

Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED: CASTLE**

**CABINET**

**16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2003**

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**ACCESS ISSUES - LITTLE THEATRE**

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**Report of the Corporate Director Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' agreement to fund a contribution of £20,000 for access works at the Little Theatre .

**2 Summary**

- 2.1 The Little Theatre has two auditoria, one seating 350 and a smaller space seating 60. The building is old, and on many levels, precluding people with limited mobility from using it.
- 2.2 The Little Theatre is proposing works to a total cost of £115,000 to make the auditoria and some backstage work areas accessible to people with limited mobility. The Theatre is asking the Council to contribute £20,000 towards those costs.
- 2.3 The Council's contribution, should you decide to make a contribution, could be funded from could be funded from savings in the existing capital programme provision for the Bursom Generator.

**3 Recommendations**

Members are asked to consider:

1. If you wish to contribute £20,000 towards access works at the Little Theatre
2. If you do so wish, that the contribution will be funded from savings in the existing capital programme provision for the Bursom Generator, and that the conditions detailed in the supporting information at Section 5, Paragraphs 2-7 be imposed on the Little Theatre.

**4 Financial & Legal Implications**

**4.1 Financial Implications**

- 4.1.1 The Little Theatre is proposing to undertake works at an estimated total cost of £115,000 to make the auditoria and some backstage work areas accessible to people with limited mobility. The Theatre is asking the Council to contribute £20,000 towards these works.
- 4.1.2 If you decide to make a contribution of £20,000, this would score relatively highly on the Council's assessment of capital projects due to the leverage of additional funding and the positive impact on the

cultural strategy and equal opportunities.

4.1.3 Funding for a contribution of £20,000 could be made from savings in the existing capital programme scheme for the Bursom Generator, though it should be noted that funding for the current capital programme is tight.

4.2 *Legal Implications*

4.2.1 A Council has the power to make this grant under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 111 of the same act.

**5 Report Author**

Tot Brill

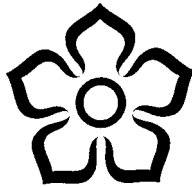
Corporate Director Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal

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**DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Reason</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	<b>Executive (Cabinet)</b>



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## **ACCESS ISSUES - LITTLE THEATRE**

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**Report of the Corporate Director Cultural Services and Neighbourhood Renewal**

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

#### **Report**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Little Theatre is owned and managed by the Leicester Drama Society. Leicester Drama Society is an amateur company with a membership of 456 volunteers who carry out most of the artistic, technical and front of house work in mounting productions.
- 1.2 In addition they employ 15 full and part time staff, and a team pf freelance professional scene designers.
- 1.3 The Little Theatre has a main auditorium seating 354, and a smaller auditorium seating 60, along with the usual bar and backstage facilities.

#### **2. The Problem**

- 2.1 The Little Theatre is an old building, built originally as a Rechabite Chapel, and has been extensively altered over the years. The age and the piecemeal nature of the alterations have meant that the building is not accessible to people with limited mobility. Both the auditoria and backstage facilities are on many levels.
- 2.2 The Little Theatre currently has around 48,000 visits a year to 12 of their own productions, as well as visiting shows by local musical societies. The Little Theatre also runs training programmes for children and adults. Currently people with limited mobility are excluded from both the audience and from taking part.

#### **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1 The Little Theatre proposes to build, in phases 1 – 4, over the next two years, an extension to the ground and first floors of the building, creating a new kitchen, rehearsal and function rooms. They propose installing one large and two smaller lifts with fire refuge points, and disabled WC's on both the ground and first floors. The seating in the auditoria will be altered to accommodate wheelchair customers and their companions.
- 3.2 Planning permission has been granted for all 4 phases of the project.

- 3.3 The total cost of Phases 1-4 is £238,000.
- 3.4 The Little Theatre cannot raise all the funds it needs to resource the work in one go, so it is taking a phased approach, where each of the phases can stand alone.
- 3.5 The Little Theatre is, through this paper, requesting support from the Council of £20,000 towards Phases 1 and 2.

#### **4. Phases 1 & 2**

4.1 Phases 1 and 2 will:

- Move the Wardrobe Workshop from the first to the ground floor
- Demolish part of the existing building and create a lift shaft and a covered walkway
- Install a fire refuge area and disabled WC's on the first and ground floors
- Install new seating in the larger auditorium to provide spaces for 3 wheelchair customers and their companions

4.2 These alterations will allow people with limited mobility to attend performances in the main and small auditoria, as well as giving full access to the Wardrobe and Offices and partial access to the bar.

