyst to attract other events, activities and industries.

The Council's thinking so far around potential public sites for programming has been influenced by, but not limited to, recent and planned future regeneration priority sites such as the newly developed Elwick Place piazza; Bank Street visioning; Lower High Street areas adjacent to the Mecca Bingo site; the Bandstand area; and the Council owned Park Mall Shopping Centre central outdoor area.

There is no pre-conception to how many performances and the artistic scope of the work, but this commission is clear that work must be temporary; free and open to the public; indoor or outdoor but expected to mainly be the latter; be not for profit, nor benefit any one business.

### **Project Measures:**

This commission will respond to the ERDF outcome measures (KPI's), as well as the Council's town centre priorities, which broadly are:

- Building a safe environment for the visitor economy in public areas.
- Boosting footfall.

- Raising awareness and delivery of promotional and marketing campaigns for new public activity on offer.
- Delivering positive outcomes for local businesses.
- Growing the arts and cultural offer.
- Developing our local community groups to put on more events and activity in Ashford town centre.
- Reduce Vacancy Rates.

**Commission Assessment:**

- Value (= 40% weighting)
  - Use of budget available (i.e. % of administration, set up costs, artist fees)
  - Expected participants / attendees (value for money)
  - Cost associated to mitigate risk for delivery
- Quality / impact (= 60% weighting)
  - Rationale & Strategic Fit
  - Likely Economic Impact
  - Lead partner expertise

**Budget:**

£24k is available for a high quality programme of events to make Ashford Town Centre's public spaces a safe, welcoming and attractive place to the visitor economy, and adding to the vibrancy and sense of community in the town centre. This budget is limited to this amount and may not be matched with any additional leverage achieved such as other public sector funding, private sector commercial income, sponsorship, inward investment, and ticket or other income streams.

**Support:**

As commissioner, and as the local authority, Ashford Borough Council will work with the successful organisation to:

- Develop your proposal with expertise in the Culture, Economic Development, Love Ashford and Communications teams.
- Facilitate any collaborations with other individuals, organisations and businesses if relevant to your proposal, providing contacts and networks to elevate the activity.
- Provide guidance from the Council's Safety Advisory Group and Licencing teams.

**Submit a quotation proposal:**

Your quotation proposal should be no more than 2 sides of A4 and should include:

- Name of lead organisation
- Point of contact in lead organisation
- Position in the lead organisation
- Email address
- Details of any likely partner organisations
- Proposed activity, including how it will meet the set outcomes
- Outline budget breakdown, including total cost
- Evidence of experience in this market
- Evidence of delivering a marketing campaign and adhering to external branding guidance
- Confirmation of £10m PLI insurance
- Images and weblinks to support your proposal.

**Key dates:**

- Deadline for Quotes: 28 May 2021
- Contract awarded and start date: 7 June 2021
- Earliest date of commission delivery: 14 June 2021
- Expected end date of commission delivery: 01 March 2022
- Final activity report/evaluation: 28 March 2022

**Lead contact:**

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