
Learning and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee

15 July 2009

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 Scrutiny Committee of the progress and performance of the York Theatre Royal under the current Service Level Agreement (SLA) which runs to March 2012.

Background

2. The four 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. Reports are brought to Overview and Scrutiny at the half-year point and again in July to report on full year performance. This report covers the financial year 2008/09 as a whole with particular emphasis on activity that has taken place since the mid-year report.
4. The SLA provides a process whereby the agreement with the Theatre will be formally reviewed by the Council towards the end of those four years and a further plan for the next four years will be agreed. The Council's funding for 2008/9 under the SLA was a standstill £298,200 but after that it includes a rolling programme of three year funding which attract inflation increases.

Consultation

5. This report is for information and there is no consultation to consider.

Analysis

6. This report presents an evaluation of the progress the Theatre has made in achieving the outcomes agreed in the SLA 2009 – 2012. 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).

7. The key partnership requirements covered in the SLA are:
 - 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
8. The report from York Theatre Royal (Annex A) sets out how they have addressed these issues over the past year, with particular emphasis on the achievements of the latter six months, and also gives an outline of what they will be developing moving forward.
9. The Theatre have produced a programme that has seen tickets sales rise to 171,000 against a target of 163,000. The programme has also enjoyed considerable acclaim with many of them going on to tour regionally and nationally. Their co-production partnerships have prospered and they are increasingly developing wider partnership across the city to Support the wider cultural agenda.
10. The Theatre remains a positive partner in the development a Cultural Quarter in the city, moreover with its work on the railway Children with the NRM and Much Ado with the York Museums Trust it is making the Cultural Quarter process more than one simply concerned with Public realm and into one that includes joint product development.
11. Of particular not is the Theatre's increasing role in developing creativity in Young people. This is seen not only in the PET scheme, their Studio and Main House programming, their Youth Theatre and the success in receiving Arts Council support for free tickets but significantly in the partnerships across the sector to promote Arts Award and the Young Actors Company. The TAKEOVER event is eagerly anticipated.

Options

12. This report is for information and there are no options to consider.

Corporate Strategy

13. 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.

Implications

14. **Equalities** - Annex A details the contribution the Theatre makes to supporting our Equalities agenda. In particular their Free theatre Tickets for Young people has been particularly well used as has the provision of an audio description service for each main house production.
15. There are no Finance, Human Resources, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology or Other implications associated with the report at Annex A.

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 Scrutiny Committee 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

30.6.09.

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Service Level agreement 2009-2012 contained as Annex 3 in January 2008 performance report

Annexes

Annex A - Theatre Royal Performance Report September 2008 – March 2009