4.3 Phases 1 and 2 are due to complete in June 2003.

4.3 The total costs of Phases 1 and 2 is:

	<b>Cost</b>
	<b>£</b>
Re-site wardrobe	10,666
Construction	79,826
Lift installation	18,314
Plumbing and heating	1,582
Fees	4,694
<b>Total</b>	<b>115,082</b>

4.4 The works in Phases 1 and 2 have been funded by a combination of grants and fundraising, but there remains a shortfall of £20,000, which the Little Theatre is seeking from the Council.

#### **5. Recommendations and Conditions**

5.1 Members are asked to consider:

1. If you wish to contribute £20,000 towards access works at the Little Theatre
2. If you do so wish, that the contribution will be funded from savings in the existing capital programme provision for the Bursom Generator, and that the following conditions should be imposed on the Little Theatre:

##### **5.2 Condition 1**

That materials used in Phases 1 and 2 are certificated as being from sustainable sources

- 5.3 **Condition 2**  
That the works in Phases 1 and 2 receive all satisfactory licences.
- 5.4 **Condition 3**  
That, if the works in Phases 1 and 2 cost less than the estimated £115,082, the Council's contribution will be reduced proportionately, and that if the works cost more than the estimated £115,082, the Council's contribution will not be increased.
- 5.5 **Condition 4**  
That the Council's contribution can only be used as a contribution towards the accessibility works identified in Phase 1 and 2 and no other purpose
- 5.6 **Condition 5**  
That the Little Theatre undertake 3 customer surveys during 2003/2004 to be agreed and shared with the Service Director Cultural Services to better understand their customers and customer satisfaction.
- 5.7 **Condition 6**  
That the Little Theatre agree that the works are designed in accordance with the guidance contained in the City Council publication *Paving the Way*.

## **FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

### **1 Financial Implications**

- 1.1 The Little Theatre is proposing to undertake works at an estimated total cost of £115,000 to make the auditoria and some backstage work areas accessible to people with limited mobility. The Theatre is asking the Council to contribute £20,000 towards these works.
- 1.2 If members decide to make a contribution of £20,000, this would score relatively highly on the Council's assessment of capital projects due to the leverage of additional funding and the positive impact on the cultural strategy and equal opportunities.
- 1.3 Funding for a contribution of £20,000 could be made from savings in for the Bursom Generator, though it should be noted that funding for the current capital programme is tight.

### **2 Legal Implications**

- 2.1 A Council has the power to make this grant under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 111 of the same act

### 3 Other Implications

3.1 Consider implications for existing strategies, or policies. Will what you are proposing set a precedent?

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Equal Opportunities	YES	The proposed works make the Little Theatre more accessible to people with limited mobility, and contribute to the Little Theatre's compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act
Policy	YES	Cultural Strategy
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	A condition of the Council's contribution to the works will be that materials are certificated as being from sustainable sources.
Crime and Disorder	NO IMPACT	
Human Rights Act	NO IMPACT	
Elderly People/People on Low Income	YES	The proposed works make the Little Theatre more accessible to people with limited mobility, some of whom will be elders.

### 3.2 Risk Assessment Matrix

	Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1	The cost of the works is more than is indicated by the Little Theatre	M	L	We will ensure that the Little Theatre knows that we will not repeat or increase our contribution.  We will ensure that our contribution is tied to the delivery of specific works, and that if all the works are not completed to an agreed standard, we will claw back all or part of our contribution
2	The cost of the works is less than predicted by the Little Theatre.	L	L	We will tie our contribution to not more than 17.4% of the cost of the works, or more than £20,000.
3	The works do not result in an increase in use by people with limited mobility	M	L	The Little Theatre will promote its performances and facilities to people with limited mobility.

4	The works are not finished though the full grant has been spent	L	H	The Council will not pay make the contribution until a fully priced programme of works, and relevant invoices tied to specific works has been agreed. A retainer of 5% will be withheld until the work is completed to agreed standards.
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L - Low

M - Medium

H - High

L - Low

M - Medium

H - High

**4 Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972**

None

**5 Consultations**

**Consultee**

Head of Finance

LCC Disabled Access Officer

**Date Consulted**

May 2003

2002/2003