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**Meeting of the Executive Member for Leisure and  
Culture and Social Inclusion and Advisory Panel**

2 December 2008

Report of the Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning and Culture)

**YORK THEATRE ROYAL: PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

**Summary**

1. This report is to inform the Executive Member of the progress and performance of the York Theatre Royal under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) which runs to March 2012. At the January meeting it was agreed that the Theatre Royal's performance would be reported at 6 monthly intervals to the Executive Member taken at the same time as the report from York Museums Trust and Gallery. This report therefore covers a slightly longer period than 6 months with detailed information in Annex 1 and additional background information on the summer production of The Railway Children is also included in Annex 2.

**Background**

2. The current 4 year Service Level Agreement (SLA) was signed by partners in April 2008 and provides a process whereby the agreed targets are reported to members at 6 monthly intervals. The specific targets that have been agreed for the theatre are:
  - Total tickets sold (target for 2008 160,00 rising annually to 168,000 in 2012)
  - No. of young people participating in educational activities (target 250 young people weekly in Youth Theatre)
  - Average % audience per show
  - % Audience from post code areas
3. The Theatre also receives funding from the Education budget of £15K to support the Partners in Education and Theatre (PET) scheme. This is included in the performance report from the Theatre (Annex 1) and is cited by the DCFS as excellent practice. Schools have responded positively for inclusion in the PET process this year with 4 primary and 2 secondary joining as partners.

**Consultation**

4. The report is for information only and there is no consultation to consider.

## **Options**

5. The report is for information only and there are no options to consider.

## **Analysis**

6. In setting out the SLA objectives for through until 2012 the key outcomes supported by the SLA were:
  - To provide a year round programme of high quality work promoting the city regionally, nationally and internationally
  - To ensure that the theatre played a significant role in supporting children and young people to enjoy and achieve in schools and in extended schools settings
  - To support new talent in the creative sector in the region through the programming policy in the Studio theatre
  - To ensure that the theatre was accessible and developed its audiences especially within those sectors of the community that traditionally had low attendance or participation rates
7. The report from York Theatre Royal (Annex 1) sets out how they have addressed these issues in the last 10 months and gives an outline of some of the developments that the Theatre are planning in the coming year.
8. The theatre has had an extensively acclaimed programme receiving three nominations for the TMA Awards. This is reflected in their very healthy box office figures.
9. The Theatre's investment in its education and young people's provision is clearly paying dividends in both youth theatre numbers and waiting lists and proportion of tickets sold to under 26. Their establishment of a Young Actors company is a particularly welcome development and the youth theatre's performances in the York Youth Mysteries and the Illuminating York Festival have been outstandingly good.
10. Work with St John's University and University of York has increased performance opportunities for their Performers, Directors and Choreographers. The New writing strand has had healthy box office returns for new writing with individual pieces receiving regional critical acclaim.
11. The Theatre remains in the top quartile of theatres in achieving the of the broadest social mix of audiences in the country, and the results of the national benchmarking exercise considering Audience development will be tabled at the meeting.
12. The Theatre has been a positive partner in the development of the vision for a Cultural Quarter in the city, taking an active, informative role in the current Scrutiny process.

### **Corporate Priorities**

13. The theatre makes a positive contribution across all five of the Lifelong Learning and Culture outcomes:
- **Making York More Eventful** - More York residents and visitors will enjoy participating in, and taking the lead in cultural events and activities.
  - **Engagement in Learning** – More people will be supported into learning by providing opportunities for everyone.
  - **Being Healthy** – More residents will enjoy the good physical and mental health that comes from increased participation in active lifestyles.
  - **Supporting Stronger Communities** – Local communities will be supported to direct their own cultural activities. Access will be open to all and we will enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities.
  - **Developing a Vibrant Cultural Infrastructure** – Residents will enjoy an increasingly thriving cultural sector and the economic benefits that flow from it.

### **Implications**

14. **Finance:** The 2008/09 budget for the Theatre Royal SLA is £298,200, representing a cash freeze on the payment made to the Theatre in 2007/08.
15. The report has no additional implications relating to:
- Human Resources
  - Equalities
  - Legal
  - Crime and Disorder
  - Information Technology

### **Risk Management**

16. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy there are no risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

### **Recommendations**

17. The Executive Member is asked to note and comment upon the performance of the York Theatre Royal.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role under the Service Level Agreement

## Contact Details

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### Wards Affected:

### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Charlie Croft  
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**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 14.11.08.

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

### Background Papers:

*Renewal of the Service Level Agreement between City of York Council and the York Theatre Royal - Report to the Executive, 25 March 2008*

### Annexes

1. Chief Executive's report
2. Railway Children Facts and Figures