

ALEO ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT



Organisation: Aberdeen Performing Arts	
Year Covered:	2021-2022
Report completed by:	Faye Barron / Leah Hodder / Ben Torrie
Position:	Director of People / Director of Marketing and Communications / Director of Programming and Creative Projects

About the organisation

A brief description of the organisation and its vision

Aberdeen Performing Arts is the arts charity that runs three city centre venues – the Music Hall, His Majesty's Theatre and the Lemon Tree and three festivals - True North, Granite Noir and Light the Blue youth arts festival. We also provide a box office service for 30+ venues in the North-east, run a production company, Freshly Squeezed Productions, for young and emerging talent, and an extensive creative engagement and learning programme across the city.

Our vision - Placing creativity and culture at the heart of inclusive transformational change in the North-east.

Organisation Information

Organisation legal structure	Company limited by guarantee with charitable status
Number of years operating	17
Name of Director/ Chief Executive	Jane Spiers (to July 2022) Andy Eagle (from August 2022)
Number of venues operated	3
Number of festivals operated	3
Number of Board Members	13
Number of Full time staff	44 full-time (average head count for year)
Number of part time/casual staff	203 part-time/casual (average headcount for year)

SECTION 1 - Outcomes and outputs

Please provide a qualitative executive summary of outcomes, outputs, activities undertaken and progress made to date:

Key Achievements

AMBITION 1: City Vision: provide cultural leadership to shape city vision and a creative Scotland

Within this ambition we have included reporting on COVID-19 recovery and achievements in terms of people, venues, communications and delivering business critical projects. Projects and activities that have kept our charity solvent, our people safe and secure and our business in the best possible shape for re-opening and recovering.

Continued COVID-19 Survival and Recovery

The Global pandemic continued to have significant impact on our organisation in 2021/22. Our venues remained closed to the public for 5 months at the start of the reporting period, and after reopening on a phased basis in September, and beginning to build back, we had to reclose our doors again in December for a further month due to the impact of the Omicron variant and Government restrictions on large-scale events. This resulted in a total closure for 6 months without any earned income (accounting for approximately 88% of our Total Turnover) which made fundraising and seeking grant funding imperative to ensure survival.

We continued to maximise use of the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme to ensure that we safeguarded employment for our workforce and ensuring no redundancies as a result of the pandemic. Our talented team at Aberdeen Performing Arts are pivotal to our success - had we not been able to retain our teams this would have had a devastating impact on the future success of our organisation and our ability to build back post-pandemic.

Cashflow remained a significant and key challenge. Whilst we exercised tight control, 2021/22 posed a higher reliance on spend within our venues in preparation for welcoming back audiences, including maintenance costs, the introduction of enhanced cleaning regimes and safety provisions (e.g. hand sanitiser, face masks), and marketing to promote our programme and increase customer confidence.

In addition to working tirelessly to secure the necessary funding to maintain solvency, our team worked hard with promoters to ensure that wherever possible performances were rescheduled to later in the year or the following year as opposed to cancelling. By doing so we have attempted to mitigate against cancellations where possible, and this has resulted in a positive start to 2022/23.

Advocacy & Funding

We have continued to be a strong voice within the city, region and nation, in relation to securing the necessary funding to keep our charity going, as well as ensuring the importance that the role of the arts and culture plays within our society, especially as we recover. We did this through national industry networks, including our membership and active role in the Scottish Theatre Producing Consortium, the UK Touring Partnership, Federation of Scottish Theatre, Culture Aberdeen, BECTU, Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce and Visit Aberdeenshire.

A primary focus for 2021/22 has been to ensure the continued solvency of the organisation and safeguarding employment of our workforce. As a result of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic our venues remained closed to the public for 6 months of 2021/22 resulting in no earned income during these months, additionally the months in which venues were reopened resulted in lower ticket sales than in a conventional year, which placed a real emphasis on achieving as much funding as possible. In what is an extremely challenging and highly competitive environment across the two years impacted by the pandemic we have successfully applied to, and been awarded funding from, 12 different funds across a number of different funding segments resulting in a total funding award over the last two years of over £5 million. It should be noted that each application resulted in a significant undertaking ensuring it is tailored specifically to the funding call and was extremely hard fought. In addition to the funding applications, a public giving and donation campaign raised over £150,000. We are incredibly grateful for all the funds received, which have safeguarded the future of our organisation.

The funding awarded specifically for the purposes of COVID-19 support and recovery can be summarised as follows:

Adapt and Thrive	25,000
Business Support Scheme	108,500
Third Sector Resilience Fund	80,000
Scottish Government Stabilisation Funding	1,400,000
Creative Scotland COVID-19 Grant	444,199
Heritage Emergency Fund	150,000
Job Retention Scheme (JRS)	1,727,443

Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund	750,000
Performing Arts Venues Relief Fund 2	500,000
Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund	150,000
Place Based Investment Fund	164,680
Strategic Framework Business Fund	27,000
COVID-19 Specific Funding 2020 to 2022	5,526,822
Public Giving Donations	154,500
Total COVID-19 Funding 2020 to 2022	5,681,322

Business Critical Projects

In addition to the work undertaken to secure the future of the organisation financially, a number of key and strategic projects were progressed to ensure we are able to recover, reopen and rebuild. Some of these key projects have included:

Recover, Reopen, Rebuild Strategy

Hello and Keeping You Safe Campaigns

In the lead up to reopening our venues, we launched our Hello marketing campaign aimed at welcoming our audiences back to our venues and increasing customer confidence whilst incorporating COVID-19 safety messaging. The “hello” message also allowed us to widen our audience, targeting not only returning audiences but new attendees as well. The campaign was key to successfully encouraging our audiences safely back into our venues after 18 months of closure. Alongside this, we delivered our ‘Keeping You Safe in our Venues’ campaign which detailed the safety and hygiene measures in place in our buildings, and details of how we were complying with both legal requirements around delivering events but also the expectations of our customers and artists. We produced online guidance for customers and issued guidance documents to all performers presenting work in our venues. We were successfully awarded See it Safely accreditation, which was a national ‘kitemark’ scheme delivered by UK Theatre and SOLT.

Ticket Scanning

The successful implementation of an e-ticketing platform allowed us to move from manual ticket checking at venue entrances to electronic scanning. Customer flow has been greatly improved, allowing quicker access to buildings and allowing us to be more flexible in the deployment of our staff, particularly at His Majesty’s Theatre. Electronic scanning has the added security benefit of ensuring that the valid ticketholder is accessing our events. E-tickets and scanning improves our sustainability credentials, reducing printing of paper tickets.

Covid-19 Vaccination Certification

Just as our venues reopened, the Scottish Government announced the requirement for checking and scanning of vaccination certificates at indoor unseated events with over 500 attendees. We quickly sourced the required equipment, provided training for staff, identified the affected shows across our venues and embarked on a communication plan to our customers. The quick and successful implementation of this additional requirement is testament to the flexibility and commitment of our team.

Customer Service Excellence

Despite the challenging period during closure and reopening we successfully retained our Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Government Standard, which requires to be annually, independently assessed on the basis of continuous improvement. We were compliant in all criteria and achieved compliance plus in 22 criteria, which was an increase of 2 on the previous year. We were specifically commended on our approach to customer engagement throughout the challenges of the pandemic.

"You have faced significant challenge following lockdown, but have fulfilled customer expectations at every step. You have explored fresh ways to engage and communicate with customers... Throughout the pandemic you have established yourselves as a flagship for the arts industry" - CSE Assessor feedback

Food and Beverage

Following on from our updated 3-year food and beverage plan, reviewed and approved by our Board in 2021, work has now commenced on the cohesion of our food and beverage offering across our venues. We successfully secured Scottish Enterprise funding to support a capital project to redevelop foyer and café bar space at His Majesty's Theatre, primarily to provide more space for customer flow and improve the customer journey. Matched funding from Aberdeen City Council was also committed for this project. The redevelopment will relocate the previous Café/Bar space and refresh the layout of the existing restaurant, creating a welcoming and contemporary dining/bar area, catering to pre-theatre diners as well as the wider community throughout the day. Capital Work has now commenced on this project, and alongside the physical work on the area, the operational planning is underway to recruit the hospitality team. 'The Terrace' brand, identity and offering is in development. An operational restructure and review of offering has also been undertaken at our Café Coda in the Music Hall to maximise income.

