

# Initial research and development phase for Larkin 2017 project

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## Executive Summary

In the context of the Hull2017 overall programme and its impact on available public and private funding, the Larkin 2017 Project (LP) is only viable with substantial funding from the University of Hull. However, the exhibition can be delivered at a lower cost than currently envisaged. The exhibition cannot exist separately from other programmes and needs to show how it will integrate with Hull2017's literature strand. To do this, it is essential that the exhibition is more than just an academic exploration of Larkin's life and work. If the exhibition is to be fully integrated with this programme and reach a wider audience, the academic focus must be counterbalanced by commissioning artists and writers to provide their reading of Larkin's enduring creative relevance.

With its charitable status, the Philip Larkin Society should make all the necessary applications to the funding bodies named in this report. A consultant should be employed to make the grant and sponsorship applications during May. LP will be displayed during May-June 2017 in the Brynmor Jones Library New Exhibition Hall. However, if the Larkin Exhibition is to begin its lead-in work in the first quarter ('Made in Hull') of Hull2017, an application to Arts Council England's (ACE) Grants for the Arts funding stream should be made as soon as possible so that the outcome is known by late June. Given the centrality of Larkin and literature to the Hull2017 bid and developing programme, there is wide opinion that this exhibition should take place and that the University of Hull must take full ownership and exploit the opportunities of this figure central to its history and literary culture.

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### 1. Aim of the research

- 1.1. Identify viable funding options available to the Larkin 2017 Project (LP).
- 1.2. Review the existing exhibition plans in the light of 1.1.
- 1.3. Identify the balance between creative and scholarly interpretation of the Larkin materials held by the History Centre and Philip Larkin Society.
- 1.4. Identify partnership opportunities to maximise impact of of LP.

This report is based on desk research, meetings, telephone calls and emails with partners and potential funders. See 7.1., Appendix I.

### 2. Main findings

- 2.1. There is a strong appetite for this exhibition to take place and that it may play a central role in the Hull2017 literature programme, particularly in relation to the BBC's May Contain Strong Words (MCSW) festival. It is generally felt that a celebration of literature and Hull would be incomplete without Larkin.
- 2.2. The current costings of the exhibition are too high and should be reduced to make the exhibition viable.
- 2.3. ACE advise that LP is not described as a festival because there's too many literary festivals connected with Hull2017.
- 2.4. The only Arts Council England funding stream available to a temporary exhibition is Grants for the Arts (GfA). This will not pay for the curation of a historic, museum-based, temporary exhibition.
- 2.5. Even with greatly reduced costs, a minimum sum of £50,000 would be required from the University of Hull to ensure the viability of the exhibition, unless a major corporate sponsor could be found. Given the timescale and existing demands on corporate sponsors, this is unlikely, though not impossible.

- 2.6. In the light of 2.4. & 2.5., it is recommended that a small GfA (under £15k) is made to commission a poet and/or artist to respond to the exhibition material as a means of ensuring public-engagement and impact priorities: e.g. publicity, cross-artform audiences, creative revision of Larkin's legacy through new artistic products. This will balance the scholarly interpretation of the Larkin material.
- 2.7. Exhibition and associated participatory/ artistic work must be developed in partnership with the 'Word is Hull' programme and work closely with BBC's creative and documentary commissioning team in connection with the new poetry festival MCSW planned for October 2017.
- 2.8. LP grant consultant/ curator should have a place on the MCSW steering committee to ensure integration of LP with Hull2017.
- 2.9. Ensure transparent dialogue with all other literary arts provision associated with Hull2017 e.g. Beverley Literature Festival, Bridlington Poetry Festival, Humber Mouth, Freedom Festival, Hull City Arts Unit.
- 2.10. Other funding options include:
  - James Reckitt Trust (up to £5k)
  - 'Explore & Test: Access & Participation' strand of Paul Hamlyn Foundation (£25k)
  - Garfield Weston Foundation (£25k)
  - Foyle Foundation for screens and building work in the gallery

