



Coventry City Council

Briefing Note

To: Scrutiny Coordination Committee

Date: 9 September 2015

Subject: Cultural Trust Review

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 In October 2012, Coventry City Council approved the recommendations of the Cultural Trust Review. The Review, which was undertaken in close collaboration with the Belgrade Theatre Trust, Coventry Heritage and Arts Trust (CHAT), and Coventry Transport Museum (CTM), aimed to ensure that, within the context of the economic climate and the need to generate savings in response to public spending cuts arising from the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR): the future of the cultural attractions managed by the three Trusts would have a viable future; would be operated as efficiently as possible; and could market themselves effectively to local, regional and national audiences, so that they could be sustained, grow and succeed in the future.
- 1.2 The Review recommended a merger of CHAT and CTM to form one new entity, with the Belgrade Theatre continuing to operate independently as a separate theatre trust. The recommended "Two Trusts" model was projected to generate a total saving of £665,000 per annum for the Council in grant/service fees to the Trusts, through a phased process of transition, with the realisation of full annual savings to the Council from 2014/15.
- 1.3 In August 2013, Culture Coventry was launched as the new Trust combining the functions of CHAT and CTM.
- 1.4 In April 2014 a £9.5m refurbishment and redevelopment programme commenced at Coventry Transport Museum and the Old Grammar School, culminating in the full reopening to the public of the School and comprehensively re-modelled Museum in June 2015.
- 1.5 In February 2015, the Council established in its budget and Mid-Term Financial Strategy further savings targets of £100,000 per annum from the closing of the Priory Visitor Centre and £500,000 per annum (from 2017) from Cultural Trust grant budgets. Further to implementation of the previous Cultural Trust Review outcomes, discussions will now need to take place with the trusts regarding this MTFS savings target.
- 1.6 In July 2015, Coventry announced it would be bidding for the UK City of Culture 2021 title. Both Culture Coventry and the Belgrade Theatre Trust are key CW8 partners and have been actively engaged and involved across the bid development process to date, including with senior representation on the Coventry City of Culture Steering Group and Executive Group.
- 1.7 This briefing note provides a summary report on the performance and operating context for the two Trusts in 2014/15, further detail on which will be provided through presentations by

the Chief Executives of the two Trusts within the meeting of Scrutiny Coordination Committee.

2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Coordination Committee:

- (i) Review the performance and current operating contexts of the Belgrade Theatre Trust and Culture Coventry.
- (ii) Recommend to Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure, Parks and Sports key considerations and priorities for sustaining and developing the cultural offering of the City supported by the Council's grant contributions to the operations of the two Trusts.

3 Belgrade Theatre

- 3.1 The Belgrade Theatre is an Arts Council England (ACE) National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). As an NPO, the Belgrade is a producing theatre, with specific objectives set in relation to its ACE grant.
- 3.2 Since the approval of the Cultural Trust Review, the Belgrade has received a phased reduction in its grant from the Council, resulting in a reduction of £272,000 (25%) per annum from 2014/15, compared with grant levels in 2012. In addition, the Belgrade has seen reductions in its NPO grant across the same period. Through this time, the Belgrade has worked towards a greater emphasis on the role of earned income in securing sustainability – with 62% of turnover coming from earned income in 2014/15, up from 46% in 2008/9.
- 3.3 The Belgrade Theatre reports to both ACE and the Council on a suite of key performance indicators. Appendix 1 outlines a number of key measures which reflect the impact of public investment in the Theatre.
- 3.4 In 2014/15, 151,000 people experienced a live performance at the Theatre, across 113 productions. Whilst audience numbers were down for visiting work, audience numbers for Belgrade performances held up well, and the Theatre produced its first professional piece for children and young people.
- 3.5 In 2014/15, the average ticket price was £13:28 and a new press and digital officer post focused work to widen the Theatre's reach to new audiences. The Theatre successfully widened its audience base in 2014/15 whilst maintaining levels at over 40% of tickets being sold at concessionary prices. Over 65,000 people attended performances for families and children and young people, and in 2015 the Theatre is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Theatre in Education, a movement which the Belgrade Theatre gave to the world.
- 3.6 Whilst the Theatre has many successes to report throughout the period of implementing the Cultural Trust Review outcomes, a key focus on developing resilience remains, with further savings to the cultural trusts scheduled in the Council's Mid-Term Financial Strategy for 2017. In particular, the Trust is focusing on increasing private philanthropic support for its work, and has launched a fundraising campaign to support its Theatre in Education programme, following the 50th Anniversary celebrations this year. The Trust is further working to develop stronger links between its professional and community work, and is proactive in working to ensure diversity in both its audiences and workforce. In support of this, the Trust continues to actively support its nationally recognised apprenticeship programme, which has provided 20 apprenticeship posts since 2009.