Energy

Significant efforts have been focused on our Green Action Plan, and particularly around the source of our Electricity. We have now signed up to an energy provider which supplies 100% renewable electricity across all our venues.

People

Employee Engagement and Reorientation

Our focus in 21/22 has been the continued wellbeing and engagement of our team, particularly, but not limited to, the early part of the year while the majority of our workforce was still furloughed. Using our Recover, Reopen, Rebuild strategy, we supported our teams to return to work on a phased basis, undertaking reorientation, re-induction, and training over July and August, ready for our phased reopening in September 2021. In addition to reorientation and training, all teams held team meetings, and all staff were invited to small meetings with the Chief Executive and members of the leadership team to discuss plans for reopening, ask questions, and raise any issues. These sessions were incredibly valuable and appreciated by all.

We bolstered our team with phases of recruitment for key roles/departments and, following some restructuring around existing vacancies, invested in new roles within our Leadership Team – Head of Finance and Sustainability, Head of Creative Engagement and Head of Technical and Operations, as well as our new roles in Creative Engagement.

Staff Restructure and Review

We continued to support the implementation of changes in our structure to ensure our teams are fit for purpose. Our integrated Customer Experience Team is now established and we have begun to implement further new ways of working and integration across other areas such as Technical and Operations, to improve teamworking, make efficiencies, and improve the customer experience backstage. We implemented the Real Living Wage in September 2021, with formal accreditation achieved in 2022. This showed our commitment to tackling low pay in our industry. In addition to this, reviews of teams and contracts has begun in a number of departments in an effort, as part of our commitment to the Fair Work Framework, to move towards more guaranteed and minimum hours contracts within our structure.

During the Scottish Trade Union Conference, which was hosted at the Music Hall and live streamed to online audiences, Aberdeen Performing Arts was held up as a best practice example of how to treat employees, due to our safeguarding of all jobs during the pandemic.

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

Essential Companion Scheme

To ensure everyone can participate and enjoy our venues equally, we have successfully launched a scheme that allows one free essential companion ticket for those who need someone to be with them in order to come to an event. This scheme has been well received and resulted in extremely positive feedback from those taking advantage to date.

Improving Access

We set up a new scheme to improve the booking procedure for our customers with additional access needs, allowing wheelchair bookers to book selected seats on our website directly. The process allows us to tag customers on request on our ticketing system which will open up the selected seats that are held off to general public for booking. We trialed this with volunteer wheelchair bookers and then rolled out to all wheelchair bookers with an e flyer and form available on the website. We have received 100% positive feedback.

Creative Change Makers

We have created two new roles focussed on our engagement work within the community, a Creative Change Maker for Climate Action and Creative Change Maker for Inclusion and Relevance. Our Creative Change Maker for Inclusion and Relevance role focuses on supporting the diversity of the programme on our stages, and in our commissioned and produced work, as well as building relationships with key groups in the North-East. Our Creative Change Maker for Climate Action is focussed on our outward facing engagement with communities and audiences around the climate crisis, and also supports the development and implementation of our sustainability action plan.

Programme – Rise Up

As part of the reopening of our venues, we introduced a theme of ‘Rise Up’ and curated a number of projects and performance in response to this theme. The theme was inspired by both the response to and recovery from the pandemic, but crucially a need for our work to better reflect the diverse communities that we serve, to showcase work by artists from under-represented and marginalised groups, and to increase the relevance of our work to a greater range of audiences.

We have successfully ensured programming and producing decisions consider areas such as gender balance, representation of Black and People of Colour, and LGBTQ communities as well as other under-represented or marginalised groups. This is a journey for us as an organisation, and with the investment in our programming and creative engagement teams, we have made significant progress, and will continue to do so as part of our EDI action plan.

Workforce

We have further implemented and embedded changes in our recruitment processes, based on learnings from participation in the Organisational Development programme of the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries programme last year, focussing on reaching a more diverse range of candidates and supporting those candidates through the recruitment process. All staff, freelancers, and volunteers are encouraged, although not obligated, to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring form to help us understand the demographics of our workforce. We have added questions around socio-economic background to understand these demographics of our workforce, as it is proven that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to face barriers to entering the arts as an industry/employment.

80% of our workforce have completed Equal Opportunities monitoring forms, an increase from circa 75% in 2019/2020. We have also seen an increase in individuals from under-represented and/or marginalised groups joining Team Aberdeen Performing Arts, and we are working to ensure all our employees regardless of background feel supported, included and that they have a sense of belonging in our organisation.

Venues

We used the 5-month closure period at the start of 2021/22 to carry out essential maintenance and repairs to all three venues to ensure that we were best placed to welcome our audiences back. Additionally, we have used this time to progress strategic capital projects at both His Majesty's Theatre and The Lemon Tree to ensure their future success.

Our key achievements in relation to venues are as follows:

The Music Hall

We completed a programme of minor works to improve operational capabilities across the venue and ensure that it is ready to receive audiences again. Works undertaken include the replacement of barriers around the stage lift and the refreshing of backstage areas. The final, delayed snagging works from the multi-million pound redevelopment project were also completed during this time and we were able to successfully certify the completion of the defects period with no ongoing claims or contested items.

His Majesty's Theatre

We commenced a £675,000 redevelopment of the Café/Bar and Box Office/Foyer areas within the extension of His Majesty's Theatre. The works will provide significantly increased foyer and circulation space on the ground floor due to the removal of the staircase and the relocation of all café facilities to the floor above. This project opens and enhances the space previously occupied by the 1906 restaurant and Corporate Suite to encompass a brand-new Café / Bar offering which will greatly improve the space available particularly during busy pre-show and interval periods, as well as allowing for a revised offering to enhance the customer experience. The redevelopment will provide unrivalled views of the new Union Terrace Gardens for a wide range of customers visiting the theatre, from morning through lunchtime and into the evening.

The Lemon Tree

The feasibility study for the redevelopment of The Lemon Tree, part-funded by Aberdeen City Council and Scottish Enterprise was successfully completed in March 2022, with an impressive scheme, which has received an incredibly positive response from audiences, stakeholders, staff and board members. We have now progressed to the next stage of design development where work is progressing to fully understand and establish the technical, operational and sustainability requirements of the scheme and develop a design within the established budgetary constraints to deliver a best-in-class venue. This is an exciting project which will play a pivotal part in the wider Aberdeen City Queen Street Masterplan which seeks to establish an urban park and cultural quarter within the heart of Aberdeen.

City vision and Cultural Leadership

On behalf of Culture Aberdeen, Aberdeen Performing Arts led a successful bid to the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund. This was one of several proposals submitted from Aberdeen, but the only bid that was successfully funded. The fund supported two strands of work: Making all the City a Stage: a series of commissions for artists to create artworks in any artform to reimagine and reinvigorate the city centre. We appointed a producer to lead this project, with a call out for artists in early January. A total of 35 applications were received, and 5 established artists and 7 early career artists were selected. Early career artists were mentored by established artists and Culture Aberdeen members. The artworks were created and presented in a successful festival *Wonderland* in September 2022. The second strand of the Community Renewal Fund supported the development of our Light the Blue Youth Arts Festival into a youth festival for the city and supported the development of a youth arts action plan to sit alongside the cultural strategy. Additional funds were awarded from Aberdeen City Council via the City Centre Recovery Fund allowing us to further develop the *Wonderland* festival with a pop-up city centre venue, *Wonder Hoose*, in Marischal Quad. This magical temporary venue provides a wonderful and other-worldly performance space for a variety of performances every day in September and bridges the weeks between *Wonderland* at the beginning of September and our True North festival at the end of September.

We continue to work in partnership with fellow cultural partners in the city, supporting the work of other organisations through programming and commissioning partnerships, support with resources, venue provision and box office services. Partnerships included Spectra, Look Again, Citymoves, Sound, Aberdeen Jazz Festival, Nuart, Tivoli Theatre, Aberdeen Arts Centre, and more.

