

APPENDIX 4

Education, Community and Heritage Outreach Strategy and service Delivery Plan, Ulster Hall

Introduction

Education, Community and Heritage Outreach (ECHO) provision at the Ulster Hall will be policy-led and strategically driven. In the conventional policy sequence from *mission statement* to *aims* to *objectives* to *action plans* to *implementation* to *evaluation*, there is a symbiotic relationship between the ECHO Policy and the wider policy and planning of Belfast City Council and The Waterfront and Ulster Halls.

The ECHO Policy has been developed in line with the BCC corporate objectives;

- To provide civic leadership
- To improve quality of life now and for the future
- To promote good relations
- To deliver best services

It is incorporated in the business plan of Belfast Waterfront and Ulster Halls under objectives 1 and 4;

- Objective 1 to provide a focus within the community
- Objective 4 to create a positive profile

The policy reflects a conception of ECHO as a valued and distinctive core discipline with its own criteria, which contributes to both internal and external measures of the council's success in discharging its responsibilities.

The ECHO objective is;

To provide an environment in which people can develop their enjoyment, understanding and awareness of the culture and heritage of the Ulster Hall, increasing their awareness of the society in which they live as part of the process of lifelong learning. To use the facilities of the Ulster Hall to further the council's policy of promoting social inclusion for members of the diverse communities of Belfast by creating opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds to engage with the Ulster Hall and avail of its services.

Methodology for delivery of the Ulster Hall Education, Community, and Heritage Outreach policy

The methodology is based on a 6 point plan, as suggested by the DCMS model;

1. Identify the range of public for which the building and the strategy can have relevance.
2. Assess and review current practice
3. Develop strategic objectives and prioritise physical resources
4. Develop the services and train the staff to deliver them
5. Implement the services and publicise them
6. Evaluate success, review and improve

Strategic objectives and associated physical resources.

Key resources for the Ulster Hall have been identified as;

- The Mulholland Grand Organ
- The Carey Paintings
- The Group theatre archive(currently housed at the Linen Hall library)
- The Architectural/socio-political heritage of the building
- The relationship with The Ulster Orchestra
- The central location within the Linen Quarter of Belfast
- The diverse nature of the activities facilitated by the building
- The building itself

A significant factor in the successful achievement of this objective is the completion of the scheduled refurbishment of the facilities at the Ulster Hall. The programme of works aims to improve physical access whilst retaining the historical and architectural characteristic of the buildings;

- Currently the Box office is open from 12-3pm Monday to Friday, these opening hours are to be extended from 10am to 5pm at a minimum Monday to Saturday;
- Physical access to the building is to be improved. In line with the Ulster Hall interpretative heritage plan (Appendix A) the front doors of the Ulster Hall will be physically open throughout the day. A significant element in realising this aspiration is the willingness of the Ulster Orchestra to open their rehearsals to visitors, except in exceptional circumstances, such as recording. It is planned that visitors will be able to appreciate the auditorium and listen from the front balcony area.

- Consultation with Adapt NI and the accessibility working group of Belfast Waterfront hall has been undertaken to improve physical accessibility throughout.
- Foyer areas will be improved to include a café facility

Developing Services and staff

The ability to deliver a message of mass ownership so as to reach a position where participation by the whole community is the norm at the Ulster Hall will require an attitudinal shift in how young people and the wider community view the Hall, as well as a change in attitude by the Hall. The creation of a full time post of education and community outreach officer, and a part time project driven education worker for the Ulster Hall are key to this shift. The post holders will have responsibility for the development of a range of services from the following broad categories of ECHO work.

- General mediation (print / audio / 'live');
- Hands-on / Interactive Sessions / Performance-based explorations and (re)enactments;
- Guided Tours (on- and off-site), Field Trips, Site Visits and Open Days;
- Research / Talks / Lectures / Presentations / Seminars / Study Days / Debates / Q+As / Conferences;
- Complementary events in Hall's core discipline or allied disciplines (on- and off-site);
- Publications (print / audio / video) including commissioned research / commentary / documentation;
- Worksheets / Activity Books / Resource Packs;
- Special Learning or Support Resources e.g. archive facsimiles; handling collections;
- Specific support for non-English speakers / readers or for those with a sense impairment / disability;
- Classes/Workshops, [Summer] Schools; Clubs;
- Family Days and Family-oriented programming;
- Residencies by Artists, Curators, Scholars;
- Professional Exchanges, Internships and Work Experience Programmes;
- Professional Development Courses;
- Medium- to Long-term Action Research and/or Pilot Projects, designed for one or more of the Hall's many publics;
- ICT services providing virtual access and/or distance learning opportunities related to any of the previous 15 indicative actions.

Specifically the Hall's ECHO staff will be responsible for;

- Liaison with peers in relevant organisations already using the building and co-ordinating programmes complimentary to those in place within those organisations. (eg; Ulster Orchestra, Youth for Christ). The Ulster Orchestra already has two full-time education staff and already runs an

excellent programme with participation in excess of 22,000 people. Whilst the primary connection is with the music curriculum, across a range of ages, there is a willingness to grasp the opportunities offered by the new curriculum to work in other subject areas, such as science, mathematics and history. There is clear potential for synergies here. The Orchestra's on-site programming is currently limited by the restricted space and facilities available in the Elmwood Hall. It regards the move to the Ulster Hall, with two large, dedicated education areas as well as other potential spaces, as offering a major opportunity to expand this work. Youth for Christ wish to extend their programme of outreach youth work to those teenagers congregated in Belfast City centre on Saturday mornings. They are keen to utilise the new café facilities in the front foyer as a focus for this activity and to open the building to this "public" whilst they are setting up their evening performances.

