



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 28 NOVEMBER 2012 at 5.00pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Waddington – Chair

Councillor Bhatti – Vice-Chair

Councillor Cassidy Councillor Chaplin
Councillor Naylor Councillor Porter

Also in Attendance

Sir Peter Soulsby	– City Mayor
Councillor Clair	– Assistant City Mayor (Heritage, Leisure and Sport)
Sarah Levitt	– Head of Arts & Museums
Mike Candler	– Cultural Quarter Project Director
Antony Flint	– De Montfort Hall
Martyn Traynor	– Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce
Chris Maughan	– Consultant, De Montfort University
John Rance	– Chief Executive, Phoenix
Geoff Rowe	– Cultural Partnership Board
Liz Blyth	– Director, Neighbourhood Services
Peter Knott	– Regional Director, Arts Council England (ACE)
Brian Ashley	– Senior Manager, Regional Planning, Arts Council England (ACE)

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36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Dr. Chowdhury, Councillor Shelton and Jerry Connolly.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made.

38. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission, held on 24th October 2012, be agreed as a correct record.

The Chair asked that the minutes of the meeting on 12th November be circulated to Members and Officers, and that any amendments be sent to Angie Smith, Democratic Support, and the minutes be presented at the meeting on 20th December 2012.

39. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 33 – Future of Leicester Adult Skills and Learning Service (LASALS)

The Chair presented a letter that was sent to Margaret Libreri, Director Learning Services, following the report presented at the meeting on 12th November 2012 on LASALS financial position, which was under active consideration by the Department.

RESOLVED:

that the letter be noted.

40. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS OR STATEMENTS OF CASE

It was reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

41. PETITIONS

It was reported that no petitions, in accordance with the Council's procedures, had been received.

42. CONSULTANT UPDATE: SCRUTINY OF GRANTS TO CURVE PHOENIX AND DE MONTFORT HALL

42.1. Chris Maughan, Consultant, presented a report to provide an update to Scrutiny Commission Members on the work being done by consultants to assist the Commission in its review of Leicester City Council's grants to Curve, De Montfort Hall and Phoenix. Members were asked to note the draft report.

42.2. Chris informed the meeting that evaluations were still to be accumulated, but good progress was being made. He stated there were not issues of concern to report, but there was a lot of data to go through, and it had been a large demand of the venues concerned.

42.3. Chris reported that surveys were being undertaken which would inform value for money from citizens, approximately 3,000 of which would be

surveyed. He added that there had been a good reaction from the business community which was being surveyed with support from Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, Leicestershire Business Voice and other business organisations. Chris said questions for the survey had been developed for non-attenders.

42.4. Councillor Waddington informed the meeting that the final report would be presented at the meeting on 20th December 2012, which was the last meeting for the review, as the City Mayor had asked the Scrutiny Commission to adhere to the timetable.

42.5. Councillor Porter asked for further information on the benchmarking detail. Chris stated that he had invited venues to provide financial and numerical information, and had approached half a dozen film venues around the country, and eleven theatres. He said he had chosen a variety of venues nationally as part of the exercise.

42.6. Councillor Chaplin asked as a point of clarity if the survey she had received via email from Curve was part of the review exercise. A representative from Curve confirmed the survey was for a different project to the review survey.

42.7. Councillor Waddington reported that a meeting was being held with the consultants and herself on 30th November 2012 to discuss the structure of the report.

RESOLVED:

that the report be noted.

43. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S REVENUE INVESTMENT IN CURVE, PHOENIX ARTS AND DE MONTFORT HALL: WITNESSES

44. ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND (ACE)

44.1. Brian Ashley and Peter Knott from Arts Council England (ACE) were present to deliver a report on the response from ACE to the review of the Council's revenue investment in Curve, Phoenix and De Montfort Hall, and welcomed the opportunity to contribute towards the Scrutiny Commission's review. The document also contained a summary of key messages ACE wanted the Scrutiny Commission to take into account.

44.2. Peter informed the meeting that Curve and Phoenix were part of ACE's national portfolio. The meeting was informed that in 2012/13 ACE would invest almost £4million in Leicester, of which £1.9million (the second highest in the country outside the National Theatre and Royal Shakespeare Companies)) would go to Leicester Theatres Trust and £80,000 would go to Phoenix, and was a significant investment. He added that value for money was part of the criteria when ACE made decisions on funding organisations.

44.3. Brian stated that ACE had noted, through work across the country, that

successful cities had a commitment to partnership working. He highlighted the success of partnership working in Bristol and Manchester, with public, private and independent sectors, with the local authority as the democratically elected representatives of the community at its heart.