Members of the Aberdeen Performing Arts leadership team were represented on local and national boards and committees during this time including Culture Aberdeen Executive, boards of Visit Aberdeenshire, Arts and Business Scotland, Federation of Scottish Theatre, Theatres Trust, Scottish Theatre Producing Consortium, UK Touring Partnership, Scottish CIPD Policy Forum, and membership of the Adoption and Permanence Panel and Children's Hearing Panel.

AMBITION 2: Programme: Delivering a distinctive and diverse artistic programme

Cultural Programme

The first 4 months of 2021-2022 were focussed on ensuring our programme was in place and strong for reopening in September. Over the previous two years, we had cancelled and rescheduled over 700 shows, working hard to renegotiate with producers to retain and reschedule as many shows as possible into 2022 and 2023.

Prior to reopening we presented two outdoor performances in the city centre. The first, in partnership with Puppet Animation Scotland/Manipulate Festival, called *Restless Worlds* installed a number of newly commissioned 'kinetic sculptures' in windows in both active and vacant premises. These pieces were viewed externally and accompanied by a soundtrack delivered digitally. The second piece was an audio drama experienced via headphones whilst walking a route in the city centre encountering street artworks depicting the story – the piece *Niqabi Ninja* by Sara Sharaawi was inspired by the uprising in Egypt and spoke to themes of reclaiming the streets and male violence.

Our venues successfully reopened in September with a curated programme of performances including the centenary staging of the Student Show, an exclusive signature concert with Nick Cave, a North-East production of *A Play, A Pie and A Pint*, and our own True North music festival.

The theme for our reopening season was "Rise Up", reflecting both the recovery from the pandemic, but also spotlighting under-represented groups and responding to pressing societal issues. We commissioned and curated a programme of work over the course of the Autumn and Spring seasons around this theme (see below).

We implemented a phased approach to reopening, with a reduced programme through September and October, increasing to "normal" levels of programming from November onwards. We took a low-risk approach to predicting attendance levels and ticket sales income to reflect uncertainty about audience confidence and to account for any ongoing impacts on our programme due to COVID-19. The majority of shows at His Majesty's Theatre in our opening six months hit or exceeded our reduced targets, with sales across all venues as, or better than, expected in the same time period.

Our 2021 pantomime, *Beauty and the Beast*, sold very well and was on target to exceed £1million in income. However, with the advent of the Omicron variant, and Scottish Government restricting indoor public events to less than 200 people, we were forced to close our venues once again on 24 December 2021. All performances (63 in total) at our venues were cancelled until we could reopen at the end of January 2022. We have continued to feel the impact of the pandemic on our programme, with some performances being rescheduled or cancelled throughout 2022 due to the ongoing financial pressures on producers and touring companies. This was an industry-wide issue across the country, with some UK tours being cancelled due to lower than anticipated sales in other locations. Overall, however, our programme was strong, with audience numbers and ticket sales performing well against target and anecdotally we performed well during this period in relation to other parts of the country.

Our programme across all our venues was strong, both in terms of sales and artistically, with a wide range of performances such as popular west-end musicals *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*, *Waitress*, *School of Rock*, *Mamma Mia* and *Bat Out of Hell* at His Majesty's Theatre, and the return of Scottish Ballet. At the Music Hall, we welcomed back the three Scottish orchestras, superstar comedians Katherine Ryan, John Bishop, Sarah Millican and Jimmy Carr, rock gigs from Paul Weller, Shed Seven, the Snuts and Level 42, and shows from the likes of Nathan Carter, Tim Peake, Scottish National Jazz Orchestra and Daniel O'Donnell. At the Lemon Tree, we welcomed legendary acts and contemporary artists alike, including The Skids, The Undertones, Sleaford Mods, The Lathums and Nouvelle Vague. Our festivals were able to return to their home venues and be enjoyed by audiences in person.

Our Festivals

True North Music Festival

Following our virtual True North festival in 2020, we were delighted to be able to stage True North in person and on our stages in September 2021. With Rise Up as the programming theme for the festival, we produced a majority female line-up, and featured many Black and people of colour artists. The festival included a celebration of the work of Stevie Wonder by Corinne Bailey Rae, a headline gig from singer-songwriter and LGBT activist John Grant, a hip hop night led by Aberdeen's Ransom FA, a newly commissioned film featuring Ayanna Witter Johnson performing her song 'Rise Up' on location at Greyhope Bay and on Aberdeen Beach, an expanded fringe programme in several city centre locations featuring local musicians, and a spoken word event featuring local poets who produced new work inspired by Rise Up. 65 acts and artists participated over the weekend across 8 venues. Visitors attended from Edinburgh, Glasgow, London and as far away as Brussels, with 98% of attendees stating they would return to True North again. We received excellent press coverage in the run up to and over the course of the festival weekend, averaging 4 press articles per week from the on-sale to the festival weekend.

"A brilliant celebration of live music after a long time away!"

"So good to be back listening to live music again, and what a return!"

"Good, diverse and entertaining line-up"

Granite Noir International Crime Writing Festival

Our sixth outing for Granite Noir crime writing festival returned in-person following the entirely digital festival in 2021. In addition to in-person events, we live streamed a small number of events allowing us to continue to connect with our global audience, as well as offer opportunities to participate for those who might still have been reluctant to attend in-person. The festival programme was a diverse mix of Scottish and international authors, new and emerging names as well as new commissions and a curated programme of work across the performing arts. More than 70 writers and chairs participated in a programme of in conversation events, panel discussions and workshops, including leading Scottish and UK writers Dame Sue Black, Ann Cleeves, Louise Welsh and Oyinkan Braithwaite; Nordic Noir writers Anders de la Motte, Kjell Ola Dahl, Silje Ulstein and Heidi Amsinck; experienced chairs including Sally Magnusson, Fiona Stalker, Bryan Burnett and Alex Clark; and emerging talent such as Farida Abike Iyamide, Hannah King and Leela Soma. The wider programme included a recording of the BBC podcast *Bad People*, a Bond-themed cocktail event, and a new Locked Room Escape Game. We commissioned a brand new site-specific play by Ten Feet Tall Theatre, *Witch Hunt*, staged at the historic Mither Kirk, programmed a selection of classic noir films at the Belmont, *The Grit in the Granite* exhibition and talk about the darker side of Victorian Aberdeen by archivist Phil Astley and researcher Dr Dee Poole, and programmed an adaptation of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* at His Majesty's Theatre. The weekend's finale was a specially created performance, 'Criminal Tunes' by the BBC Big Band at the Music Hall, featuring music connected with or inspired by crime.

Total sales for the festival were almost 7,000 tickets, plus an estimated 3,500 attendances at the exhibition, giving us attendance figures of more than 10,000. This made it the second highest attended Granite Noir in its history. We had a total of 35 events across seven venues, 60 speakers with nationalities from across the world, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark and India, with 130 livestream attendees and 400,000 impressions across social media. 100% of our attendees indicated they would like to return to Granite Noir in the future.

"Great programme, well presented and thoroughly enjoyable."

"I loved the storytelling event as much as my 7-year old!"

"The staff were wonderful."

Rise Up festival

As part of our Rise Up theme, we staged a two-day festival in partnership with We Are Here Scotland, which celebrated and showcased the work of Black and People of Colour artists and creatives from Aberdeen and across Scotland. The festival, the first of its kind in Scotland, featured three performances including an evening of spoken

word and song, a theatre performance, *One Mississippi*, which explored how childhood experiences across different ethnic communities affects men's adult lives, and a final gig by leading emerging musicians, songwriters and DJs. The festival hosted several panel discussions and workshops covering a range of topics across the weekend. The festival was well attended and well received, and we have built a strong partnership with the WAHS team. We continue to develop new and interesting work with them now and for the future.

