

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **28TH SEPTEMBER, 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE**

SUBJECT: **CLWYD THEATRE CYMRU PROGRESS REPORT**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide a progress report on Clwyd Theatr Cymru (CTC) covering delivery of the business plan and budget efficiencies, and the emerging vision for the theatre after the appointment of a new Artistic Director.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 In 2014 CTC was described as “an arts centre with Wales' premier drama producing theatre (making 6-8 of its own productions per year) at its heart. It played to a 200,000 audience per annum, its annual turnover was around £5m and it employed around 200 people. Combined with its Theatre for Young People, it was the third largest client of the Arts Council of Wales with total public funding of £2.45m. The Theatre for Young People was a distinct Arts Council of Wales revenue funded organisation with its own Artistic Director, artistic policy and business plan, and reports to the Board of Governors.”

2.02 CTC is part of the Local Authority structure. It is managed by a Board of Governors and the following extracts from the ‘Theatres Governance Arrangements’ form key elements of the role of Board.

- The Board of Governors/Trustees will operate as a semi-independent Committee of the Council and co-opt external Members with responsibility for the artistic, financial and business performance of the Theatre.
- The Board has dual reporting to Flintshire County Council and the Arts Council of Wales.
- The Board will have a sufficiently inclusive membership to maintain sound and productive relationships with the Council and the Arts Council of Wales and the arts and business communities of Wales.
- The Council retains full legal and financial responsibility and

liability for the Theatre.

- The Board and appointed Officers of the Theatre and the Council have delegated authority to oversee artistic, business and financial affairs according to its business plan without undue interference by the Council.

2.03 As part of the Business Planning process all services went through to put forward budget proposals for 2015/16 onwards, CTC identified the following changes that were approved by the Council.

- To develop a new and more efficient operating model.
- The setting of a 1/3 Council budget reduction (£0.350m) over 2 years with a £0.200m reduction in 2015/16. To achieve this by a reduction in programme from 8 to 6 in house productions, a more efficient operation, and an increase in income. The plan outlined the priority of appointing a new Artistic Director and a commitment to future consideration of an alternative method of delivery to support change.

2.04 In addition Council members in agreeing these proposals commented on the importance of monitoring CTC's progress in increasing its commerciality and becoming closer to the local community.

2.05 As well as facing reductions in funding from the Council CTC is also currently applying to remain an Arts Council of Wales funded organisation. It will not find out the final outcome of this process, which will include future funding levels, until later in the year.

2.06 Therefore this report, which will follow a tour of CTC, aims to provide scrutiny with the ability to:

- comment on progress against the business plan, and new operating model, including delivery of the identified savings;
- hear the new emerging artistic vision for CTC from the newly appointed artistic director who took up post in August 2015;
- comment on the progress of CTC in increasing its commerciality and becoming closer to the local community.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 The following sections form a report from the new Artistic Director at CTC detailing progress against the business plan and detail on the emerging artistic vision, increasing commerciality and becoming closer to the community.

3.02 **Section 1 – Ongoing Priorities : Delivering our core annual ACW remit as follows**

3.02.1 A programme of 6-8 in-house shows:

This season is in the process of being developed but will embrace a broader range of work than in previous years, to include new writing, musical theatre, a regional premiere, Welsh language work and co-productions, as well as revivals of classic works.

3.02.2 Touring work around Wales:

We are continuing to explore touring possibilities and have been in discussions with several companies about next year's season. We are negotiating two possible UK tours for the latter half of 2016.

3.02.3 Developing a culture of new writing at the heart of our work:

We will be producing two new plays in autumn 2016 and workshopping at least one new musical in collaboration with a commercial co-producer in summer 2016. We are also working with a new organisation, Playwrights Studio Wales, to bring writers into the theatre in a series of regular residencies.

3.02.4 Presenting a diverse range of quality visiting work, film and visual art. Ensuring the best possible artistic quality and financial/operational management throughout:

We have been working to ensure that we programme further ahead in order to be able to secure higher quality touring shows and more favourable financial deals. We have also been working towards a more holistic approach to the work across the whole building and all the art forms that we present.

3.03 **Section 2 - Short/medium term (2015/16 - 2016/17)**

3.03.1 Appoint a new Artistic Director with a new artistic vision:

Tamara Harvey took up post on August 3rd 2015 and is committed to a broader artistic programme with a holistic approach to all art forms across the building, drawing in new audiences and ensuring that Theatr Clwyd becomes a welcoming home for the community and a beacon of innovation across the creative arts in Wales, the UK and beyond.

