

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

DECISION

meeting date: 9 MARCH, 2021
title: PLATFORM GALLERY ARTIST SELECTION
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To outline proposed changes to the stock levels at the gallery to improve choice for customers and help new artists show their designs.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities
 - Corporate Priorities - To ensure a well-managed council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs
 - Other Considerations – Encourage the development of new artists

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following an audit report over 6 years ago the number of artists stocked at the gallery was limited to up to 30 to allow for better stock control. This served a useful purpose to allow the systems and control measure to be put in place to ensure that stock control was managed effectively.
- 2.2 Since that time, a number of new staff have been employed and they have embraced the new procedures and controls adopted and improved them, to ensure we have a robust stock system. The confidence from the last several internal audits has been high.
- 2.3 The limit on the artists has meant that over time the staff have tended by necessity to focus on those artists which are selling well to ensure that income is maximised. However, the down side to this can be that taking on new artists in the gallery carries greater risk, because an established artist would need to be excluded as a result. This reduces consumer choice and the opportunity for new artists to show their wares.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The shop space is physically large to fill with just 30 artists, if those artists in question aren't particularly large in scale, e.g. jewellery, small ceramics. Recent sale analysis from the pre-Christmas and summer periods, looking at not only which artists sold but what items in their ranges sold best, shows that a lot of the most popular artworks sold recently are smaller in scale.
- 3.2 The Gallery consistently find that rotating work or adding a new display does translate to a boost in sales, which is basic retailing. Not just in the new display itself but across the whole shop offering. The cap of just 30 artists limits the amount of newness which can be offered to repeat customers at the same time as keeping trusted best-selling artists stocked.
- 3.3 Increasing the shop offering would allow it to better support the potential problems faced with any unknown amendments to the exhibition programme that arise and is particularly relevant this year following the covid restrictions placed upon us.

3.4 All shop stock is taken on a sale or return basis, so there is no increased cost to holding more stock. However, increased stock levels are expected to translate to increased sales.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The Gallery has income targets to achieve for the stock it sells and any approaches that help maximise that are encouraged. The Gallery as with many Council services is audited on a periodic basis to ensure that procedures are in line with our financial procedures.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None in the context of this report
- Political - None
- Reputation – The Platform Gallery has an excellent reputation locally and regionally for the high quality of artists stocked and displayed, both with the shop and the revolving exhibitions which are staged through the year. This will be enhanced through a greater selection of artists being available.
- Equality & Diversity – The service provides equal opportunity to all artists to display.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Note the report and approve raising the limit to 40 artists and delegating to the Director of Community Services the number stocked in any period.

MARK BEVERIDGE
HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS; none

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