Conference and Events

The Scottish Trade Union Conference was our first post-pandemic large conference, a 3-day event with additional get-in day. 300 delegates and 60 exhibitors attended, and it was live streamed throughout. Speakers included First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, and Scottish Labour Leader Anas Sarwar. As part of the event, we hosted a Civic Reception and 4 fringe events at the Lemon Tree, as well as several breakout meetings around the Music Hall. STV delivered a live broadcast and a 5-minute feature on STV 6pm news. The Music Hall was set up in a tabled format not previously used which proved ideal for the conference. Coda Café benefitted from the conference delegates with daily sales of over £1000. The success of the event was down to a strong team effort, resulting in positive feedback on both the venue and the staff from organisers, exhibitors and delegates. We were mentioned by one of the Disability unions, championing the Music Hall as an example of true accessibility in a listed building.

We hosted the Aberdeen Music Festival with its first visit since 2015, involving local choirs/ school groups as part of a wider event held in various venues across the city. Traditionally held at the Music Hall, Aberdeen Music Festival offers children and young people the chance to perform onstage and introduces many young people to the venue for this first time - next year is the 150th year anniversary of the festival and planning is underway for a special event in 2023.

Other conference and events included Lochside Academy Prize Giving (1000 delegates), Aberdeen Harbour AGM, Friends of the Earth Election Hustings, and the Robert Gordon's College (RGC) Juniors. The Music Hall also hosted the Robert Gordon University Winter Graduations, which included a very special ceremony, during which our chief executive Jane Spiers was awarded an honorary doctorate.

AMBITION 3: Creative Learning: Providing inspirational community engagement and participation

During 2021–2022 we repositioned and restructured our creative learning offering and team into a Creative Engagement team. We introduced a new leadership team post of Head of Creative Engagement and rebuilt our offering to one more focussed on communities and areas of interest such as climate action, diversity, inclusion and relevance, rather than our previous focus on artistic genre (such as music and drama). On that basis we restructured the team with several new roles including *Producer – Participation*, *Creative Change Maker – Climate Action*, and *Creative Change Maker – Inclusion and Relevance*.

Prior to our venues reopening, our youth theatre participants took part in two exciting projects which were delivered both online and in person in line with ongoing Covid restrictions. Participants from our three youth theatre groups (Junior, Intermediate and Senior) participated in the Positive Stories for Negative Times delivered by Glasgow based theatre company Wonder Fools. The company commissioned several new scripts for the project from a range of leading Scottish playwrights. Our groups created online productions filmed on Zoom which were presented alongside pieces by other youth groups from across the country. Members of our Young Company also delivered a project in partnership with the Grampian Hospitals Arts Trust commemorating the centenary of the Foresterhill Hospital Campus. They worked with a film-maker, composer and writer using archive material with the resulting work displayed in an installation at the Suttie Art Space at ARI and later transferred to the Big Sky Studio at the Music Hall.

Our youth theatre and early years music workshops restarted in September, with a strong start in terms of participant numbers in the Autumn and Winter/Spring terms, albeit working to reduced capacities in line with COVID guidance. In addition, we have been working with local schools and relevant council services to offer an increased number of free/subsidised spaces to children and young people who would otherwise not be able to attend these sessions. Between September 2021 and April 2022, we had 14 young people taking up our offer of

free spaces in our Creative Engagement workshops. We aim to ensure our workshops are inclusive and our sessions included 5 young Black and people of colour participants and 14 young people with identified ADHD, Asperger's, autism and dyspraxia. A number of young participants identify as trans and non-binary. We continue to work with partners to expand the use of these subsidised class places.

For the first time, we launched a new programme of workshops in the Easter holidays, including hip hop sessions and a week-long technical theatre programme. We worked specifically with Barnardo's, to offer places to young carers and care experienced young people to participate in these projects, which was funded by Creative Scotland's YMI Access to Music Making fund. The hip hop programme was delivered by locally based artists, and the technical theatre programme devised and delivered by our in-house teams across His Majesty's Theatre, the Lemon Tree, and the Music Hall. The holiday programme was very successful, and we plan to deliver an ongoing programme in these areas in 2022-2023.

Our Light the Blue youth arts festival took place in June 2022. Our new Creative Producer for Light the Blue devised and delivered a larger and more curated programme, building on the festival pre-Covid, and engaged with Culture Aberdeen partners, further education institutions, local schools and youth groups to devise a programme for and by young people. This year's programme will be a starting point for further development as the festival grows for 2023 and beyond.

We have begun a process of engagement with Afghan asylum seekers, working in partnership with GREC and a group of 14 parents and children attended a concert of Wonderland Children's Classics at the Music Hall. Our Creative Change Maker for Inclusion and Relevance has also begun to engage with Ukrainian refugees and this work will be developed over the coming months, working in consultation with the groups to identify how we can meaningfully offer relevant and engaging creative opportunities which can also facilitate integration with the local community.

AMBITION 4: Talent: Be an incubator for artists and talent development in the North-east

This year we produced and presented two shows on the theme of Climate Justice. During Climate Week North East, *Jam for Climate Justice* was a plastic free, unplugged music event in the Lemon Tree featuring young Aberdeen based musicians and the premiere of a new collaborative song especially commissioned for the event (plus toast and jam from local suppliers!). *Eat the Rich! Climate Justice Cabaret* was an intimate, alternative and subversive evening of art and activism featuring a diverse line up of artists and produced in collaboration with Sanctuary Queer Arts. Both were incredibly well received, and our intention is for this cabaret theme to be developed over the coming year.

We have provided 70 opportunities for local and early career artists to perform, exhibit, or develop their practice. Working with Eden Court, Inverness and Captial Theatres, Edinburgh we co-commissioned three early years festive productions, with the first, Unicorn Christmas Party, performed at the Lemon Tree in December 2021. The second of the three productions, the Enormous Christmas Turnip, will be hosted at the Lemon Tree in December 2022. Our Wonderland festival provided established and early career artists, based in the North-east, opportunities to develop and showcase their practice in a large city-centre festival. We have commissioned, with the support of our Digital Art curator, a number of digital artworks for 2021-2022 for our Stepping In Screen at the Music Hall. The reopening season from September featured three new pieces, including a beautiful floral piece by Daniel Brown, a live generation of data collected from the Music Hall by Aberdeenshire-based *Silent Chaos*, and a collection of pieces by local artists called *What our Winter Feels like* created by local agency Design and Code. One of our previous commissions was returned to coincide with the cosmic theme of the Spectra Festival, and a new commission by Aberdeen-based Nina Stanger took pride of place in April. Further new works have been selected and will be presented over the course of 2022-2023.

In addition to digital pieces, a programme of visual arts exhibitions have been hosted in the gallery spaces at the Music Hall. Pieces from Gray's School of Art Degree Shows in 2020 and 2021, which were staged virtually, and produced in partnership with Look Again was exhibited for the first time in person, followed by the Granite Noir archive exhibition. *Boundaries* by Esther Woolfson and Gill Russell premiered at the Music Hall, inspired by Aberdeen and its relationship with the sea, delivered in partnership with Lesley Thompson and Peacock Visual Arts. We also displayed the digital exhibition created by Grampian Hospital Arts Trust with members of our Young Company called *All About People*. This was created to celebrate the centenary of the Foresterhill Hospital Campus and featured archive footage and new films created by our young people.

Our Rise Up theme throughout our opening season provided opportunities for spoken word commissions, with four Aberdeen artists creating a new piece of spoken word in response to the theme. These were performed at True North and then subsequently created into short films which were premiered at the Belmont Filmhouse. Our Climate Action cabarets featured performances and responses to the theme of climate justice, and even served jam and toast from local makers and bakers! We hosted *Blurring Boundaries* at the Lemon Tree, a selection of readings by the Scottish BPOC (Black and People of Colour) Writers Network, in honour of LGBT History Month.

We continued to support our Weston Jerwood Creative Bursaries fellow in their role as Associate Producer. This bursary programme allowed us to fund this role for 1 year, as an opportunity from an early career individual from lower socio-economic background. The role began in May 2021, and the individual played a key role in some of our talent development activities and diverse programming/produced work in that year. We are pleased to say that our fellow has now secured a permanent role with us as our Creative Change Maker – Inclusion and Relevance and continues to develop our work with under-represented and marginalised groups and communities.

