



Mr Andrew Smith
Chief Executive
Hampshire County Council
The Castle
Winchester
Hampshire
SO23 8UJ

Monday 15 July 2013

Dear Mr Smith,

I am writing to offer our strong backing for the Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust proposal currently under consideration.

In these challenging financial times, the economic value of arts and museums is of increasing importance to the UK's wider recovery. Arts Council England (ACE) takes a national lead on promoting the contribution of arts and museums to the tourism industry, the creative economy and health and wellbeing objectives. We are particularly keen to work with organizations that wish to retain and develop a bold ambition for culture into the future, and which are keen to explore innovative solutions in order to achieve this outcome.

The Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust project is a model that is of great interest, and we have strategically and financially supported its development since its beginnings in 2010. The detailed and considered analysis and planning that has been undertaken during this time has convinced ACE that it has the potential to provide a resilient solution for current services; one that allows for longer-term local authority savings and enables strong future growth of the sector in support of wider economic and social ambitions in the Hampshire Solent area.

We are delighted that Hampshire County Council, Southampton City Council and Winchester City Council have had the foresight to work beyond traditional boundaries and put first the long-term benefits to the consumer and wider economy. This comes as no surprise given the ongoing commitment to culture and investment shown by all 3 partners over many years, and it is what makes the Hampshire Solent Cultural Trust proposal so important.

From our perspective, the proposed integrated offer brings a currently fragmented group of individual services into a united critical mass of cultural



product that is much bolder and stronger together. It creates a dynamic and unified vision and brand that will attract a wider customer and investor base, without losing the local sense of place that is also so important. It allows for economies of scale and a sharing of complementary strengths and capacities across individual organizations. Under the auspices of a Trust, this cultural offer will be shaped, resourced and delivered through a partnership of local authorities, community, private sector and wider public sector stakeholders.

ACE has already demonstrated its ongoing interest in working with such an organization into the future, not least through its significant financial support of the emerging Hampshire Solent cultural brand over the last 3 years. The range and quality of the Hampshire Solent cultural offer overall is of major regional significance in terms of tourism and the creative economy. With continued bold vision and leadership, it has the potential to become one of the top cultural clusters in the UK.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I, or my team, can be of any further assistance in the decision-making process.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phil Gibby".

Phil Gibby
Regional Director

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