- 44.4. Brian said the economic and social health and wellbeing of a city had a strong dependence on a vibrant cultural scene which made it attractive to residents, to businesses and to inward investors. He added creative industries, culture, heritage, leisure and the arts added value to the local economy, and were not a drain. He continued to say that businesses wanted to base themselves in a place they saw as a positive place to live, in order to attract the best employees to work for their businesses, which was important but not always recognised or taken into account. In recent years ACE had seen Leicester invest considerable amounts of money in world class arts facilities, and the City Council had to be congratulated on its early capital investment and on-going revenue funding, which was the basis of an exciting cultural ambition and ACE were pleased to sign up to the City's Cultural Ambition Statement, which they saw as a good basis from which to work.
- 44.5. Peter said that ACE recognised that all local authorities across the country and other organisations faced significant budget pressures in the coming years which required difficult decisions to be made. He reminded the Scrutiny Commission of high profile scenarios, in the region twelve months ago in Derby, and current situations in Birmingham and Newcastle which were making the news. Peter stated in the case of Leicester, ACE saw a wider competitive advantage already established between the three venues, which placed Leicester in a good place. He said that in comparison with other cities, ACE felt that all partners in Leicester would need to make a concerted effort to sustain the level of ambition and to realise its potential.
- 44.6. Brian informed the meeting that ACE continued to be a major investor in Phoenix as part of a national portfolio, and supported the artistic programming that happened at De Montfort Hall. He said ACE supported the development of partnerships and new business models that contributed to the longer term sustainability of organisations. He added it was important organisations recognised the need to change with the times, and made would make a point across the country that if people undertook change for strategic reasons, it could lead to greater efficiencies and effectiveness, which would lead to greater prosperity. Brian concluded that Leicester City Council was a partner with ACE and had, and continued to do, significant business. They saw the city as a place with great potential and cultural excellence, and welcomed the long-term commitment from the City Council and its partners to culture, heritage and the arts in challenging times.
- 44.7. Peter stated that with regards to the regional perspective a recent meeting had been held with the City Council where ACE had outlined their position. He said that even in challenging financial times, ACE saw

Leicester as a city of great potential, and that the investment that ACE had made in Leicester hadn't had the chance to blossom. Peter referred to recent events and highlighted the successful Harvey Weinstein production (Finding Neverland) at Curve, a multi-million pound production, and that Curve was bucking the trend in terms of online sales, and that Phoenix was establishing itself as a significant and major player in the network, the venues were at the start of their journey. He added that even though the benchmarking data had been fascinating to read, some of the very essence of what Leicester could be could not be bound in purely in benchmarking figures, but the growing potential in arts and culture had to be seen.

- 44.8. Councillor Cassidy asked what the potential of Leicester was, and where did the city fit culturally amongst Nottingham and Derby? Peter responded that Curve was the most successful theatre for selling tickets online and were embracing 21st century technology, but venues were at different stages of development. He added that Leicester was a significant English city, and noted the contribution that all cultural venues, along with museums and libraries, made as a whole. He added that Capital Investment in Nottingham Contemporary, made it the centre for visual arts outside of London, and had been successful in that area. With regards to Leicester their entire arts and culture offer were on the same level. Leicester also had a great offer of festivals and events, and needed to coalesce the different elements to enable Leicester to realise its true potential.
- 44.9. Peter stated he had an optimistic view as he believed there were partners who would want to invest. He said that he had heard from the Council a more strategic holistic argument that the welfare of the city was as much reliant on its cultural services as well as its statutory services.
- 44.10. Councillor Cassidy asked where the Arts Council stood with film, and also referred to the Active People Survey, and asked if it was too early to say if the ACE investment and City Council investment has it made a difference. Peter responded that in terms of mass and commercial film production, the responsibility lay with the British Film Institute (BFI), but ACE worked closely with BFI and were developing a memorandum of understanding with them. He added that ACE saw a great deal of similarity and alignment between the two missions, and saw ACE as having a close relationship with film, though the development and funding responsibility sat with BFI.
- 44.11. On the question around the Active People Survey, historical data, drawn from a time when Curve and Phoenix Square were development projects, had shown that Leicester was one of the cities with one of the lower level of engagement with the arts. Peter added that the figures would now make better reading, but there would still be areas for improvement. It was also the case that some of the answer to the financial challenges facing the cultural sector, would be to find commercial solutions to some of the funding challenges, and that was to increase ticket sales.