INDICATOR	TARGET 21/22	ACHIEVED 21/22
Programme: Delivering a distinctive and diverse artistic programme		
Number of Performances (Aberdeen Performing Arts programme):		
Number of performances across venues (total) / digital		445
Number of performances at His Majesty's Theatre		176
Number of performances at Music Hall		115
Number of performances at The Lemon Tree		154
Number of performances at other venues / online		15
Number of performances at True North Festival		27
Number of performances at Granite Noir Festival		53
Number of performances/events at Rise Up Festival		11
Attendances at Aberdeen Performing Arts programme:		
Audience numbers across venues (total) / digital		185,843
Audience numbers at His Majesty's Theatre		95,361
Audience numbers at Music Hall		62,776
Audience numbers at The Lemon Tree		13,981
Audience at other venues / online		1,000
True North Festival Attendance		2,000
Granite Noir Festival Attendance. (In person event with some streamed events)		c.10,500
Rise Up Festival Attendance		225
Tickets Sales for Aberdeen Performing Arts programme:		
Ticket Sales: His Majesty's Theatre		3,272,142
Ticket Sales: Music Hall		1,159,725

Ticket sales: The Lemon Tree		190,712
Talent: an incubator for artists and talent development in the North-east		
Number of artists participating in talent initiatives (produced, curated, commissioned and festivals development)		70
Number of Associate Artists (in residence in the city)		0
Number of local, emerging artists participating in talent initiatives		37
Number of new works commissioned		46
Number of exhibitions commissioned		4
Number of sharings		2
Creative Engagement: Providing inspirational community engagement & participation		
Number of participants in music making & youth theatre engagement projects		102
Number of participants in youth theatre digital engagement projects		39
Number of subsidised/free places provided to children/young people in our creative engagement workshops		7
Number of subsidised/free tickets provided to community groups, charities to attend Aberdeen Performing Arts events/performances		47,561
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:		
Number of BSL signed performances		22
Number of captioned performances		5
Number of audio described performances		7
Number of Touch Tours		0
Number of relaxed performances for people on autism spectrum		2
City Vision: provide cultural leadership to shape city vision and a creative Scotland		
Accreditations		
Customer Service Excellence Standard accreditation		57 compliance 22 compliance plus
Volume of customer service interactions		
Volume of customer service email interactions		23,062
Customer service calls answered		32,645
Environmental		
Reduce electricity consumption by 5% year-on-year	-5%	-25%
Reduce gas consumption by 5% year-on-year	-5%	-6%
Reduce overall energy consumption by 5% year-on-year	-5%	-39%
Reduce waste to landfill by 5% year-on-year	-5%	-52%

If you have not met the targets set, please give any reasons or explanation for this:

This section is an opportunity to provide context and reflect on particular challenges, what learning has come from the experience which will feed into future planning. This section should really demonstrate your organisation's commitment to continuous improvement.

We started the current reporting period under a period of national lockdown and the resultant uncertainty around the duration of restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic meant that our venues were closed to the public until September 2021, that audience numbers were incredibly unpredictable and that our venues were closed again for a further month in December/January, and we faced further cancellations in our programme. It was therefore inappropriate to set a realistic set of targets for the year, other than relatively low risk financial targets, for cash flow and budgeting purposes. Our entire team worked tirelessly to keep the organisation in a stable position, ensuring that the necessary financial support and fundraising activity was

maintained and to enable us to retain our workforce throughout the pandemic, ready for reopening when it was possible. Subsequently, this ensured our venues were adequately prepared to welcome our audiences through the doors when it was safe and ready to do so.

As an organisation, we have demonstrated resilience in unprecedented and challenging times. Despite the incredibly challenging times, we did not mothball our organisation, but continued to focus on business-critical projects to support our reopening in the best possible way. Our ticket sales and audience numbers were generally strong on reopening and our focus on not just retaining previous audiences, but welcoming new audiences, and building back confidence in returning to live events has been key to ensuring progress and continuous improvement/development of our audience. Our reviews of organisational structure, and investment in new key roles, has ensured we have the support in place to ensure we continue to develop and improve in our key priority areas such as audience development, customer engagement, community engagement, environmental sustainability and EDI.

* Our reduction figures quoted against our Environmental goals are comparisons based on the period Sep-21 to Mar-22 v Sep-19 to Mar-20 to provide a like for like comparison over periods where our venues were fully open and operational.

Please provide a summary of particular successes or case studies:

Case Study One: Hello Reopening Campaign

The main aim of the Hello communications plan was to aid and maximise our recovery from closure. This has been in the form of a strong visual campaign and a data driven segmentation project. From June to December 2021, there has been 39 outdoor sites booked across billboards, roadside digital screens, shopping centre digital screens, shopping centre posters and two shop fronts. Outdoor advertising had an estimated 1.4 million views every two weeks. This is across 28 separate sites including billboards, roadside digital screens, shopping centre digital screens, shopping centre poster sites, two shop fronts, bus sides, bus rears. Between June to September, the segmented emails have resulted in over £270,000 of ticket revenue. With £554 being spent on the emails in total this has resulted in a return on investment of almost 50,000%. We worked in partnership with Indigo Ltd to implement a national audience segmentation plan across Family, Mainstream, Contemporary, Classical and Traditional customer segmentation profiles, ensuring targeted communications.

Case Study Two: COVID-19 Keeping You Safe Campaign

The Keeping You Safe campaign and activity supported operational reopening plans in September 2021 for the venues after the extended period of closure since March 2020. Guidance on staying Covid-secure was created for staff, artists and audiences and a phased induction programme was rolled out for staff, both our retained team and staff who had been furloughed for almost 18 months, to support their safety, wellbeing and re-introduction to the workplace. This included phased and staggered shifts for those returning, sanitiser stations throughout the venues, supply of face masks for those who needed, enhanced cleaning regimes including regular anti-microbial misting. We were awarded the industry-wide See It Safely mark launched by UK Theatre and SOLT, for implementation of best practice, and compliance with the latest government guidelines, such as introducing mobile ticket scanning, Covid-19 precautions to socially distance in circulation spaces, vaccination certification where required, a reminder for audiences to respect other's space, encouraging use of facemasks at all times by our Front of House team and ensuring readily available sanitiser stations throughout the venues. Pre- and post-show emails were used to set out detailed information of what to expect on our venues on arrival, to minimise queue times, ease apprehension of audiences, and gather feedback on the customer experience when exiting the venues. We had excellent feedback from customers who indicated they felt safe in our venues during the reopening period and gave confidence for returning to live events in the city, with survey results demonstrating a significant increase in confidence levels post-visit compared to pre-visit, with confidence levels increasing from 52% prior to attendance to 70% afterwards.

Case Study Three: Rise Up Festival

The Rise Up festival delivered in partnership with We Are Here Scotland was successful in celebrating and showcasing the work of Black and People of Colour artists and creatives, shining a light on key issues and

topics affecting marginalised artists, and developing new audiences. The weekend comprised of performances, panel discussions, workshops and community spaces celebrating Black and People of Colour Creatives in Aberdeen and Scotland. Curated by We Are Here Scotland and commissioned by Aberdeen Performing Arts, it is the first festival of its kind in Scotland, and has formed the foundation of a strong partnership between the two organisations. Legacy events are planned with a panel discussion at True North, a gig at the Lemon Tree in December as part of the INCUBATA project, and programming partnerships for Granite Noir.

Feedback included:

"I believe Rise Up! succeeded to do that [celebrate Black and People of Colour creatives], and it is imperative that we make these creative spaces a regular gig all across Scotland, especially in Aberdeen."

"The Aberdeen creative scene can pride itself to be diverse, and to offer a wonderful array of people who dare reinventing the scene by doing their own thing...and doing it awfully well."