4 Culture Coventry

- 4.1 In August 2013, Culture Coventry commenced operations as the new Trust to combine the previous functions of CHAT and CTM – operating Coventry Transport Museum, the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, the Priory Visitor Centre, Lunt Roman Fort and (more latterly) Old Grammar School.
- 4.2 The amalgamation of the two organisations into one team with common objectives and policies progressed concurrently with the circa £9.5m development and refurbishment programme at Coventry Transport Museum (CTM) and the 12th Century Old Grammar School (OGS), which was completed in June 2015.
- 4.3 The transformational development at CTM and the OGS has been funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the Arts Council, BIFFA Award, Garfield Weston and WREN. The complexity of the scheme resulted in a number of challenges that required the museum to be closed for two periods of two weeks (i.e. four weeks in total) through its development programme, and the conference space remained closed for a total of seven months. Both of these factors necessarily impacted on income generation across 2014/15. Furthermore, the required phasing of the scheme (to maintain a functioning museum across a £9.5m redevelopment programme) meant that significant sections of the museum had to remain closed to the public across 2014/15 and up until the end of the project in June 2015.
- 4.4 Since the commencement of operations in 2013, the Culture Coventry Board has focused on securing an attractive visitor offer and a balanced budget for the organisation going forwards, to ensure the successful delivery of the £393,000 per annum grant savings made possible through the formation of the new organisation (combining the functions of CHAT and CTM).
- 4.5 As both Coventry Transport Museum and the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum remain free to visit, improvements to the shop and product lines have been made at both venues, with the aim of generating increased secondary spend income. In addition, Culture Coventry merged significant elements of the museum reserve collections into a single location during the year, thereby saving £14,000 per annum. In February 2015, Culture Coventry embarked on a reorganisation of the business to make further cost savings in order to improve its resilience going forward.
- 4.6 Very positively, in 2014/15, all four museums were re-awarded Accreditation status, thereby achieving recognition of the management of collections in line with nationally agreed standards for museums in the UK.
- 4.7 The redevelopment of Coventry Transport Museum further allowed for the complete re-interpretation, re-design and re-installation of 12 out of 14 galleries throughout the Museum, enabling new, high quality graphic interpretations, audio visuals and interactive features to greatly enhance the visitor experience. The 1916 Maudslay Lorry restoration project was also completed and subsequently received a Highly Commended award in the national 2015 Museum & Heritage awards.
- 4.8 In 2014/15, Culture Coventry further secured £50,000 funding from ACE to create a new interactive exhibition space at the Lunt Roman Fort, which is already proving to be popular with schools and general visitors.
- 4.9 Herbert Touring has progressively developed its national reputation (with four exhibitions toured to nine venues in the UK since 2013), but it is recognised that the Museum team are operating in a challenging market, where many regional museums no longer have the budgets to hire touring exhibitions.

- 4.10 Culture Coventry has further performed very strongly in delivering the national Museums and Schools programme (as one of ten selected museums), with over 24,000 students visiting the organisation's museum sites between 2012 and 2015, and with 282 of the 606 school visits taking advantage of the travel bursary scheme on offer.
- 4.11 Following some previous fluctuations in visitor numbers at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, visitor numbers were again up by 11% in 2014/15. CTM visitor numbers had been consistently increasing since 2007, but fell by 30.7% in 2014/15 (in line with the organisation's forecasts) due to the redevelopment works taking place at the Museum across the year.
- 4.12 Following the completion of the very significant redevelopment programme at Coventry Transport Museum and the Old Grammar School, and following enhancements to facilities at the Lunt Roman Fort, Culture Coventry is now positioned to offer a more consistent and enhanced experience across the suite of cultural venues that form its visitor offer.

