

PEACOCK, FUNDRAISING BACKGROUND

Peacock Visual Arts is awaiting the results of the public consultation on the City Square Project to inform decisions about the future of Union Terrace Gardens and to whether the new Peacock and partners Centre for Contemporary Arts can proceed as designed.

When the investigation into the City Square Project was announced Aberdeen City Council asked Peacock to minimise all expenditure on the Contemporary Arts Centre until there was clarity on whether it could go ahead (to limit any potential waste of public money should the scheme be abandoned). In addition all work on Peacock's lease for the Gardens was halted.

Peacock has therefore been running on a significantly reduced budget since December 2008. Whilst we have been keeping up vital stakeholder communication we have not been able to progress our project since November 2008 and have lost £250,000 of EU funding (as a result of the delay caused by the City Square Project) and have had to make our fundraiser redundant.

GOING FORWARD

Whilst we understand that the future of the City Square Project must be looked at in its own right we feel it important to clarify our situation because of the significant impact decisions made on the City Square will have on the continued development of the existing Peacock scheme.

We have taken advice from fundraising professionals Iain More Associates and BDS Sponsorship. Their analysis is that any further delay will make the current fundraising target of £3.5 million for the scheme unachievable. There are a number of reasons for this including delays causing further erosion of the general confidence about and credibility of the scheme but two recent developments in particular will impact greatly.

Scottish Investment Fund

Peacock have been liaising with the Scottish Investment Fund for over 2 years. They have expressed a willingness for us to apply for their maximum grant of £1m towards the new Centre. This would provide a key piece of core-funding and significantly reduce the fundraising target. They have been monitoring the situation closely and whilst they are keen for Peacock to apply they will not accept an application until there is clarity on the future of Union Terrace Gardens.

We were informed last week that in order to consider us they require confirmation by June on whether we can proceed. The fund is in its last year and there is no indication it will be rolled out further. If we cannot go ahead by summer then we

will have lost out on this substantial piece of the funding jigsaw.

Scottish Arts Council Funding

The Scottish Arts Council have committed £4.3m to the project and it is anticipated it will provide a significant amount of revenue funding for the Centre going forward. Along with Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Enterprise it is a key capital funder of the project.

The Scottish Arts Council are soon to become Creative Scotland. There is no indication that this new body will have a capital funding budget. The Scottish Arts Council's lottery committee agreed to ring-fence Peacock's funding until December 2009 – 12 months after the announcement of the investigation into the City Square.

They have since extended this for the second time to enable the results of the public consultation into the future of Union Terrace Gardens to be released and subsequently for Aberdeen City Council to make decisions on the future of the site. They note that:

“The outcome of the recently-concluded public consultation, led by Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Forum (ACSEF), will have a significant influence on the continued development of the existing Peacock scheme. The initial timetable given by ACSEF to announce the outcome of its consultation on City Square was scheduled for March, however, this has now been delayed until 13 April. As a consequence, the Scottish Arts Council will now review its position in June 2010 at the next scheduled meeting of our Lottery Committee.”

CONCLUSION

In light of these facts we judge that the Peacock project has a window until the end of June in which it requires clarity to proceed or it will become untenable from a fundraising perspective and therefore ultimately unviable.

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Campaign Director
Peacock Visual Arts
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