### 3. Option Summary

#### 3.1 Option 1 (Recommended)

Use existing exhibition facilities with additional purchased materials and some modification. This would not be equivalent in terms of production values to the Yeats exhibition at the National Library in Dublin, but could tell an equivalent story and respond more flexibly to creative interpretation. The option would also make sense given that the Yeats exhibition is permanent and LP will be shown for two months. Concerns about touring opportunities that might arise from this option would be met through dialogue with touring partners, and make use of their available resources. In this option the design would be determined by the curator working, which is standard procedure for visual art-based exhibitions, particularly of a temporary nature. A budget of £50,000 for the exhibition element alone would be sufficient for this option (See 7.3. Appendix 2 ). This would be supplemented by additional funding for the writer/artist and engagement work.

#### 3.2 Option 2

To pursue the existing planned exhibition costing of £105,000 through multiple applications to public and private funders. This would involve a museum exhibition designer alongside the curator, both working to procure bespoke systems of exhibition display. This would be supplemented by additional funding for the writer/artist and engagement work.

## 4. Scope of Option 1

### 4.1 Option 1(Recommended)

We suggest that alongside the scholarship necessary for a successful exhibition we should explore the idea of the literal pilgrimage, the desire of readers to come into contact with objects directly related to the body of the writer who made the text they know. What remains in the socks and ties of Larkin? What can they tell us? How do they differ to other socks and ties? This idea of the writer's equipment as a holy relic is something that could be creatively explored by a curator working with a contemporary writer or visual artist. This would not negate the scholarship necessary for a successful exhibition, but open up a playful, questioning dialogue.

The content of the exhibition is likely to include, alongside texts, a range of items, including: audio visual (Larkin talking to his mother); ceramic plaques from around the house; Larkin reading his own poems; Larkin's drawings; fan letters; library minutes; LPs; cameras and photographs.

From research and experience, it is possible for an exhibition curator to borrow cases and other museum furniture, as well as using existing resources and building temporary structures where appropriate. Given the short amount of time to get LP in the Hull2017 programme, a decision about funding needs to be made quickly. For this reason this approach is strongly recommended. Research conducted for this report indicates that it is unlikely that private, corporate funders will be identified in the short-term. Therefore we recommend that core funding of £50,000 approx. is sought from the University of Hull.

Executive programmers at Hull 2017 have identified as yet unspecified financial resources for LP.

If this funding is secured, we can make a strong application to ACE for additional funding through GfA for the creative and participatory elements that the ACE would be prepared to fund. With exhibition in the Hull2017 it would be possible to obtain further funding from charitable trusts without delaying or jeopardising the exhibition.

It is essential that within the context of Hull2017 and available funding, the project contains a strong educational element. Therefore, the project should be integrated into the English Department's 'The Word is Hull' and form part of this programme of events, which includes extensive outreach work. The funding application to ACE should make clear that this exhibition and outreach work complements and strengthens existing Hull2017 provision.

Discussion with the Larkin Society has identified existing educational partnerships. However we should be careful not to over commit to what's possible within the capacity of the project. Existing additional partners and providers may include: University of the third Age through raising funds from Paul Hamlyn's Access & Participation Fund and Hull College and Bishop Burton College who have already expressed an interest in the project.

Research suggests that a focus on contemporary creative writing should be at the heart of the project, both in terms of engagement and influence on the curation of the exhibition project. To this end, Larkin 2017 will work with the BBC festival MCSW, The Forward Prize, Poetry Society (Poetry by Heart project in particular), First Story, The National Poetry Archive, NAWA, and The Writing Squad.

Arts Council England and other funders are keen to see both artistic excellence and development. They want to see an organisation growing and developing as well as nurturing new talent. Larkin 2017 could be the catalyst for the development of the University gallery and its future programming. This project could be instrumental in how the University communicates to a wider community within the city.

Research has identified that there are no public funding bodies that specifically supports exhibitions of historic artefacts.