3.03.2 Deliver on reduced FCC funding by £200k in 2015/16 through a robust and financially sustainable business framework:

a) How the £200k this year will be delivered:

| Plan from the board papers | | £000s |
|---|--|--------------|
| - The budget incorporates public funding cuts of £200k from FCC and £34k from ACW. | | (234) |
| - The surplus from 2014/15 brought forward. | | 26 |
| - The net production budget has been reduced by £120k. This has been managed by replacing our own main house production with 4 weeks of visiting work which has generated additional net income of £10k. It should be noted that this is not practical to any greater extent due to the limited amount of visiting work available to a venue of our size and the impact this would have on our ACW funding. | | 120 |
| - Marketing staff have been redeployed to earlier panto build and other projects. | | 10 |
| - The marketing budget has been reduced by £10k in respect of the lost production and a further £10k to reflect our decision to extend the Autumn brochure to 4 months to chime with the transfer of programming to the new Artistic Director. | | 20 |
| - Contribution from ancillary trading is planned to increase by £10k, especially with the planned | | 10 |

| | | |
|---|--|----------|
| appointment of the new Events Manager in June. | | |
| - Savings on energy costs (actual metering) /waste disposal amount to £18k. | | 18 |
| - Ongoing staff savings arising from vacancies | | 30 |
| Net Impact | | 0 |

b) Update on Delivery of Savings September 2015

- We're well on target to deliver this – the lost CTC show in the main house was replaced with 4 weeks of visiting work which played to 11,311 people and generated a surplus of £28k which was £18k higher than the planned £10k above.
- We are working with an independent advisor to deliver a full staffing restructure, which will enable us to better exploit our resources and explore new revenue streams.
- We are also developing a new marketing plan to enable us to reach out to different and more diverse audiences. Our season beginning in February 2016 will look to present a more varied programme of work with a greater number of collaborators. We are also working with new casting directors to ensure that we broaden our company of artists to further appeal to different audiences.

3.03.3 Find a means to claim Theatre Tax Relief and possible VAT Cultural Exemption as soon as practicable:

The position with this is that theatre specialist lawyers, Harbottle & Lewis supported by VAT specialists, SOCVAT, have been retained to help us resolve the issue of how a local authority owned venue can access the tax relief. Theatre Tax Relief (TTR) is claimable by tax eligible entities that create and deliver theatre productions and tours. The tax relief represents 16% (20% x 80%) of production costs excluding running which at current operating levels would amount to additional income of around £100k pa. A higher amount of 20% is also available in respect of touring productions. So, we need to create an appropriate tax eligible entity. Work is ongoing to complete establishing tax entity that achieves what we require.

3.03.4 Find creative solutions through new ways of working and initiating new partnerships and collaborations in all areas of our work, pursuing our Welsh Producing Consortium initiative:

Potential co-productions being explored for 2016 include work with Sherman Cymru, Wales Millennium Centre, St James Theatre

London, Theatre Iolo, Clean Break, Headlong and two commercial producers. Our team have had fruitful meetings with Venue Cymru, Aberystwyth Arts Centre and Chester Performs about ensuring greater collaboration in the future.

3.03.5 Develop our Celtic Festival of new writing in collaboration with theatres and companies from the other Celtic nations:

The Celtic Festival is currently pencilled for May 2016 and is being envisaged as an explosion of Celtic work in the building - bigger, bolder, more concentrated (with a big opening weekend and only a three week run) and encompassing all of the art forms and spaces in our building.

3.03.6 Develop an Annual Report to reflect and promote everything we do:

We have been consistently working with our Business Reports and developing these further as our new Artistic Director develops the new vision for Theatr Clwyd.

3.03.7 Extend our community links to a bigger and broader range of people:

This is a vital part of our new vision and will lie at the heart of all we do. The new Artistic Director has been meeting with different community groups and individual local artists to explore how we can create greater links. We are looking to relaunch the Youth Theatre in 2016 and to work with a wide range of community organisations to provide opportunities for artistic engagement both within and without the building. On 31 October 2015 is 'Open Doors', a day of free events in Theatr Clwyd for young and old alike, with all areas of the building - including wardrobe, props, rehearsal rooms and backstage areas - open to be explored. We are currently working with local partners on plans for an ice rink on the side of the building during the Christmas period, in order to draw more people up the hill. These plans will also include transportation for those in Community First areas. We are also looking to produce a site-specific immersive theatre piece in a house in Mold for this same period. The tunnel between the car park and the theatre is to house art by local schoolchildren and we are working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board – Arts in Health & Wellbeing to pilot an arts scheme for the elderly and mentally ill.

3.03.8 Progress our building refurbishment project on to its development stage:

Work is taking place on a fundraising strategy for capital development and we are talking with a number of experienced colleagues about how to progress this in order to capitalise on our 40th anniversary celebrations next year. We are also working on a short/medium term programme of work to try out 'rough' versions of proposed changes,

both so that we can understand possible strengths and weaknesses and so that our audiences can join us in the journey towards a full capital development project.