Please provide a summary of any problems or issues that have required attention or action:

The single and most significant challenge to our organisation in 2021/2022 continued to be the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our venues remained closed for the five months of the reporting period, having closed at short notice in March 2020. With this closure came the immediate loss of all earned income (accounting for 88% of our total turnover) for 18 months. We have been able to mitigate against this reduced income with support from the Job Retention Scheme (which we utilised fully until its termination in Sep-22), significant fundraising efforts and tight cost control ensuring no non-essential expenditure. In doing so we have achieved this as an ALEO without putting any additional financial burden on Aberdeen City Council.

Upon reopening our venues in September 2021, we experienced a strong and reassuring response from our audiences with initial attendances across most programming at our venues exceeding expectations. Unfortunately, we had to close our doors again for just over 1 month as a result of the Omicron variant and the subsequent reintroduction of restrictions by the Scottish Government. This resulted in a further 63 performances being cancelled across our venues. We did, however, successfully claim compensation from the Covid Cancellation Fund via Creative Scotland to offset the income lost.

There is cause for optimism as 2021/2022 ended with our venues fully reopened and a full programme for the year ahead, however, there are still some challenges we continue to face as a result of the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the emerging cost of living crisis. The pandemic brought a significant period of uncertainty for people and as a result we are seeing shifting trends from our audiences which we continue to monitor closely and adapt towards. The legacy of the unpredictable nature of restrictions and the cost of living crisis means we are seeing our audiences choose to book tickets within a few weeks or even days of a performance rather than the longer lead time pre-pandemic. We have also seen a lower risk approach from touring producers, meaning producers are less willing or able to sustain tours which are not consistently selling well across all venues on the tour. We continue to work hard through targeted marketing campaigns and strong messaging to encourage the segment of our audiences who still have concerns attending an event in amongst a large crowd. We are reassured however that where we were able to open with performances in 2021/2022, the participation was much more positive than expected, and this has continued to be seen as we return to some normality in this first quarter of 2022/2023, although we are monitoring sales closely over the coming weeks and months.

The Energy Market volatility has been and continues to be a real challenge and has the potential to be a threat to our organisation if there is no targeted support provided or reduction in the prevailing rates in the near future. We have already seen a significant uplift in our electricity and gas costs in the current year and based on the current outlook these could continue to grow substantially. Significant work has been undertaken to ensure that we have contracts in place at the most competitive rate available, in addition to the existing work towards sustainability we have undertaken already which closely monitors our consumption.



Delivering on Key Strategic Priorities

Please provide a summary of how your activities have delivered against key local (and national) strategic priorities relevant to your organisation

Culture Aberdeen 2018-2028 Action Plan Ambitions	Regional Economic Strategy 2018-2023 Action Plan	Creative Scotland Priorities 'Unlocking potential, embracing ambition'	Aberdeen Performing Arts Delivered Actions (a summary of achievements – more detail is located elsewhere in this report)
<p>Releasing our Creativity - <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city opening doors, where everyone can be transformed and inspired through engagement in the arts and culture.</i></p>		<p>Everyone can access and enjoy artistic and creative experiences</p>	<p>Despite periods of venue closure, we were able to deliver a number of creative and accessible projects :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • True North music festival • Unicorn Christmas Dance Party– festive production – as one of three commissioned productions nationally, led by Aberdeen Performing Arts • Granite Noir crime fiction festival • Several participatory projects – Positive Stories for Negative Times, All About People with GHAT (youth participants), • Music Hall Stepping In Digital Screen series of commissioned artworks • Rise Up thematic programming and showcase festival • Revised approach to accessible ticket purchasing including essential companions and online wheelchair purchasing
<p>Becoming Scotland's Creative Lab - <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city to experiment in, a home, a place, a destination and testing ground for artists, creative enterprises and new ideas</i></p>		<p>Excellence and experimentation across the arts, screen and creative industries is recognised and valued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed new digital art commissions for Stepping In screen and exhibitions for the Music Hall gallery spaces. • Led the development and delivery of a multi-venue, multi-year commission for early years festive productions with Capital Theatres in Edinburgh and Eden Court Highlands. • Developed partnership approach to Rise Up Aberdeen commissions to mark reopening and recovery from the pandemic, with the culmination at Rise Up! Festival in partnership with We Are Here Scotland • Produced and commissioned spoken word pieces and performances • Produced Climate Cabaret, and Jam for Justice nights to showcase new and emerging talent with specific climate action themes

<p>Making All the City a Stage - <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city which inspires, where exciting cultural experiences are around each and every corner and where there are no creative boundaries.</i></p>	<p>Delivery & marketing of cultural, heritage and tourism attractions of national significance, and of international standard (existing and new assets) and maximising tourism potential of accredited archives.</p> <p>Support and attract events that will be of international and national significance as part of the delivery of the Aberdeen 365 events and festivals plan.</p>	<p>Places and quality of life are transformed through imagination, ambition and an understanding of the potential of creativity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staged large scale west-end productions at His Majesty's Theatre, attracting strong audiences from across the region and beyond. • Produced True North and Granite Noir – featuring events, workshops and exhibitions in various locations and venues across the city • Led, on behalf of Culture Aberdeen, successful bid to UK Government fund, to produce Wonderland festival (Making all the city a stage) and create Wonder Hoose venue. This festival aimed to commission experienced and early career artists, to exhibit across all artforms in locations across the city centre, and encourage people back into the city to enjoy arts and culture • Hosted a number of conferences and events in our venues, including Scottish Trade Union Conference, which was live streamed to online audiences as well as those attending, and LNER staff conference (also live streamed).
<p>Connecting Us to the World- <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city like no other, where we celebrate and promote our culture and heritage, the things we make and create.</i></p>	<p>Support and promote the arts and cultural venues of the North East to attract and promote national and international exhibitions and programmes.</p>	<p>Scotland is a distinctive creative nation connected to the world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granite Noir featured 11 international writers from across the world, including Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Nigeria, USA, Germany and India, and was a platform to showcase Aberdeen and Scotland on a regional, national and international stage, while also featuring a number of North East early career authors through our Locals in the Limelight programme. • True North celebrated homegrown talent with an expanded fringe programme providing opportunities for local artists, while attracting audience members not only from the North East but further afield including Edinburgh, Glasgow, London and Brussels. • Retained all the programming of national and international significance at our venues by carefully rescheduling and avoiding cancellations wherever possible.
<p>Shaping our Future- <i>Our vision for Aberdeen is a city whose cultural sector is growing in ambition and confidence with a</i></p>	<p>Support development of projects and delivery of Culture Aberdeen Plan and the Aberdeen Culture Strategy.</p>	<p>Ideas are brought to life by a diverse, skilled and connected leadership and workforce</p>	<p>Active participation in city-wide initiatives; development of the cultural strategy for the city:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant contribution to the delivery of the cultural strategy for the city

strong collective of cultural leaders collaborating to realise the city's potential.

- Membership of city-wide groups including Culture Aberdeen, Events 365, AGCC Policy Council, Visit Aberdeenshire Tourism group, Aberdeen Youth Music Partnership.
- Led successful bid, on behalf of Culture Aberdeen, for UK Government funding
- Staff learning and development programmes; cross-departmental working groups:
- Participation in Aberdeen Inspired Umbrella Project raising awareness for neuro-diversity

Future proofing:

- Strong, immediate and effective governance and leadership in response to the global pandemic
- Continually review and update business readiness including business continuity, infrastructure, information and data security, GDPR adherence, cyber security audit, environmental impacts, Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

Local Priorities:

Please highlight where your outcomes, outputs or activities align against the priorities of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and or Council Delivery plan. <https://communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/aberdeen-city102-local-outcome-improvement-plan-2016-26/>

Aberdeen Performing Arts is not currently a statutory community planning partner but contributes and aligns to the LOIP stretch outcomes as follows (pre-revised LOIP Priorities 2018-9)

Aberdeen Performing Arts is also a member of Culture Aberdeen, who currently sit on the Outcome Improvement Group 'Aberdeen Prospers'.

