

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Urgent Business
DATE	29 November 2012
ACTING DIRECTOR	Patricia Cassidy
TITLE OF REPORT	The redevelopment of the Music Hall
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/12/061

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update Elected Members on recent developments regarding the Music Hall, and to confirm the City Council's agreement to Aberdeen Performing Arts conducting a design competition to determine the scope of any future redevelopment.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Urgent Business Committee agree to confirm the City Council's support for and agreement to Aberdeen Performing Arts carrying out a design competition in order to determine the full potential of any redevelopment of the Music Hall.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications at this stage. Aberdeen Performing Arts intend to commission any designs from within their existing budgets and from fundraising. Should there be any future requirements for capital investment from Aberdeen City Council, these will be brought forward as a matter of course for consideration as part of capital programming.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The review of Arts and Sports Commissioned services, ECS C_10, undertaken as part of the priority based budgeting exercise, will be presented to the Culture and Sport sub committee on 10th January 2013. Aberdeen Performing Arts have been part of this process, and it is clear that the Music Hall is a key part of the future sustainability of the organisation, in terms of its ability to attract high quality productions, to develop music activity, and to generate the income needed to ensure it operates effectively.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 On 20th January 2011, at the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, Elected members agreed to:

- Instruct Aberdeen Performing Arts to present a detailed financial model and business plan for the Music Hall which outlined the financial and resource commitment requested from Aberdeen City Council, and:
- Instructed officers to consider the implications of supporting the development within the context of the city's cultural priorities, and the five year business plan, reporting back to the 24th March Education, Culture and Sport Committee with recommendations arising from these implications.

The Cultural Priorities report approved at the subsequent EC&S Committee on 24th March established the redevelopment of the Music Hall as a key capital priority for the City Council.

5.2 Aberdeen Performing Arts

Aberdeen Performing Arts is a company limited by guarantee operating at arm's length to Aberdeen City Council. APA operates the Music Hall, His Majesty's Theatre and The Lemon Tree on behalf of Aberdeen City Council, as well as managing a box office for the region. APA programmes a diverse programme of performing arts including drama, musical theatre, children's theatre, opera, ballet, dance, comedy and music across the spectrum. Alongside the programme APA offers creative learning activity for all ages and abilities including workshops, master classes, seminars, talks and talent development for young people. The organisation stands as the largest in the North of Scotland, currently employing 250 staff with a full time equivalent of 136.

5.3 Current initiatives

The Culture and Sport Commissioning team has recently commissioned a study from external consultants which will provide a comprehensive cultural assets map for the City. This will support the future prioritisation of arts, culture and heritage capital planning, and ensure that a bid for UK City of Culture is able to be delivered through an infrastructure which is fit for purpose and ready for the step change required to deliver a successful bid for the accolade in 2017.

5.4 Current status

Original discussion on the redevelopment of the Music Hall began in 2007 when APA commissioned a feasibility study from Bonnar Keenlyside. Most recently, APA applied to Creative Scotland for funding to support the capital redevelopment of the Music Hall in 2012. This application was rejected, and has led the Chief Executive to review the approach taken and to seek Aberdeen City Council's support as the owner of the venue.

With a view to reapplying to Creative Scotland in Spring 2013, APA intend undertaking a competitive process in order to ensure that the organisation can arrive at the best and most imaginative design solution. The Music Hall is an 'A' listed building of national significance and this process represents the biggest single investment since the hall was built in 1822. It will also help to raise the profile of the project, engage stakeholders and assist with the likely £5 million required to complete the works. There are currently RIAS Stage B drawings prepared by the City Council, and the organisation welcomes the Council's full involvement on the interview panel and in the selection of architects and the successful design.

6. IMPACT

This report relates to 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City':

- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- We aspire to be recognized as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality and diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.
- We will encourage and support citizens to participate in the development, design and decision making of services to promote civic pride, active citizenship and resilience.

'Vibrant Aberdeen' has five objectives:

- Establish a cohesive cultural sector.
- Increase community engagement in cultural activity.
- Improve the city's cultural profile.
- Increase investment in culture.
- Effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of culture.

The project proposed directly relate to strands of the following Local Outcomes:

Outcome 2, 'Aberdeen will have high quality employment opportunities for its citizens',

Outcome 3, 'People of all ages take an active part in their own learning to achieve their full potential' and 'Learning and training is appropriate and accessible to learner's needs.

Local outcomes for National Outcome 4, 'Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens'.

Outcome 7. 'Improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas.'

Outcome 12, 'Aberdeen is widely recognised as a City with high quality natural assets, biodiversity, architecture and heritage which instill civic pride in its citizens.'

Outcome 13 'We take pride in a strong and inclusive national identity'.

Outcome 15, 'Our public services are consistently high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.' Guidance for Community Planning partnerships, from the Scottish Government entitled 'Culture Delivers' states: 'Cultural provision and infrastructure is part of the drive for best value. High quality should be promoted, continually seeking to improve its impact on communities and taking account of local aspirations and needs. Cultural activity can also help other sectors and services deliver in ways more closely matched to peoples wishes, and can assist in engaging citizens with civic life'.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

20th January 2011, The Redevelopment of the Music Hall, Education, Culture and Sport

24th March 2011, Cultural Priorities, Education, Culture and Sport

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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