Conversations and research conducted for this report suggests that this would be a popular exhibition and will create interest at the early stages of development. It might also play a significant role in establishing a temporary exhibition programme for the University Art Gallery that might attract sustained, future funding from ACE.

According to Hull2017 there are no exhibition clashes at the planned time of LP.

## **5. Project-funding Schedule for Option 1 (Recommended)**

- 5.1. 30 April: Core funding decided
- 1 May: Appoint curator
- 31 May: Funding application to ACE
- 30 June: All other funding applications submitted

## **6. Funding table**

Research into a range of funders was undertaken following advice from colleagues in the sector and previous experience. This table represents only those that may be likely for this specific project. See separate file attachment.

## **7. Appendix**

### **7.1. Communication with potential partners**

- Meeting at the History Centre with Simon Wilson and the Larkin exhibition steering committee including Graham Chester
- Skype meeting with Liz Draper, Development Manager (Corporate Partnerships), Hull UK City of Culture 2017
- James Trowsdale, Head of Public Partnerships, Hull UK City of Culture 2017

## 7.1. (contd.)

- Meeting with Stephen May, Literature Relationship Officer, Arts Council England
- Karen Durham, Hull2017 Relationship Officer, Arts Council England
- Gill Greaves, Museums Relationship Officer, Arts Council England

## 7.2. Communication with potential funder (supplementary to funding table)

### Hull 2017 Principal Partners

KCOM: no response

KWL: no response

Yorkshire Water: no response

### Hull2017 Major Partners

BP: no response

Sewell Group: already committed their money to Hull 2017

Wykeland: possible

### Business Club members

Hudgell Solicitors: no response

Jelf Insurance Partnership: no response

Smailes Goldie Group: no response

Strawberry: already committed their money to Hull 2017

### 7. 3. Appendix 2: Larkin Exhibition wishlist / costings - an alternative budget

PLS - Philip Larkin Society, HUA - Hull University Archives

Element	Detail	Supplier	Cost (£k)	In-kind (£k)	Notes
Venue - Hull	Exhibition Hall, BJL	UoH		tbc	Currently May-June 2017
Venue- London	tbc	tbc		tbc	British Library? CoC team offered to help re a London venue, negotiate re transport & installation costs to keep project costs down
Project Director	Undertake curation of exhibition, write bids, liaison with artists etc	tbc	15		Supported by PLS and HUA. Outline costings provided by an experienced curator
Digitisation - photos	Digitisation of photographic material for the exhibition	HUA staff		1	Healthy image bank following Bradford book and AN Wilson documentary in 2015
Digitisation - AV	AV material needs to be sent to bureau for digitising	RicRac (audio) PrimeFocus (film)			University Library agreed to cover this cost - items to be selected & digitised by July 2016
BBC material	Film footage from historic and current Larkin documentaries	BBC film archive		tbc	Including previously unseen footage would be a good selling point
Other content	Do we want to feature any material that isn't physically in Hull at present?				Shipping & insurance costs - for example Notebook 1 currently at the British Library
Design & printing of exhibition	Includes loan of display cases etc	tbc	20		Outline costings provided by an experienced museum exhibition designer
Artistic Commissions	Commission two artist to create two new commissions			25	Ask CoC team about securing two artistic commissions via CoC small grants scheme
Supporting programme	Programme of events inspired by life of PAL		7		Guest talks and events to appeal to broad range of audiences
Promotion and Publicity	Part of CoC programme	UoH & CoC marketing		25	
Guide - OPTIONAL	Glossy coffee table booklet to go with the exhibition		2		Consider approaching Faber & Faber
Higher Education - OPTIONAL	Does there need to be an educational element to the project?		2		Larkin isn't in the Hull Curriculum [for Primary schools] Get commissioned artists to work with Hull College and Bishop Burton College
Online Exhibition - OPTIONAL	Re-work display panels and imagery from exhibition into an online context to go live after the London exhibition	Google Cultural Institute		2	HHC currently looking at the Google Cultural Institute - free platform for online exhibitions. HUA staff would transfer information across
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£46k</b>		