- Developing a closer working relationship with The Waterfront Hall including building a policy of referrals and partnership outreach projects.
- Developing, in conjunction with consultant educational specialists and the BCC heritage officer, educational materials for delivery within the building and the supervision of a programme for delivery of such material. Particular emphasis is to be placed on the widest possible promotion of the materials and full use made of ICT to increase accessibility beyond the physical realm of the building itself.
- Developing, in conjunction with relevant consultants, a range of permanent and temporary exhibitions illuminating the architectural, socio-political and cultural heritage of the Ulster Hall and to facilitate structured visits for school with emphasis on student participation in workshop activities; the range to include; Art focus, History focus and Music focus with reference to the curriculum and to relevant partners. The Ulster Orchestra is currently celebrating its fortieth year and has accumulated a substantial archive as well an oral heritage yet to be recorded. Belfast City Council will be working with the Orchestra to preserve make this material available within the Hall.
- The identification and implementation of strategies for the inclusion of those "publics" classified above as *intenders*, *coat-tailors* and *thresholders* within the regular users of the services.
- Developing strategies to build relationships with those sectors of the community at risk of social exclusion. Particular emphasis is to be placed on youth outreach activities in conjunction with existing BCC projects and those of partner organisations and promoters.
- To further aid accessibility through the provision of audio equipment to facilitate both self guided tours and audio description for those with visual impairment. Content will be location-specific, with delivery sites specifically centred on the stairs, upper corridors and especially the balcony areas. This approach minimises disturbance to the heritage space and to any rehearsal or other usage of the main auditorium. Content will be segmented between the general – information which allows a visitor to understand the spaces they are occupying, expanding and enhancing the interpretative panels – the specific,

selectable by topic. Visitors will be able to select, for example, between various genres of music, perhaps even specific artists associated with the Hall, such as Rory Gallagher, literary, sporting or political heritage.

Implementation and publicising of services

Services will be publicised through the extensive marketing resources of Belfast City council. Publicity materials at the disposal of the Ulster Hall include;

City Matters, the information magazine of Belfast City council delivered door-to-door to 124, 000 households in Belfast. Copies are also sent to all the public libraries and waiting rooms in doctors and dentists surgeries in Belfast.

Waterfront/Ulster Hall Entertainment Guide 80,000-100,000 printed. 35,000 mailed to patrons, the rest distributed to information points, bars, restaurants etc across Northern Ireland.

Belfast City Council Website with links to both The Ulster Hall and The Waterfront Hall referencing the ECO policies of both buildings and the facilities available for interested parties. (see attached as Appendix C for summary of provision)

NITB, BVCB and Ulster Orchestra websites; partnership organisations will be utilised to promote access to facilities for relevant groups.

In conjunction with the BCC Corporate Communications Dept, a redevelopment and re-launch of the Ulster Hall website is planned, working in tandem with the current Waterfront site, which at a minimum will include:

- Greater visual ownership of the website from the Ulster Hall rather than City Council;
- Better advertisement of facilities available for hire, conference facilities, exhibition areas and theatre;
- Scheduled programme of shows/events;
- Details of proposed outreach projects;
- Facility to book tickets on-line or at least links through to promoters online purchasing websites;
- Refurbishment information page detailing proposed works, marking stages of closure and promotion of new facilities;
- Location map
- Interactive history of the Ulster Hall;
- Up to date news/review section.

Evaluation of success, monitoring and enhancing

We will continually ask questions of ourselves and others about what we are doing and how we can do it better. We will focus our efforts not just on quality outputs, but also on outcomes. To make this tangible, we will continue to develop our baseline data and our performance measurement systems to make the targets we set ourselves realistic, achievable and worthwhile.

Active evaluation of visitor response, where visitors are not engaged in attending ticketed events, will be carried out via methods outlined in the MLA *inspiring learning for all framework*. Quantitative and qualitative data will be analysed in line with the framework. It is envisaged that visitors in the following categories will be surveyed in this way;

- Participants in partner organisation's outreach initiatives eg Ulster Orchestra, Youth for Christ
- Organised formal and informal educational and community visits
- Spontaneous visitors including leisure tourists

Demographic information will be gathered for all non ticketed visitors to establish baseline data for social inclusion research.

In line with the current practice of the department, the ECO section will report on a monthly and annual basis to the board of the Waterfront and Ulster Halls, accounting for expenditure and measuring success against Key performance indicators.

Data will be collected and measured in the following areas to provide KPI information;

- Number of visitors to Ulster Hall
- Percentage increase in occupancy by art and community sector clients.(Returning and new customers/visitors)
- Number of new customers/visitors from art and community sector
- Number attending community events
- Occupancy rates of education suites and meeting rooms by community or arts/education sector
- Number of new partnerships created
- Number of workshops facilitated
- Number of temporary exhibitions presented
- Number of non ticketed visitors
- Percentage increase in income generated from art and community sector clients in main auditorium/Group space