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

22 January 2008

Report of the Assistant Director (Lifelong Learning and Culture)

**YORK THEATRE ROYAL SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT:
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 2008. Reports will from now on be brought to EMAP at the half-year point as well as in May to report on the full year performance. This report covers the first half of 2007/8 (though being the first report additional background information is also included in Annexes 1 and 2).

Background

2. The three year SLA is a joint agreement between the Council and the York Theatre Royal. It sets out:
 - the key objectives of the partnership
 - performance targets and indicators to be met by the Theatre
 - performance information to be provided
 - review and reporting procedures
 - partnership arrangements between the Council and the Theatre
3. The SLA provides a process whereby the agreement with the Theatre will be formally reviewed by the Council towards the end of those three years and a further plan for the next three years will be agreed. The Council's funding for 2007/08 under the SLA is £298,200. The Theatre has had a rolling programme of three year SLAs with funding fixed at the outset for the 3 year period and an allowance for inflation added each year. We are currently negotiating the new SLA to run from 2008 – 2011.
4. This report presents an evaluation of the progress the Theatre has made in achieving the outcomes agreed in the SLA 2005-2008 (Annex 3) and highlights some of the areas currently under discussion for inclusion in the SLA for 2008 to 2011.
5. 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 Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCFS) as excellent practice.

Consultation

6. In setting out the SLA objectives for 2005 - 2008 officers worked in consultation with the Theatre, Arts Council England: Yorkshire and First Stop York tourism partnership. The key issues covered in the SLA were:
 - The need to provide a year round programme of high quality work promoting the city regionally, nationally and internationally
 - The potential for the theatre to take a more significant role in supporting children and young people to enjoy and achieve in schools and in extended schools settings
 - The opportunity for the Studio theatre to support new talent in the creative sector in the region
 - The need 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
 - The need to improve the proportion of earned income against public investment
7. The report from York Theatre Royal (Annex 1) sets out how they have addressed these issues over the past three year period and gives an outline of some of the developments that are informing our current negotiations. The full details of the performance indicators, previously reported to members quarterly, for the period of the current SLA are given in Annex 2.
8. The Theatre has clearly been through a period of change with a renewed emphasis on education and young people's provision, the introduction of a second performance space and the establishment of a national production and touring reputation. This has coincided with some difficult financial issues, which has seen a marked reduction in the Theatre's reserves. However, the Theatre is making progress towards becoming less financially dependant on the Pantomime box office and currently has a healthy financial position this year.
9. The increase over the last 3 years in Youth Theatre Provision, outreach project work and new work in the Studio with the Higher Education sector has been positively welcomed by partners. National figures for 2006 from the Arts Council England show that the York Theatre Royal has one of the broadest social mix of audiences in the country, supported by a pricing policy that encourages attendances by young people.
10. The Theatre has been a positive partner in the development of the vision for a Cultural Quarter in the city. Work with the City of Festivals initiative and tourism product development, though slow to start with because of forward planning timescales, is now imbedded in the management planning at the Theatre.

Options

11. The new SLA must be in place by 1 April 2008. There is further opportunity to contribute to ongoing drafting process in the light of any final comments or issues raised by members at the meeting. The Service Level Agreement 2008 – 2011 will be considered by the Executive in March 2008.

Corporate Priorities

12. The York Theatre Royal contributes to a number of corporate objectives including developing opportunities for residents and visitors to experience York as a vibrant and eventful city, improving opportunities for learning, and in strengthening York's economy through investment in the tourism infrastructure. Investment in the Cultural Quarter, which includes the Theatre, is an identified priority within the sub-regional investment plan.

Implications

13. The report has no additional implications relating to:
 - Finance
 - Human Resources
 - Equalities
 - Legal
 - Crime and Disorder
 - Information Technology

Risk Management

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

Recommendations

15. 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

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Report
Approved



Date 08.01.2008

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Annexes

Annex 1 Theatre Royal Chief Executive's report

Annex 2 Performance Indicators data

Annex 3 Service Level agreement 2005-2008