

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**22 NOVEMBER 2007**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
AND SOCIAL INCLUSION  
SELECT COMMITTEE**

### **CABINET DECISION**

Corporate and Social Inclusion – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Laing  
Arts, Culture and Leisure – Lead Cabinet Members – Councillor Mrs Womphrey

#### **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THEATRE SUBSIDY**

1. Summary

The attached report sets out the findings and recommendations from the Corporate and Social Inclusion Select Committee's review of Theatre Subsidy. The report examines whether the level of Council subsidy to the Billingham Forum Theatre represents good value for money and makes recommendations regarding the provisions to be included in any future contract.

2. Recommendations

(1) that once the issues surrounding the future of the Billingham Forum building have been resolved, following an appropriate procurement process, the Council should let a long term contract incorporating the following:

- clarification of the relationship between the chosen contractor, the Council and Tees Active Ltd and specifically the degree of influence the Council would want to have on the management of the forum theatre including guidance on a framework for approval of the theatre programme;
- a requirement in the contract for the chosen contractor to collect customer information and detailed information on attendances to allow greater analysis of audience by socio economic and special interest groups and to inform the theatre's marketing strategy;
- requirement of a strategy for programme and audience development;

(2) that, in advance of a new contract being developed and let, Officers work with the current Contractor to try to extend audience appeal and find ways of more effectively promoting educational productions to school audiences and publicising how the theatre can accommodate audience members with specific access needs.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

In order to ensure value for money and to seek to develop and improve the programme offer at the theatre.

#### 4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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  - clarification of the relationship between the chosen contractor, the Council and Tees Active Ltd and specifically the degree of influence the Council would want to have on the management of the forum theatre including guidance on a framework for approval of the theatre programme;
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**DETAIL**

1. The report presents Cabinet with the findings of the theatre subsidy review undertaken by the Corporate Policy and Social Inclusion Select Committee between June and October 2007. The topic was identified at a meeting of the Scrutiny Liaison Forum in January 2007 and was confirmed by Executive Scrutiny Committee in May. The review was identified as it was felt that there was a need to ensure that the subsidy for the running of the theatre represented value for money and timely because the future of the Forum building was under review.
2. Following consideration by Cabinet an action plan will be submitted to the Select Committee setting out how the approved recommendations will be implemented detailing officers responsible for action and timescales.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The report does not recommend any changes to the current annual subsidy to the Forum Theatre of £240,000 at the present time.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The report makes recommendations regarding the provisions to be included in a future contract. The letting of a future contract would need to follow an appropriate procurement process.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

This report is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

## **COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS**

The operation of the forum theatre contributes to the following Community Strategy priorities:-

- Economic Regeneration and Transport
- Liveability

## **CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS**

All Members were consulted on the programme and operation of the theatre as part of the review.

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**Post Title: Scrutiny Team Leader**

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Background Papers : None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: Not ward specific

Property: The future operation of the forum theatre is dependent on the resolution of the issues surrounding the future of the Billingham Forum Building.