Officer Contact Details

David Cockroft
Assistant Director – City Centre and Development Services
Tel: 024 7683 3964
Email: David.Cockroft@coventry.gov.uk

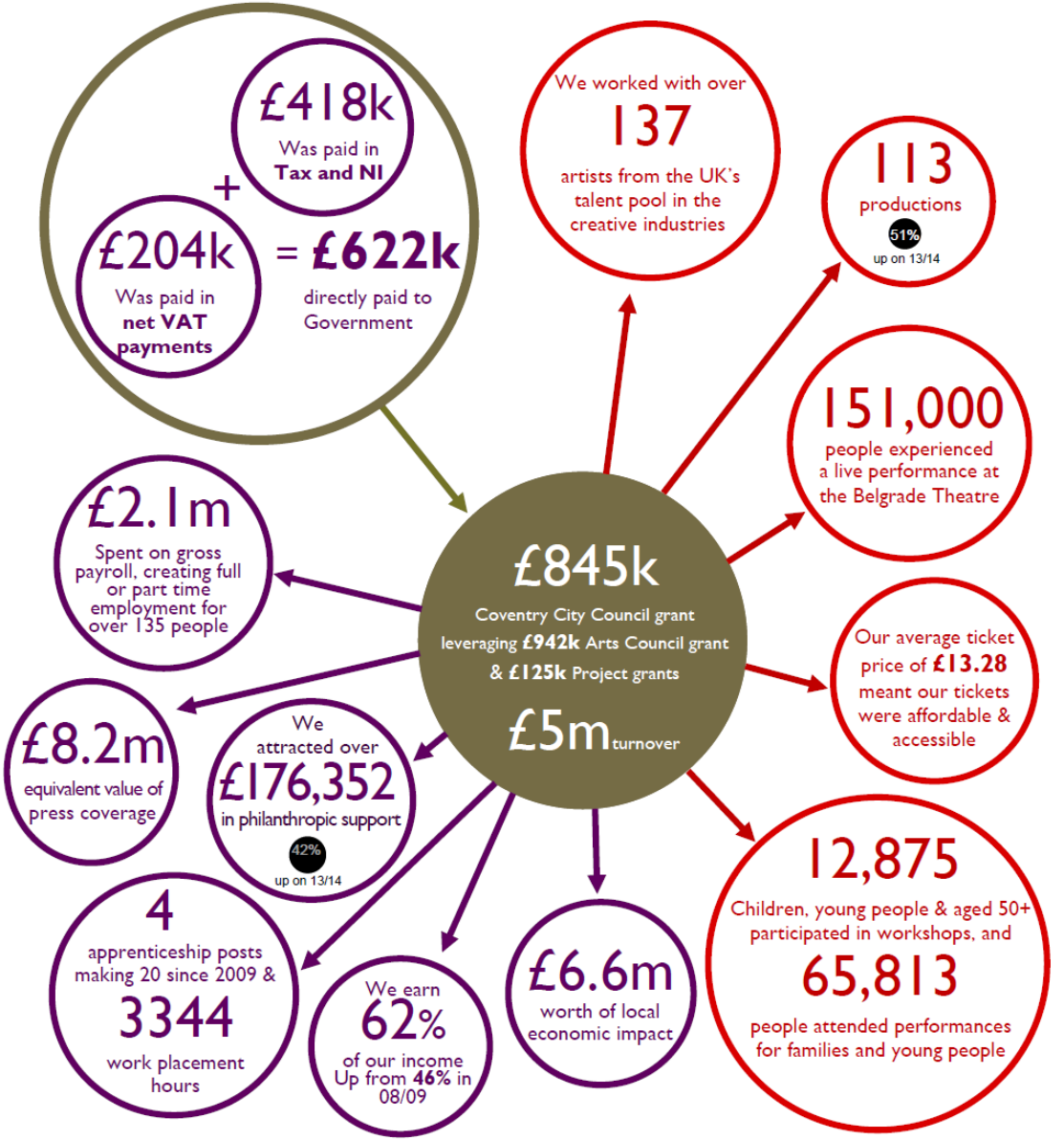
David Nuttall
Head of Service – Sports, Culture, Destination and Business Relationships
Tel: 024 7683 2362
Email: David.Nuttall@coventry.gov.uk



Coventry's vibrant producing & presenting theatre

THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC INVESTMENT 2014-15

The Belgrade Theatre is a charity. Public funding received from Coventry City Council, Arts Council England; fund-raising from various Trusts and Foundations; and Charitable and Business Sponsorship, enables us to leverage considerably more from earned income generated through ticket and other sales.



Economic Impact

£4.98 GENERATED FOR EVERY £1 OF COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL FUNDING

Cultural & Social Impact

BROADENING CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT & SOCIAL COHESION

Printed on FSC paper