LOIP Stretch Outcome	Key Driver	Aberdeen Performing Art Actions
Aberdeen Prospers		
<p>Investment in Infrastructure Aberdeen City is a robust and resilient economy providing a vibrant built environment and attractive place for residents, students, business and tourists</p>	<p>We will regenerate our city centre to become a vibrant and attractive place to live, work and invest in</p>	<p>We continued to invest in our buildings during the pandemic and in our first year of operation following reopening. We continued to programme a diverse cultural programme with local and international reach and impact.</p> <p>Throughout the pandemic we worked hard to retain as much programming as possible for when we reopened. Our venues are award winning and contribute to footfall in the city centre boosting the evening economy, bringing people into the city centre at weekends, impacting positively on local business and having a positive impact on tourism development and place making.</p> <p>We have invested in redevelopment of the foyer/box office and café Bar at His Majesty's Theatre which will bring customers to the venue, with unrivalled views of the newly redeveloped Union Terrace Gardens. We completed feasibility study and first design stages for an exciting redevelopment of the Lemon Tree which will play a pivotal role in the City's Queen Street Masterplan.</p>
<p>Innovation</p>	<p>We will accelerate the transition to a more balanced economy</p>	<p>Accelerating, balancing, growing and diversifying the economy through the cultural and creative</p>

<p>Aberdeen City has a reputation for enterprise, innovation and world class solutions</p>		<p>industries. We currently make a major contribution to the cultural and creative industries in the city generating pre-pandemic turnover of £12m and employing over 250 permanent and casual staff in the last year.</p> <p>Bringing in funding to the city from a wider range of sources inc £1m over three years we receive from Creative Scotland, during the pandemic we have raised £5M externally to keep Aberdeen Performing Arts solvent and avoid wholesale redundancies, and the successful bid to the UK Government on behalf of Culture Aberdeen for Wonderland festival.</p>
<p>Inclusive economic growth A skilled workforce for the future that provides opportunities for all our people</p>	<p>We will develop the people and skills necessary to deliver economic development and, as a result, support diversification of businesses and economy</p>	<p>Talent development programme. We provided work opportunities to 70 artists through our commissioned, curated and produced work. We supported, developed and provided permanent employment for a young creative as part of the Weston Jerwood Creative Bursary programme and subsequently as part of our Creative Change Makers programme.</p> <p>We provided training and professional development opportunities for all staff as they prepared for returning to work</p> <p>Supporting the creative and cultural sector in Aberdeen – we currently play a significant role as a creative hub and strategic partner including providing a box office service for 30+ venues in the region. During the pandemic we have supported partner venues in a number of ways – helping to programme, helping to manage the rescheduling of external venues events, and partnering with local and national festivals/events. We also supported other cultural organisations through partnering on produced and commissioned work e.g. We Are Here Scotland.</p>

<p>Internationalisation Aberdeen City is a location of choice for investment, high value business activity and skills</p>	<p>We will attract the best possible range of incoming exhibitions and events and showcase the city's internationally recognised sports, arts and culture offer</p>	<p>We programme and curate signature events, festivals and unique programmes of work that play a major part in the promotion and marketing of place bringing visitors to the region, contributing to quality of life, attracting a skilled workforce and attracting inward investment.</p> <p>We have managed to save almost all events in the diary over two years affected by the pandemic, and certainly all the significant and most impactful events.</p> <p>Our internationally recognised festivals Granite Noir and True North – attracts regional, national and international audiences and artists, and provides an excellent showcase of the city, with both festivals receiving very positive feedback from both audiences and artists.</p> <p>Our restructure and refocus for our Creative Engagement team has begun to develop and rebuild our activities supporting creative engagement activities for children and young people, as well as targeted groups who may not have the opportunity to participate, or who maybe underrepresented in the participation of the arts, or from marginalised groups. We provided opportunities and supported the development of 37 emerging/early career artists.</p> <p>We continue to contribute to city-wide partnerships, place making projects and destination marketing for the North East of Scotland</p> <p>We continue to attract regional, and national conferences and events in our venues</p>
<p>Prosperous People – Children are our future</p>		
<p>Children are our future and people are resilient, included and supported when in need</p>	<p>Children have the best start in life – children in Aberdeen City are healthy, happy and safe, and enjoy the best possible childhood</p>	<p>We provide free and subsidised places in our workshop programme including for early years, children, young people and</p>

		families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Our creative engagement programme has a strong focus on deep engagement with communities and under-represented and marginalised groups. We've worked with local council services and charities to support young carers, care experienced young people, and refugee communities.
	Children are safe and responsible – from all forms of harm	We collaborate with others through a multi-agency approach to offer support for vulnerable children and young people through opportunities to take part in our creative engagement programme, providing positive destinations and inspiring, diversionary activity.
	Children are respected, included and achieving – children and young people are listened to, respected, valued and involved in the decision-making process	Our inclusive and accessible creative engagement programme targets young people who may not otherwise have opportunities to engage in the arts. Our workshops encourage positive engagement, supporting young people to contribute to session content, direction and outcomes. Participation develops confidence and skills in teamwork and decision making and contributes to wellbeing and improved mental health. Young people are given opportunities which can shape their future and provide career pathways
Prosperous People – People Are Resilient, Included and supported when in need		
People and communities are protected from harm – Individuals and communities are made aware of the risk of harm and supported appropriately to reduce this risk.	We will develop systems and approaches that raise awareness of harm	Cultural programmes aimed at young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and marginalised groups, that improve resilience, health and wellbeing and empowerment. Our Equalities, diversity and Inclusion Working Group In 21/22 we reviewed our child protection and safeguarding policy

		<p>Our Producer – Participation and Director of People undertook training in relation to supporting young people with adverse childhood experiences. The Producer – Participation also completed training in how to support young LGBTQ+ people.</p> <p>We provided training in conflict management, as well as first aid, including some employees completing mental health first aid training. Our programme for mental health first aid training will be further expanded in 2022/2023.</p>
<p>People are supported to live as independently as possible – able to sustain an independent quality of life for as long as possible, take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing</p>	<p>We will empower citizens to feel they have real and meaningful choice and control over their own lives.</p>	<p>Supporting, growing and developing as a healthy, supportive and engaging workplace/culture for our employees, with opportunities for development and promotion.</p> <p>We are an accredited Real Living Wage employer.</p> <p>The embedding of our Open House access scheme to enable better access and booking processes for customers with a range of access needs.</p> <p>Continue to be a Disability Confident Committed accredited employer, working towards being Disability Confident accreditation in 2023.</p> <p>Providing regular performances which as BSL signed, audio described, captioned and relaxed performances. We’ve reviewed our accessible ticketing provision including essential companion and online wheelchair purchasing.</p> <p>Ensuring our venues and events are as welcoming and open to all through training of staff, accessible buildings, inclusive language and</p>

		marketing, and working with relevant groups to review and sense check our processes.
Prosperous People - EMPOWERED, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES		
People friendly city – a city where people to choose to invest, live and visit	Build a child friendly city to ensure that the best interests of the child is a primary consideration	<p>We provide a child and family friendly programme in all our venues.</p> <p>We are continually reviewing our offer and looking at ways to make our programme more relevant to children and families.</p> <p>We offer subsidised and free opportunities where possible. We have recently reviewed our child protection and safeguarding policy and all practitioners working with children, young people and vulnerable adults are fully disclosed.</p> <p>Signed up to breastfeeding friendly Scotland scheme.</p>
	We will be a city whose built environment is fit for keeping an ageing population safe and healthy and puts the child at the centre of design	<p>We have played a sector leading role in raising awareness around sustainable development which has resulted in us winning various awards pre-pandemic.</p> <p>We have invested in two roles in the last year which have specific focus on sustainability, and this means not just looking at the here and now, but also the future for the sustainability of our buildings and our city (Head of Finance and Sustainability, Creative Change Maker Climate Action).</p>

Education:

Please provide further information in respect to any education programmes delivered.

Self-explanatory but helpful to highlight any links with specific schools, further education institutions, geographic areas.

To avoid repeating what has been said previously you can highlight in depth some example of particularly successful projects/programmes, feedback from participants or schools or provide context for longer term vision and partnerships.

