

**BUDGET AND
PERFORMANCE PANEL**

4.30 P.M.

29TH APRIL 2008

PRESENT:- Councillors John Whitelegg (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Tina Clifford, Keran Farrow, Sarah Fishwick, Ian McCulloch and Peter Williamson

Apologies for absence:-

Councillors Jim Blakely (Chairman), Jean Dent and Mike Greenall

Also in attendance:-

Joe Sumsion, Chief Executive of the Dukes Theatre

Officers in attendance:-

Roger Muckle (part)	Corporate Director (Finance and Performance)
David Owen (part)	Head of Cultural Services
Liz Stokes	Corporate Performance Manager
Jon Stark	Democratic Support Officer

60 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

61 SCRUTINY OF FUNDING TO THE DUKES THEATRE

The Head of Cultural Services introduced Joe Sumsion, the Chief Executive of the Dukes Theatre and presented a report to provide Members with background information in respect of the item. It was noted that a report had been considered by Cabinet in December 2007 regarding funding from the Council and the proposed business model of the Dukes at that time.

Mr Sumsion gave a presentation detailing his history in theatre and his appointment as new Chief Executive of the Dukes in January 2008. Members were advised that since his appointment the Dukes had appointed a Strategic Policy and Governance Committee to oversee the artistic and financial governance of the company. It was reported that £100k had been secured from the Arts Council and a further £235k from the North West Development Agency (NWDA), and work had begin to refurbish and upgrade the premises.

The Panel was advised that an Artistic Policy had been developed for the organisation with a dedication to diversity and becoming a beacon of excellence. The Dukes was actively developing partnerships with Ludus Dance, More Music in Morecambe and the Nuffield Theatre and forming closer links with Lancashire County Council. It was reported that the management team were planning the programme for autumn 2008 and continuing to develop the DT3 programme, which focussed on work with young people in the community.

Members were advised that the long-term priorities for the Dukes included a closer engagement with Centros, in light of the potential development taking place in the direct vicinity of the theatre, and to increase and diversify its funding streams, particularly from the Arts Council.

The Head of Cultural Services confirmed that the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Dukes had commenced in January 2008 for a period of 12 months. The SLA contained all the Council's requirements in return for the funding.

Members raised concern that the Dukes aimed to attract more funding and improve its activities yet had cut operational and marketing costs and reduced staffing levels. It was reported that the reductions were made in response to cuts in funding. However, the theatre aimed to 'grow the business' and consequently begin to increase the number of staff to deal with the increased workload, beginning with a new role of Producer that was due to be advertised.

Mr Sumsion outlined the company's ethos as a creative institution that sought to be creative in its management style and inquisitive of its market, its aims and its capabilities and would seek new methods for business development and be prepared to learn and adapt. It was agreed that SLA agreements were public documents and so the confidentiality section of it should be removed.

Mr Sumsion discussed the importance of the Dukes to the district on a philosophical level and outlined their aim to cater for all sections of the community, and their commitment to appointing a community liaison worker to target activities at those who did not normally attend the theatre. Members agreed that they should receive some data from the Dukes' audience and participation survey to make a more informed analysis on the effectiveness with which the theatre was catering for the community.

Resolved:-

- (1) That the confidentiality section of the Service Level Agreement with the Dukes be removed.
- (2) That monitoring and evaluation of the demographic data of the users of the Dukes Theatre be produced and forwarded for the Panel's consideration in 6 months time.

62 BVPI COMPARISON - EXETER BENCHMARKING GROUP

The Corporate Performance Manager introduced a report to provide Members with a comparison of the Council's performance against statutory Performance Indicators in relation to a number of similar local authorities based on size, demographic profile and budget.

Members discussed the data at length and requested additional information on a number of issues.

Resolved:-

- (1) That additional information be requested from Service Heads in respect of:-
 - (a) Why the average length of stay in hostel accommodation was recorded as 0.00.
 - (b) How the figure for the cost of waste collection per household is calculated and why the current value varies from other authorities.
- (2) That the Head of Environmental Health and Strategic Housing be requested to address the Panel regarding:-
 - (a) Measures to reduce the number of 'sites of potential concern' with respect to land contamination.
 - (b) Measures to increase the number of sites for which sufficient detailed information is available to decide whether remediation of the land is necessary, as a percentage of all 'sites of potential concern'.
 - (c) Measures to increase the percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time.
 - (d) How Members can access details of noise complaints received by the Council and additional issues of anti-social behaviour reported to the Council.
 - (e) Statistics reflecting the district's air quality in comparison with previous years.
- (3) That representatives from the Museums Partnership in receipt of City Council funding be invited to a future meeting of the Panel.

63 WORK PROGRAMME REPORT

The Democratic Support Officer introduced the Work Programme report to update Members with regard to the Work Programme. Members were advised that they would receive reports on Service Level Agreement (SLA) monitoring and the results of the Local Environment Quality Pilot Study at the meeting scheduled for 10th June 2008.

Members agreed they were satisfied with the briefing notes received in response to the request for additional information on the items referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding housing issues. It was agreed that additional information was not required at the current time.

Members were advised that a financial training event was due to take place on Tuesday, 9th September 2008 that would be conducted by the advisors to the Council's Treasury Management arrangements and it was agreed to add this to the draft Work Programme for 2008/09.

Resolved:-

That Members note the financial training event scheduled for Tuesday, 9th September 2008 and that it be added to the draft Work Programme for 2008/09.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 6.26 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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