



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Culture and Arts Update
Date:	9 December 2009
Reporting Officer:	Shirley McCay, Acting Director of Development ext 3459
Contact Officer:	Kerrie Sweeney, Tourism, Culture and Arts Manager, ext 3586

Relevant Background Information

The Culture and Arts update comprises the following

1. 1613 Symposium
2. Community Festivals Fund
3. Lyric Theatre

Key Issues

1. 1613 Symposium

A request to hold a symposium looking at the commemoration of Belfast's 1613 charter was agreed by the Committee on 13 May. This event was held on 4 November in the Ulster Hall where a distinguished panel of speakers and contributors shared knowledge of the role of history in contemporary society, Liverpool's 800 celebrations, the 2007 celebrations in Jamestown, Virginia and the archaeological context and meaning of Plantation in its widest context. Dr. Duncan Morrow, Director of the Community Relations Council, also contributed. The event was facilitated by William Crawley of the BBC. The audience contained a number of important scholars and a diverse range of members of the public.

The 1613 Symposium was widely regarded as a success and the process used commended, in particular by the American visitors.

There was general agreement by all those who attended the at the Ulster Hall that

- the anniversary of the charter was important;
- people were interested and wanted to learn more about the period, but also felt that they should have been made aware of some of the issues at school;
- it was shared history, that needed to be looked at holistically and in context.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members note the success of the event and agree that a small internal working group be set-up to look at further possible actions. This group should include representation from the Good Relations Unit. External consultation and engagement should be continued.

Resource implications:

None at present.

Decision Tracking:

No decision tracking required.

2. Community Festivals Fund

In September the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure reported an underspend in their Community Festivals Fund and offered Councils an opportunity to express an interest in accessing this funding. An additional £8,213 was secured and matched by BCC (approved by Committee on 16 September); the additional funding was £16,426.

The Community Festivals Fund has been split over 4 tranches in the 2009/2010. The final tranche was advertised in October 2009 for festivals taking place during January to March 2010. The additional funding of £16,426 was included in this tranche increasing the funding from £29,140 to £45,566. This has now been fully committed.

Resource implications:

Members approved match funding DCAL's additional monies at the September 2009 Committee Meeting. An additional £8,213 was secured from existing Departmental budget.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members note the update

Decision Tracking:

No decision tracking required.

3. Lyric Theatre

The Lyric is the only full-time producing theatre in Northern Ireland. The original venue opened in 1968 and closed in January 2008 as it was no longer fit for purpose. The new theatre, part-funded by the Council, is due to open in 2011 and will be a landmark building developed by Award-winning architects O'Donnell & Tuomey. At the Council meeting on December 2007 the Lyric Theatre was awarded £1.25 million towards its capital development through the Cultural Legacy Fund.

The cost of the capital project is £17.8 million, of which over 95% has already been raised, with the aim to source the final 5% whilst the Theatre is being built. It is notable that nearly £4 million of the total has been raised from private funds/non public agencies. Since being awarded the grant, the Lyric has been liaising with Belfast City Council and has provided updates on a regular basis.

Ciaran McAuley, Chief Executive of the Lyric Theatre has now requested an opportunity to present to the Development Committee to bring Members up to date with plans and demonstrate how the Lyric Theatre can support the Council in delivering our objectives.

Resource Implications:

There are no resource implications at present

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee agree to receive a presentation from the Lyric Theatre, date to be agreed by the Chairman.

Decision Tracking:

Further to agreement that an invitation be issued to Ciaran McAuley to present to the Committee.

Timeline: January 2010

Reporting Officer: Kerrie Sweeny

Key to Abbreviations

BCC: Belfast City Council

DCAL: Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

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