3.04 Section 3 - Medium/long term (2016/17 to 2017/18)

- 3.04.1 Continuing from the planned achievements above, and Implementation of the new Artistic Director's vision, including developing partnerships and projects with Welsh companies and others:

We are striving to become a vital and vibrant arts centre at the heart of our community and a creative home for artists from Wales and beyond where new work can be created and new ways of working explored. We are reaching out to Welsh artists, theatre companies, dance companies and more, and to companies in the rest of the UK and beyond. We are working to make our building more accessible, more welcoming and more alive, through visual changes and through pre and post-show events in our foyers and other spaces.

- 3.04.2 Develop our first co-production with National Theatre Wales, a new play for summer 2016:

We are working with various Welsh companies and companies in the rest of the UK to create co-productions for the 2016 season.

- 3.04.3 Restore the position of New Plays Associate along with a commissioning budget:

This is a target for 2016, to be developed in light of the staff restructure. In the meantime, we are in conversation with several contemporary writers about future commissions and are working with Playwrights Studio Wales to place Theatr Clwyd at the heart of new writing in Wales.

- 3.04.4 Deliver on reduced FCC funding by another £150k in 2016/17 bringing the total grant to around £650k:

2016/17 target

| Savings | £000s |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Reduced Production budget – CTC shows | 50 |
| Staff cost savings | 60 |
| Overhead savings | 5 |
| Income | |
| New visiting contribution | 5 |
| Extra trading contribution | 10 |
| New Events income | 15 |
| Other donated income | 5 |
| Ticket price increases | 0 |

| | |
|-------|-----|
| TOTAL | 150 |
|-------|-----|

a) How the £150k next year will be delivered - Savings

Next year is currently less specific – the original plan presented to the Board in November is attached below and whilst the savings will still be in the same areas, with the changes to our methodology that are now becoming a (welcome) reality, we would expect to achieve the production savings without reducing the number of our own shows. Co-productions, longer term planning and a new approach to production design, whilst maintaining quality, should achieve the savings. We're also reviewing our pricing and marketing strategies exploring dynamic pricing, etc. We're currently engaged in a complete staff structure review - this will be complete by Christmas and implemented by March 2016, which will generate the planned staff savings. As part of this the Events Manager post will be reviewed and implemented to generate the proposed ancillary commercial income.

b) Income

This is mostly picked up above with regard to ancillary trading. The function room refurbishment is now complete and a Commercial Manager will be appointed to drive this activity forward. We've started selling confectionary which will generate additional revenue and we'll be engaging on a completely new marketing campaign broadening our appeal significantly to include all sectors of the community and developing all sorts of additional daytime activities to ensure the building is used much more. Sponsorship is also being developed and with longer term planning arcs has a much better chance of generating income. Basically a big shift in mindset and company culture. Visiting work in the main house is to be pursued on a more commercial basis along the lines of the gains achieved this spring and the artistic programme itself will also contribute to this as we find further life for our work through touring.

3.04.5 Develop our family audience and Arts and Learning programme:

Theatre for Young People continues to work with local schools and young people. We are working with BCUHB - Arts in Health & Wellbeing to deliver a pilot scheme for the elderly and those with mental health issues. We are relaunching our Youth Theatre in 2016 and are looking to turn Studio 2 into a dedicated space for young people and young artists. We are also exploring a possible story telling area and soft play area within our public spaces.

3.04.6 Explore our position within the national Welsh Arts Strategy with a

view to consolidating our national presence and contribution:

The Artistic Director has had fruitful discussions with the Chief Executive at the Arts Council of Wales and is working on ambitious plans for our 40th anniversary to work with high profile Welsh artists in defining and articulating a Welsh theatrical canon.

- 3.04.7 Transform our building into a crucible of creativity – a cultural and social hub buzzing day and night:

This is absolutely integral to all our plans. As well as our artistic programming, we are working on short, medium and long terms plans to revitalise our foyer spaces in terms of both the entertainment on offer and the food and drink available.

- 3.04.8 Move the capital feasibility study through the development stage:

Technical staff are working to progress the design plans and the work on the staffing restructure will be crucial to ensure there are the right skills in the team to develop the capital project.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 To comment on CTC's progress against delivery of it's business plan and identified savings.
- 4.02 To comment on the emerging artistic vision of the theatre.
- 4.03 To comment on CTC's progress in increasing it's commerciality and becoming closer to the local community.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01 This report details the progress CTC has been making on delivery a revised budget that includes reductions from the Council and the Arts Council of Wales.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 CTC aims to increase it's links with communities including those that are unlikely to visit the theatre due to their financial circumstances.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 The capital project at CTC will play a major part in making the theatre more environmentally sustainable.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01 CTC strives to provide artistic opportunities for all with an increasing

emphasis on young people and local communities.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 A complete staffing restructure is underway and will be overseen by the CTC Board.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Engagement will take place with Local Communities to develop CTC's future programme.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 CTC Board has considered Business Plan updates.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 No appendices

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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