
Report to

Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

4th March 2009

Report of

Councillor John Blundell – Cabinet Member (Children, Learning and Young People)

Title

Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Belgrade Theatre Trust

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 At their meeting on 10th May, 2005, the Cabinet approved a process of reporting back to the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on the work of those outside bodies appointed to by the City Council. This reports sets out details of the work of Belgrade Theatre Trust (Coventry) Limited over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 I recommend that Coventry City Council continue to appoint two Councillors to the Board of Belgrade Theatre Trust.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 The Belgrade reopened in September 2007 after an 18month closure while the £14 million Capital Project was undertaken.
- 3.2 With the reopening the Belgrade has sought to establish itself as a major producing house and create a programme of work that could not be found in any other regional theatre and therefore attract the country's leading artists and develop audiences.
- 3.3 To this end between September 2007 & March 2008 there have been 8 home produced shows to huge national acclaim. In particular 'Scenes from a Marriage' which is currently scheduled to move to the West End and 'One Night in November'.
- 3.4 Community and Education work continues to be a major part of the Belgrade's work. Work Programmes of the in house youth theatre, with its pioneering 2 year project 'Acting Out' that is delivering in partnership with the Local Authority and the outreach youth theatres in Canley, Tile Hill and Foleshill all delivering to improve the outcomes for young people.
- 3.5 The current financial climate continues to pose its problems and the theatre suffered a drop in box office income and a reduction in income from sponsorship and trusts. In order to combat this and generate income for the future the theatre has produced 2 significant new income streams (Events and Conferencing and Belgrade Production Services) that are forecast to contribute nearly three times more in ancillary income than the pre capital project.

However these are not sufficient to allow the Theatre to deliver a balanced budget, leaving the level of producing in B2 together with the work of Community and Education projects, in particular, under threat.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 Coventry City Council is a major sponsor of the Belgrade, which is a significant contributor of the cultural life of the city and an important vehicle to deliver educational programmes.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 5.1 Coventry City Council's representatives on the Belgrade Theatre Trust are Councillors Blundell (from May 2008), Skipper and Councillor Sawdon (up to May, 2008). During the period of January, 2008 to December, 2008 inclusive 7 Board of Director meetings took place, of which Councillors Blundell and Skipper each attended 6. Councillor Skipper also attended 5 Audit Committee meetings of the 6 meetings that took place.

- 5.2 There is no remuneration for the appointment.

List of background papers

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Schedule of City Council Appointments to Outside Bodies