

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14 JUNE 2012

**REPORT OF
CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Portfolio Arts, Leisure & Culture– Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Ken Dixon

SIRF 2012 Preview and Issues

1. Summary

This report describes the anticipated programme highlights for SIRF 2012. It explains some of the issues and opportunities we are exploring and working through; 25th Anniversary celebrations, VIP night plans, sites for shows, new commissions and partnerships, marketing and communications, traffic management, town centre programme, budget and charging, Visitor Experience, Carnival theme, finale outline and health and safety.

2. Recommendations

1. To receive this report and note its contents

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To note content for information

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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SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To receive this report and note its contents

DETAIL

1. 2012 will be the 25th SIRF and the programmed performances will transform the town from Trinity Green to Infinity Bridge with startling and beautiful images drawn from ancient myth, folk tales and the machines of the modern world.

An emerging theme for this year's event is "Giants"; giant shows, gigantic characters, the biggest Community Carnival we've ever had – SIRF, a giant amongst festivals.

2. **Stockton Town Centre public realm works programme**

The Town Centre public realm improvement programme planned for South High Street will start after SIRF. The contractors, BIRSE, are aware of the timing and scale of SIRF and keen to support in any way they can.

3. **Traffic Management**

The SIRF team works closely with the Council's Traffic and Road Safety section to plan and manage necessary road closures to enable us to deliver a spectacular and safe festival as well as provide minimum disruption for public transport providers and the general public. Most road closures this year will be the same as last year, however, we will be closing Stockton High Street 4 days earlier than usual, from Sunday 29th July, 07:30 to Monday 6th August, 04:00. This is to enable us to build the large scale and complex opening show, Prometheus Awakes, in time for a dress rehearsal on Wednesday 1st August, in readiness for its public performance on Thursday 2nd August.

4. **Olympic and Paralympic connection**

SIRF is embracing the opportunities offered by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games: The Community Carnival has an Olympic theme and is involving a number of local sports clubs; our opening show, Prometheus Awakes, has been selected as part of the London 2012 Festival, the official Cultural Olympiad national

programme. Prometheus Awakes is led by disabled artists, giving it a connection to the Paralympic Games.

5. Marketing and Communications

In keeping with the “Giants” theme, we are planning to display large scale SIRF 25 signage and image on buildings, empty shop fronts, billboards and on pavements, making SIRF highly visible in the Town Centre. Below is an example of the one planned for ARC.



The SIRF website has been completely redesigned making it easier to access and navigate from mobile phones and tablets. We will be improving and increasing our social media applications and activity to engage with people throughout the year.

6. Finances

We successfully applied to Arts Council England’s new National Portfolio funding programme, receiving an annual increase of £60,000 over the next three years for SIRF main programme and Carnival. We will also receive financial support from several other sources; Arts Lottery funding through the Without Walls Consortium and Gi20 programme and grants for particular shows from the Institut Ramon Llull Foundation and the Anglo Mexican Foundation.

7. Charging

In 2011 we had two charged for shows in the Spiegel Tent. Ticket sales were disappointing and we didn’t achieve our occupancy rate and income target. This year we have one paid ticketed show, Circus Ronaldo, in a big top on Trinity Green over 4 nights. ARC will act as our marketing support and ticket agent, using their skills, knowledge and databases to promote the shows and achieve our target of 90% occupancy. The marketing campaign will start at the end of May.

The Programme

8. SIRF 2012 will be the 25th Festival; an extraordinary achievement in itself. Unpredictable, vibrant, spectacular, challenging, moving, beautiful, transformative; these are emotive words that perfectly describe SIRF's programmes over the years. SIRF 2012 will certainly live up to those descriptions and provide wonderful surprises and enjoyment for our audiences including an extraordinary large scale performance on the High Street, a show on the River Tees - the first since 2005, a family circus on Trinity Green and our largest ever Community Carnival
9. SIRF continues to play a leading role in commissioning new work, presenting premieres of shows and creative collaborations with artists, companies and other festivals in the UK and internationally. Our work with Without Walls consortium of 8 UK street arts festivals and Gi20 collaboration with the National Theatre will result in 16 new UK commissions being presented at SIRF this year. In addition there will be 1 co-commission and 3 UK premieres.
10. The majority of this year's programme will take place on Trinity Green, Stockton High Street and North Shore. We have one show, Motor Show, which requires a car park space; the former diary car park site has emerged as a possible location for this show.
11. **SIRF VIP event**
This year we are taking a different approach to our VIP night and engaging senior Council staff as co-hosts and promoters.