Hip Hop Workshops and Introduction to Technical Skills – in depth example

Working in partnership with Barnardos, we delivered a series of hip hop sessions to two different groups of young carers over the Easter holidays. We continued with weekly hip hop sessions to the older group of young carers after the Easter break until the last week of term. We delivered a one-week introduction to technical skills course during the Easter holidays to a group of young people, some of whom were neuro diverse, or care experienced or identifying as LGBTQ. Our partnership with Barnardos is new and we are working to develop a better understanding of what we both can offer. Some of the young carers had chaotic home lives and on occasion this meant attendance at the hip hop workshops was erratic. Some young people needed extra support from the tutors and other members of staff to build confidence and to help them feel comfortable in the venue. This group began the sessions feeling anxious and lacking in confidence. By the end of the project, they had created new music and written raps which they were proud of. After taking part in and enjoying the Easter holiday Hip Hop workshops, one young participant was very keen to continue and attend the weekly term time sessions. Ongoing participation was on the condition (set by her mother) that her behaviour at school showed improvement, most specifically in Expressive Arts where her participation was poor. This approach proved to be successful, and she was able to attend the weekly sessions with her confidence growing to the point where she took part in the hip hop dance workshop – something that would not have been possible for her to participate in at the start of the sessions – and her engagement at school also improved.

One young participant said of taking part in Hip Hop workshops ‘it’s the reason I don’t stutter anymore’.

Our introduction to technical skills brought together a group of young people who developed friendships as the week progressed and became visibly more confident and animated. The young people worked with a mentor and the technical team across our three venues, each of which stages different productions and has its own, unique technical set up. As well as learning about the uses of lighting, sound and technical effects in theatre, they were introduced to the importance of health and safety in the workplace. Young people worked with a technically trained mentor and the technical staff to rig lighting, sound and technical equipment. This was used at the end of the week where they created a short scenario making use of their skills and understanding to create appropriate mood and atmosphere within the scene. One participant of the ‘Introduction to Technical Skills’ course came to us through a link with ‘Action for Children’. He made an active choice not to stay in his bed over the Easter holidays as ‘I’ve done quite a lot of that’ and decided to ‘give it a go’. By the end of the week, he was operating the lighting desk for the short lighting and sound sequence created by the group. Within our organisation, our Technical and Creative Engagement teams worked together, ensuring the most up to date technical information was delivered to the young people in the best way to meet their needs. Our organisation worked with Barnardos and Action for Children to ensure that young people were able to access the venues and workshops and to begin to break down barriers to access, to develop an understanding of what our organisation does and how this can benefit young people from all walks of life. Our practitioners have gained skills and confidence by working with young people from a variety of backgrounds and ages. Practitioners have adapted and developed the way in which they deliver workshops, learning to best meet the needs of the young people with whom they work. Our Technical Team have learned how to break down their work practice to make it accessible and easily understood and how to share it successfully with the young people.

Employment

Please give us a bit more information about your volunteers, if you have any:

What roles do your volunteers undertake within the organisation

Fundraising, advocacy, legal advice, tour guides, archiving, board membership.

Training and Policy in action

Due to closure during the pandemic, and a focus on reopening in the latter half of the year we were unable to engage with our volunteer base, other than to keep them informed of our progress in keeping the organisation solvent and ready for reopening. The majority of our volunteers outside of our Board are tour guides (which is only a small group) and due to continuing concern for the spread of Covid, no backstage tours took place this

year. The only volunteer who actively contributed, outside of our Board members, was our volunteer archivist who has continued to update our extensive archives a day a week.

Artists/ Creative practitioners Opportunities:

Please provide further detail on examples of projects or programmes which have created employment opportunities for local residents, artists and or creative practitioners.

Through our produced work, curated projects and commissions we have created employment opportunities for 70 artists/creative practitioners. We've ensured that each of our festivals includes performance opportunities for locally based artists and creative practitioners, for example, musicians at the True North Fringe and writers in the Locals in the Limelight strand at Granite Noir. We've maintained, and increased, the numbers of performance opportunities for local residents through amateur and community productions on our stages – we reopened HMT with the annual student show in September 2021, we added additional local casting to the annual panto, we prioritised the return of local groups and schools to the Music Hall programme, and expanded Light the Blue to become a festival for the city.

SECTION 2 – Audiences, Participants and Investment

Please complete this section to report on the number of participants from each of the identified areas who have participated during the year.

Participants	Target	Total 2021/22
Total number of participatory opportunities created throughout programme		236
Number of participatory opportunities targeted for priority groups		
Children and Young People 0-25		215
Adults 26yrs+		21
Disability (mental health physical, sensory (e.g. BSL users) and carers of disabled people)		22 BSL performances 5 captioned performances 7 audio described performances 2 relaxed performances 2 performances specifically for young people with profound and multiple disabilities
Ethnic minority communities		25

Please complete this section to report on audience/visitor numbers in relation to your programming.

Audiences	Target	Total 2021/22
Total Audience Numbers		174,232
Total Visitor Numbers (note this is footfall ie non paying visitors)		520,000
Audience number from Aberdeen City		74,357
Audiences who are residents of regeneration areas within Aberdeen City		26,122
Audience number from the wider region or further		99,875
% of audience survey rating experience as 'excellent' or 'good'		94%
<i>The above may not be relevant to your organisation or known – however if you use ticket/box office analysis, visitor books, audience surveys, event impacts studies etc. it should be fairly straight forward to complete.</i>		

We are keen to evidence the added economic value and social return of investment in culture, as such we request that you please complete the Cultural Impact tool kit as well as the table below.

Income 2021/22	Total £
Value of Grant(s) from Aberdeen City Council	1,347,250
External Grant funding	
External Grant funding	777,532
Sponsorship	0
Earned income	5,123,089
Other (incl. Job Retention Scheme and other COVID related grants)	2,836,680
Total add income	10,084,551

Section 3 – Support Material

We recommend you provide up to five items of support material to help demonstrate the quality and impact of your activity. This may include; case studies, photographs, videos, web links, publications, marketing material, reports, participant testimonials and feedback. If emailing please keep all support material to under 5mb. Please supply details on your support material below

Please note that any material submitted may be included within an annual Cultural Investment report and/or material promoting the Creative Funding programme. By submitting this you are providing permission for each item to be used for publication. You should ensure you have the creators consent and accreditation is provided where necessary.

Support Material 1:	<u>Upcoming venue brochure</u> Brochures (aberdeenperformingarts.com)
Support Material 2:	<u>Granite Noir 2022</u> Granite Noir (aberdeenperformingarts.com)
Support Material 3:	<u>Light the Blue 2022</u> Light the Blue (aberdeenperformingarts.com)
Support Material 4:	<u>Rise Up 2022</u> Rise Up Film commissioned by Aberdeen Performing Arts (youtube.com)
Support Material 5:	<u>Access Register</u> Access Register (aberdeenperformingarts.com)
Support Material 6:	<u>Technical Theatre/Hip Hop workshops</u> Hip Hop workshops outputs (dropbox) Technical Theatre outup (dropbox)

Section 4- Declaration on use of information

Aberdeen City Council collects and maintains the data on this form about your organisation for the purpose of contacting you in relation to the funding, monitoring purposes and to collate information for statistical and audit purposes. We will retain Personal Data for six years in accordance with the organisation's Corporate Records Retention and Disposal Schedule and for the purpose of administering, processing and assessing your report.

For the purposes of processing this information Aberdeen City Council is the Data Controller. The Information Commissioner Office is the UK's regulator of data protection law (www.ico.org.uk). More information about all of the rights you have is available on our website at: <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/your-data>.

Whenever the Council processes personal data we need to make sure we have a basis for doing so. We understand our basis in GDPR to be Article 6(1)(e) as we consider that it is in our public task to collect this information under our powers set down in the Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act, 1982 section 14, as amended by section 128 of the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act, 1994. The act provides for us doing or contributing towards the expenses of providing or doing, anything necessary or expedient for the purpose of ensuring that there are facilities available for recreational, sporting, cultural or social activities as we consider appropriate.

To confirm that all information included in this report is accurate and that you have read and followed the terms and conditions, please sign and date below. If submitting by email an electronic signature or the typed name of the appropriate contact should be inserted.

Name: Ben Torrie
Date: 21 September 2022