

Belfast Festival at Queen's

Following the Deloitte Independent Evaluation/ Audit of Multi-Annual Funding Final Report (26 September 2007), it was agreed by Members that the Belfast Festival at Queen's would be subject to a review. An overall summary of the report on the Belfast Festival at Queen's states:

The Belfast Festival has achieved its objectives of delivering an annual international art festival and of continuing to profile Belfast's artists. Marketing of the festival has continued and some audience development and outreach activities have been undertaken, however these have been limited in the past few years due to funding restrictions and loss of staff members. Our assessment is that the Festival meets most of its objectives; however we have some concerns about the priority given by the Festival to developing audience development and outreach activities.

The following sections required assessment:

- **performance against objectives**
- **performance statistics**

Based on information and evidence provided by the Belfast Festival at Queens, an assessment on these sections was carried out.

Performance against Objectives and Performance Statistics

Evidence of significant structural changes which have taken place over the course of the past year has enabled the Festival to perform more efficiently. Due to a new major sponsor, staffing issues have been resolved and the festival now has a dedicated Director and a Marketing Manager, and the organisation has rejoined Audiences NI. The festival has extended its relationship with the Belfast Telegraph and is working very closely with Belfast Visitor and Convention Bureau. In-kind marketing support from the title sponsor has yielded the marketing budget to approximately £200,000, an increase of over 200%. There is evidence of a clear commitment made by the festival to increase the accessibility of the programme. Several measures such as free events, the community ticket scheme, free transport for schools and the Hitchhikers Guide to the Festival have aided in the development of new audiences. A part-time Education Officer will be appointed in December 2008. The Festival's change in box office system to ENTA has enabled the collection of audience data to be more relevant to set performance objectives in audience development in particular. The Festival's commitment is considered a positive indication that they will meet their targets in both audience development and outreach activities.

The deficit in 2006/2007 has been rectified due to major new sponsorship and cash sponsorship from the private sector has increased by 140% in the current financial year, 2008/09. This financial improvement has created stability. Although audience figures had decreased in 07/08 this was due to financial reasons which impacted on programming. However, it is estimated that in 2008/09 programming and therefore audience figures, will both increase significantly.

Statistics for 2005 - 2008	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Audiences	50,000	65,468	41,000 ticket sales (total audience estimated at 55,000)

Statistics for 2005 - 2008	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Performances	267	190	144
Turnover	£1,033,302	£1,264,569	£1,450,000
Expenditure	£1,139,715	£1,409,583	£1,420,000
Surplus/ (Deficit)	(£106,414)	(£145,014)	£30,000

Following review of the Belfast Festival at Queen's it is recommended that they continue to be a multi-annually funded client until 2011.

Linenhall Library

Following the Deloitte Independent Evaluation/ Audit of Multi-Annual Funding Final Report (26 September 2007), it was agreed by Members that the Linenhall Library would be subject to a review.

An overall summary of the report on the Linenhall Library states:

The Linen Hall set itself a lot of objectives in its MAF application, many of them challenging. As the period of review has featured internal change and resource difficulties, this has impacted on the Linen Hall's ability to focus on and achieve all of its objectives. In light of this the Linen Hall has been assessed as meeting some objectives

The following sections required assessment:

- **performance against objectives**
- **performance statistics**

Based on information and evidence provided by the Linen Hall Library, an assessment on these sections was carried out.

Performance Against Objectives and Performance Statistics

The Linenhall Library's review of the senior management resulted in the development of a new management structure, and implementation of this will be completed by the end of March 2009. At the same time, the Library will have completed its Business Plan to position itself more securely to deliver its services and objectives. Funding received from DCAL has been used for the installation of a modern exhibition and multi-media facility which is now in place and is in addition to proposed activities. Firm evidence of the development of a thematic mini-festival approach to arts and cultural programming has been encouraging, with projects of particular interest to the public and entries to the second Michael McLaverty Short Story Award have increased by 100%. Partnership working has been established and the Linenhall Library has negotiated a partnership with the Ulster Tatler to facilitate publication of its Literary Miscellany. Partnership with Queen's University to digitise Irish Periodicals will provide free access to this material for all members. These are all considered positive indications in the Linen Hall's performance against objectives. Overall the cultural programme has been streamlined and, although programmes

have decreased, a clear rationale has been established to justify the reasons. There is evidence that the programme is more focused on quality rather than quantity and strategically aligned with the core ethos of the Library.