The VIP event will be on the Thursday night, 2nd August. The show will take place in the space directly north of the Town Hall. Rather than focus on one large hospitality event, we have invited senior management within the Council to host "satellite" events throughout the town centre. In addition to our main VIP event at ARC, we will have 11 satellite events within walking distance of the Town Hall, in venues such as Stockton Library, Castlegate Shopping Centre and the Sun Inn. We will provide hosts with a 25 years of SIRF DVD, goody bags for guests and information about the SIRF 2012 programme. Our aim is to have 1,000 guests at the event compared to our usual 350 people.

12. **Staff Private View**
The Council's staff are its greatest asset and we want to make them feel special and give them a sense of pride and ownership of SIRF by inviting them to a Private View of Prometheus Awakes on Wednesday night, 1st August. It will be the show's dress rehearsal and be stunning and we hope that those who attend will bring friends and family for the Thursday night performance. Inviting staff to the dress rehearsal also helps us test the layout and effect of the show on a live audience.

Things to look out for this year

13. Prometheus Awakes

Prometheus Awakes, is a collaboration between La Fura dels Baus, the company that produced the opening ceremony at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games, and Graeae Theatre, the UK's leading disabled and deaf company. As night falls, a giant walks amongst men in Stockton High Street as the Greek myth of Prometheus is retold. The show features extraordinary stagecraft, enormous puppet, mass choreography, original music and large scale digital projections. Prometheus Awakes is the first ever large-scale outdoor theatre production in this country that is led by disabled artists and the scale of this sensational performance will be breathtaking. A co-commission with Greenwich & Docklands Festival and part of the London 2012 Festival



14. Water Fools by Ilotopie



French performance troupe, Ilotopie, transport you into a mythical, whimsical watery wonderland where cars drive on the River, street lamps emerge from the depths and a 5 metre-high Queen watches over her kingdom from a giant penny farthing. To be presented on the River Tees, close to Infinity Bridge.

15. Gigantikow

Over a week, German artist, Richard von Gigantikow, will create an interactive labyrinth from recycled wood on Trinity Green with the help of local artists, musicians and visitors, which will be ceremonially burned at the end of the Festival. This is a UK premiere

16. Circus Ronaldo

Flemish Circus Ronaldo makes a return visit to SIRF. It is one of the most exciting contemporary circus companies in Europe, bringing together three generations of the Ronaldo family in a show which plays on the key ingredients of the great circus tradition - curiosity and illusion - in the intimate setting of their own Big Top. To be staged on Trinity Green and is our only paid for event. This is a UK premiere



17. Terracotta Army lantern installation

Our collaboration with Beijing Chaoyang Intercultural Association is an installation in Trinity Church of over 100 soldier figure lanterns based on the Terracotta Army to mark the 10th Anniversary and showcase their cultural heritage.

18. Periplum



SIRF's finale will be "The Bell" performed by UK company, Periplum. The show has been redeveloped to include performers from Mexico. It is a show where the audience can feel part of the cast with stilts, aerial performance, and soaring music and singing to create a potent tale of hope & redemption. The show features fire & pyro from The World Famous and includes up to 15 local participants. To be staged on North Shore, adjacent to Infinity Bridge

Without Walls programme

SIRF will be presenting 6 Without Walls shows:

19. Company Chameleon – *Push*

Push is an exploration on the quality of touch and its physical and emotional resonance. Athletic yet sensitive, the work continues a conversation that began in childhood between artists Anthony Missen and Kevin Edward Turner. This powerful and engaging duet looks at the different stances we take as we relate to one another, and how the complex nature of our psychology means at times we push to exert our dominance and control, and at others submit and yield.

20. **C-12 Dance Theatre / Shaun Parker & Company – Trolleys**

Part dance. Part ballet. Part outdoor spectacle. TROLLEYS is a new ballet for five supermarket trolleys. Five shopping trolleys randomly appear in a public space. Two meet and fall in love. One grapples to find a friend. Three others revolt and ignite a dance of anarchy.

Trolleys spin, glide and slide in this highly physical, humorous outdoor performance where high-octane contemporary dance, acrobatics and street dance merge with the extraordinary world of trolleys.

Set to a pounding electro-acoustic score, TROLLEYS will tease, thrill and move its audience. You'll never go shopping in the same way again.



21. **Helen Chadwick Song Theatre - White Suit**

White Suit combines close harmony singing with larger than life physical performance to tell the story of a landmine survivor. Its surreal theatrical storytelling is a ferocious satire on the brutality and hypocrisy of the arms trade, featuring singing armaments and dancing arms dealers in a highly stylized song-theatre performance.

22. **Mimbre - Falling Up**



A physical tale of 4 women's physicality, 4 real stories about 4 real bodies, circus without the glitter, and bodies not conforming to stereotypes – celebrating strength and reality rather than some airbrushed fiction of what we 'ought' to be.

