Big About Music
Music Village Proposal

Big About Music background

Big About Music was formed 4 years ago to deliver the Youth Music action zone for Corby, Kettering [providing music making opportunities for children and young people], funded by the Northamptonshire County Council, Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council and Youth Music {www.youthmusic.org.uk}. The project was governed by a steering group of representatives from the three councils and Youth Music. As part of a growth and sustainability plan endorsed by the steering group Big About Music became an independent company. Big About Music Community Interest Company [CIC] began trading in February 2007.

Big About Music made a successful application to Youth Music to deliver the Northamptonshire Music Action Zone on a contractual basis, the contract value is £150,000 with and additional 25% match funding secured by Big About Music. The company was further successful in its application to deliver MusicLeader East Midlands {www.musicleader.net} the contractual value is £150,000. Big About Music has also been successful in gaining the contract to deliver Sing up {www.singup.org} this contract is to deliver in Northamptonshire and Rutland developing singing in Key stage 2 by offering professional development opportunities to school staff. The contract value is about £50,000. The company also has an earned income strategy that is on track for this year selling its service to schools, organisations and companies. We will for the second year be paid to deliver music sessions in four complementary education centres across Northamptonshire. The company engages a team of professional fundraisers to seek and secure funding for further development and an internal and external accountant. The company also employs Franklin Solicitors to act on its behalf in all legal matters. We therefore view our year and a half as successful, stable and as a company ready for growth.

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The Music Village

Big About Music was approached by Bee Bee Developments LTD to submit a proposal for the development of a music facility for young people on a site it owns in Heritage Way, Corby http://www.multimap.com/maps/?qs=nn17+5xw&countryCode=GB&mapData=917. The site consists of 12-acres of land with industrial

buildings [no tenants at present are located on the site]. Our vision was originally to create a music venue that would be high quality and attract a diverse audience providing positive role models for young people. We would utilise our expertise and contacts within the industry to support the development of the venue providing a destination for young people and adults who are interested in musical performance and performing. The revenue created by adult customers would subsidise the use of young people. The venue would also incorporate a recording studio and practice space for emerging bands as well as workshop space.

The feedback received so far from young people is that they would like to see the main building developed as a music venue that attracts local, national and international performers. The young people would like to see the smaller buildings developed into restaurants and a smaller venue to accommodate acoustic and developing performers. For the recording studio the young people would like professional support to be available to enable high quality materials to be produced. There is also scope within the site to dedicate a building for the use of any young people's services that may wish to use the facility to contact young people.

As these plans would leave an under used building during day time, the proposal would be to support the development of young people interested in the music industry, providing workshops and educational programmes that link to the formal education system (GCSE and A levels). We have existing links with schools where we currently provide this on school premises. We can expand this to cater for many more young people and offer a true industry experience at The Music Village. For young people who are not currently undertaking these qualifications we are qualified to deliver non-formal education [accredited] including the Arts Award, Youth Achievement and Keystone Awards. We would also be able to develop a qualification unique to The Music Village, for which we would gain accreditation through OCN.

We currently offer placements to further and higher education students who are interested in developing a career in community music. The Music Village would offer the opportunity to develop this further with the potential to include; studio sound recording and engineering, sound and lighting and performance management, programming and venue management as well as front of house roles. Big About Music also offers an apprenticeship programme for young people who are not able to move on to higher education straight after leaving the education system; the Music Village would enable the expansion of this programme.

The site also offers the opportunity to involve commercial business from within the music industry to relocate and/or develop provision on the site to enhance the feeling of a music village. There is the

potential to support social enterprise endeavours within the site and both will support the sustainability of The Music Village.

Young people

Led by Big About Music's young workers team {the youngest employee being fifteen years old} groups of young people have been working towards fulfilling the criteria for a myplace funding application. So far they have undertaken a letter writing campaign, sending letters to local and national elected members, heads of local and national departments responsible for young people's services and the business community locally and nationally. The group have set up a website dedicated to the music village www.bigaboutmusic.biz a facebook group and a myspace page. They have developed a video and posted this on uk.youtube.com bigaboutmusic. The group have a postcard campaign inviting young people and the wider community to give comments on the proposed music village {the young people have been working evenings and weekend at events and places young people may gather}.

Feedback from postcards;	
Under 13s	36
14-17 years old	101
18-25	73
Over 25s	55
Males	130
Females	135

The group have produced all of the materials themselves and have been out with the postcards for the last three weeks. They have dates and venues they will be accessing over the summer months to gain the widest possible feedback from as many young people and wider community members as possible.

Partnerships

Bee Bee Developments LTD are offering to lease the site to Big About Music for the development of The Music Village; they are committed to investing £1,0000.00 to the project. They have further dedicated staff time to support Big About Music in gaining further support in the development stage. Battersea and Wandsworth Trading LTD have offered to write a detailed business plan for the venue, they have further pledged to use their contacts with national promoters to gain recognition for the venue as a destination for performers. Consultants BoffeeArts have agreed to write detailed funding proposals. Rockingham Speedway has agreed to host events for Big About Music to gain further support. The young people's letter campaign has gained support from Northamptonshire Police, local and national elected members and local business, follow up work is

currently taking place to create a partnership group from this. Discussions are currently taking place with educational services with a view to locating their provision on the site; these include schools and collages. The discussions and negotiations will be complete before the main myplace funding deadline.

Funding

Big About Music is seeking the widest possible funding possible its Directors have agreed £20,000 from its earned income to support the development of The Music Village. It has instructed its professional fundraiser to seek sources of funding for the project. To take the vision to the next stage in applying for this funding an additional £40,000 would need to be found. This would enable a feasibility study to be undertaken on the site and plans made for the various buildings.

Music

In a recent study under taken by the University of Hertfordshire for the British Music Rights found that:

- **14-24 year olds love music – arguably more than any previous generation**
- **Around 90% of respondents now own an MP3 player. They contain an average of 1770 track.**
- **The CD is not dead. Even if a legal file-sharing service existed, over 60% say they would continue to buy CDs. Money spent on live music exceeds that spent on recorded Music.**

Feargal Sharkey, Chief Executive of British Music Rights;

"First and foremost, it is quite clear that this young and tech-savvy demographic is as crazy about and engaged with music as any previous generation. Contrary to popular belief, they are also prepared to pay for it too. But only if offered the services they want. That message comes through loud and clear."

We have with The Music Village the potential to create a learning environment that will support young people to develop career opportunities in the creative and entertainment industries and bring with it true economic growth. The presence in Northamptonshire of The Music Village could gain national recognition and add value to the existing regeneration of the area.