As is noted from the table below membership and loans have fallen slightly. Due to the size of the building the optimum membership figure has been estimated at 4,000. It is encouraging that the Library has taken a pro-active approach to increase this membership by instigating a series of measures including the targeting of groups and tiered membership costs. Footfall continues to increase and is on target. Linen Hall Library has provided information on methods to reduce their deficit which is based on depreciation. To manage this deficit, the management committee have integrated a robust financial system.

Performance statistics	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Membership (calendar years 2005 – 2008)	3,912	3,867	3,626
Footfall	126,779	121,478	124,445
Loans (Calendar 2005 – 2008)	31,981	28,010	25,542
Performers	400	299	209
Turnover	£908,495	£1,217,216	£1,061,070
Expenditure	£999,567	£1,217,691	£1,189,949
Surplus/(Deficit)	(£91,072)	(£475)	(£128,879)

Following review of the Linen Hall Library it is recommended that they continue to be a multi-annually funded client until 2011.

The Lyric Players Theatre

Following the Deloitte Independent Evaluation/ Audit of Multi-Annual Funding Final Report (26 September 2007), it was agreed by Members that the Lyric Players Theatre would be subject to a review.

An overall summary of the report on the Lyric Players Theatre states:

The Lyric has performed well against most of its objectives, with the exception of developing their outreach programme and developing a summer season of theatre productions. Therefore the assessment of the Lyric is that it meets most but not all of its objectives.

The following sections required assessment:

- **performance against objectives**
- **performance statistics**

Based on information and evidence provided by the Lyric Players Theatre, an assessment on these sections was carried out.

Performance Against Objectives and Performance Statistics

The Lyric Players Theatre has provided the council with their draft Business Plan 2010-12 and updated information on 2008-09 activities. While the Lyric still have some staffing issues, there is firm evidence of improvement with the appointment of a new Artistic Director and the future appointment of an Education and Outreach Officer scheduled for 2009. A strong and convincing educational and outreach programme has been designed to identify groups - both formal and informal and non-traditional theatre attendees - and subsequently bridges have been put in place to cross various barriers to access.

A reasonable series of educational activities to suit different age ranges has been put in place. Evidence of partnership with the Ulster Scots Agency is seen as positive. The Lyric is working across the city and is clearly committed to developing real partnership workings. The outputs of these developments will be realised across the city in forthcoming years. Focusing on youth (18 -22 age group) the Lyric proposes to re-launch the Lyric Drama Studio which will become a central part of the Lyric's education Programme. Overall these are very encouraging indications of the developing outreach and educational programme.

In line with the Lyric's Business Plan, the Creative Programme is designed to appeal to a broad range of audiences offering access and opportunity for all. During the transitional period the summer season will not take place but will be re-instated once the new building is complete.

As is noted from the table below there is a marked increase in performances and therefore audience figures. Evidence of increased annual turnover is very encouraging. It should be noted that their accounts are currently being audited and the deficit shown is an estimate.

As the Lyric are in a transitional period in the current year (08/09) and therefore with reduced numbers of performances, it is understandable that audience figures may drop accordingly. However, the latest productions have been well attended and have received great critical acclaim.

Statistics for 2005 - 2008	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Audiences	49,181	48,286	52,754
Performances	226	200+	241
Turnover	£1,277,431	£1,193,380	£1,335,409*
Expenditure	£968,788	£1,183,426	£1,355,409
Surplus/ (Deficit)	(236,097)	£9,954	(£20,000)**

* Please note that the Lyric's legal structure changed during this year in preparation for the capital project. Lyric Players Theatre ceased trading as at November 30 2007. Lyric Players Theatre Productions Ltd began trading on August 1 2007. Lyric Theatre NI began trading on December 1 2007. Figures quoted here represent a consolidated figure for the three companies.

Following review of the Lyric Theatre it is recommended that they continue to be a multi-annually funded client until 2011.

BLANK PAGE