Falling Up will explore the meanings that are already inherent in any pre-existing moves or tricks, the impression the physicality in itself conveys to the audience, as well as creating new physical material suitable for the story we are trying to tell or the character we are trying to create. Bodies flying, falling, stacking up, one person carrying the weight of another, all images bursting with content - as soon as two

people connect physically; hold hands, touch, push, catch each other, it paints an image of their relationship, without any words added and this will be the language of Falling Up.

23. **Requardt & Rosenberg - Motor Show**

Motor Show is a performance that explores themes of young love and coming of age: innocence, secrecy and intense overpowering emotions - while the dark and chaotic world turns around them.

Motor Show is a dance in and around ten cars, designed to be performed on an urban area with the city skyline providing the backdrop. The audience wear headphones and watch the large-scale choreographed movements of the cars themselves and the dancers in, on and around them, and listen to the intimate interior conversations and sounds from within the cars.

24. Tilted Productions - *Seasaw*



Tilted Productions's work led by artistic director Maresa von Stockert, is characterised by its combination of vivid imagery, innovative dance and an integral use of props & set as well as landscapes & architecture.

A trail of contemporary dance, performance art and physical theatre vignettes, *SEASAW* is inspired by the relationship between humans and water.

Whether evoking childhood memories of waterside holidays or provoking thoughts on current environmental issues such as water pollution and global warming, *SEASAW* wants to both entertain and challenge

Supported by Arts Council England through Grants for the Arts.

25. **Gone in 20 Minutes – Gi20**

SIRF is once again working with Remarkable Production on the second Gi20 national showcase to support 10 emerging artists and companies to present new projects as work in progress to national/international audiences in both London and Stockton. The London showcase will take place at the National Theatre as part of their programme of outdoor arts, Watch This Space. The programme aims to invest in the development of new, small to medium scale work and create showcasing opportunities that lead to attracting interest, partners and investment.

Supported by Arts Council England through Grants for the Arts.

26. **Community Carnival**

This year's Community Carnival has an Olympic theme; Sporting Stockton. The carnival parade will be split into six sections which have been inspired by the Olympics: Ancient Greece, London, In the Stadium, On the Water, In the Park and Global Games. The parade will bring to life and illustrate the history of the Olympics within the space our High Street; from Zeus throwing down the thunderbolt to begin the very first games, to the London skyline a festival of all things red, white and blue, a celebration of the great variety of different sports and athletes, to the flags of the nations the medals and the torch, finishing with a nod to the future and the samba celebrations expected for Rio 2016! We are welcoming sports clubs across Stockton to take part in carnival and help us celebrate the UK's proud sporting and Olympic heritage. Our target is 1,500 participants, including 10 sports clubs. The Carnival will culminate in an event on Trinity Green where participating groups will perform routines and organise creative activities and demonstrations.

27. **25th Anniversary Legacy Project**

We are working on a SIRF 25th Anniversary legacy project, gathering artists, audiences and participants' stories, images and experiences of previous events and presenting and distributing the results in creative ways. We are looking to create an archive through Stockton Library and Heritage Services.

We are also working with Cleveland College of Arts and Design on designing a small range of SIRF 25 souvenirs to sell prior to and during the festival.

28. **Artistic Director**

This will be Frank Wilson's final year as Artistic Director of SIRF. He will still be involved with the Festival but in a reduced role which will enable us to continue to benefit from his skills, knowledge and contacts. The Council's Arts Development Manager will assume the role of Artistic Director

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

29. The increased demands of the 2012 Olympic and anniversary events presents a human resource and financial resource pressure.
30. Whilst some additional external resource has already been secured, and a number of grant applications are pending, the scale of investment required, maximising the 2012 opportunities will require an alignment of resources within the already agreed MTFP framework.
31. Having reduced staffing levels through the range of EIT Reviews, including for example the reduction of the Sports Development Team from 21 staff to 9, the demands on remaining staff teams will be considerable. For 2012 additional human resource will need to be deployed on events, and it is expected that this will be drawn from across a number of Service areas.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

32. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

33. This (subject matter of report) is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

34. Continued development and promotion of festivals and events will increase the profile of the Borough locally, regionally and nationally, as well as providing opportunities for families, children and young people from our communities to experience and participate in the arts and to enjoy sport and active leisure.
35. The promotion of diverse cultural opportunities, and the animation of our town centre spaces, will contribute towards the creation of vibrant and successful Town Centres.

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

36. An equality Impact Assessment has been completed for SIRF, alongside detailed and repeated disability access assessments of the Festival. Every effort is made to ensure that all of the events are accessible to the widest possible range of people, and physical access assessments are carried out as part of event planning.
37. Given the enhanced nature of the plans for 2012, it will be the subject of a separate Equality Impact Assessment.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

38. SIRF is underpinned by robust and wide consultation with Council Members, Council Services, partners, stakeholders, businesses, resident and community groups. Market traders, bus operators, fixed retailers, and community representatives are directly involved in the planning of SIRF and our other large scale events.

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