- 44.12. Brian informed the meeting that the Taking Part survey, which was a parallel survey, was to be continued, but did not drill down to individual data and would not help the work of the commission. ACE were undertaking an evaluation impact of Capital Investment in the region but this would not be concluded until after the Scrutiny Commission had completed its work.
- 44.13. Councillor Porter said he assumed ACE were under similar budget pressures to the City Council and as previously stated £1.9million was given to Leicester which was the second highest in the country. He asked if there was pressure from local people in Leicester to reduce the grant to Curve for example, would Leicester City Council be able to ask ACE them to increase the amount put and would ACE be under similar pressure to reduce funding given. Councillor Porter added that it had been suggested that the venues improve their financial positions by being more commercial, but in the current recession the venues would struggle to get people in, and did ACE have any suggestions for the venues, for example, sponsorship.
- 44.14. Peter responded that ACE were under the same sort of pressure as the public sector, and in the last financial spending review had lost £180m nationally of grant and aid so had to make difficult decisions. Only a small reduction in the award to Curve had been made, but ACE had kept the faith. The fact that the City Council had done the same had influenced ACEs decision, as they invested money where there were other investors. ACE would look at new ways of doing things, and had worked hard with Curve and Phoenix on ways the venues could improve their bottom line, for example, to develop a scheme for Philanthropic giving to organisations, which was a money match scheme, and to encourage the cultural sector to become better at asking. ACE realised the majority of philanthropic given was in London and that was a challenge for the scheme they were trying to address.
- 44.15. When ACE looked to the sports sector for example, the naming rights for Walkers Stadium demonstrated the very real challenge in getting sponsorship at the level Curve required. ACE were working hard with their national portfolio of organisation on resilience, looking at new business models and encouraging them to look at ways in which they can make financial savings. ACE saw the solutions as being partly public subsidy, but also the need to see the engagement of the business community, as well as increasing ticket sales.
- 44.16. Councillor Naylor stated he did not believe the city used some of the organisations based in the city to best effect, and knew from previous experience there could be added value to be brought in to supplement some of the work Leicester were doing. He asked what could ACE do to encourage others in the city to ensure investment was brought in, and how could partnership working be expanded to include every single organisation we have working in the city.

- 44.17. Peter responded that the majority of people who attended the venues in the city were either city residents or people from the county. He said that numbers of people coming from other cities needed to be increased and not decreased. Peter said he understood the question to be, how greater value could be gained from the individual parts, and suggested working closely together. He added ACE and Leicester City Council had had a good working relationship for many years and had worked on previous capital and joint funding projects together. He said the three organisations under review and other cultural organisations in the city had a good track record of working in partnership. He added that the aims of the cultural ambition statement gave direction in what was required to encourage more investment in culture in the city to make it an attractive proposition to Leicestershire residents and to the diverse community that lived in the city, but would remain a challenge. He added that there was a commitment from Curve, Phoenix and De Montfort Hall to represent the diversity of the city, and meetings and talking together would ensure the joint investment delivered the agenda.
- 44.18. Councillor Chaplin referred to ACE as a regional organisation based in the East Midlands who worked with colleagues nationally. She asked what ACE could do at national level to highlight the good work that was going on in the city. She also asked if there was a risk to the funding that came into Leicester from ACE as the second highest in the country, being diverted to other venues around the country who were also suffering funding cuts, for example, Birmingham and Newcastle, which would then put the venues in Leicester at risk.
- 44.19. Peter responded that ACE invested £3million in Leicester annually. He informed the meeting that ACE had a direct government relationship with DCMS and more recently the Department for Education. He stated that ACE lobbied on a national basis but used regional examples of success, and ensured the Executive Board was fully briefed with what was happening across the country and wasn't just London focused. He added the more senior people in the organisation travelled around the country to see what was happening.
- 44.20. With regard to the proposals at Newcastle, Peter stated he could not imagine ACE taking money out of Leicester or any other city to pay for a local authority cutting funding and that the opposite was likely to be a case. He added that he could not see as a public funder how the infrastructure could be kept unless there were partners investing.
- 44.21. Councillor Chaplin then stated that she understood that trying to gain sponsorship in a recession was challenging. She referred to an example whereby Leicester University funded a medical unit at a hospital and said where people could see a tangible health and wellbeing benefit, they invested money. She asked what evidence could ACE use or gather to show the economic and social benefits of cultural arts which could potentially be attractive to giving and supporting the arts venues for health

and learning.

- 44.22. Peter said there was a lot of persuasive factual and financial information on the economic impact of the arts across a range of different places in the country, and individual organisations as well. He added that ACE worked very closely with universities in the region, and had a strong relationship with De Montfort University, and were constantly looking at ways to work closely together to share intelligence, and to work on projects to achieve joint aims.
- 44.23. Peter then informed the meeting that ACE had to use lottery money for arts outcomes. He said that if there was a secondary benefit that had a health outcome or a range of health outcomes that was a good thing, and ACE did work with primary care trusts, individual hospitals and other institutions.
- 44.24. Councillor Waddington said that the majority of the key messages were positive and the Commission would agree that the wellbeing of the city was partly attributable to the cultural offer provided. However, some of the unfulfilled potential needed to be achieved, as harder times were coming. More commercial success and appeal to a wider audience than those that currently used the facilities was required. She asked how would ACE advise the Council to work with the three venues to achieve their potential, so that they made as much contribution as possible to the cultural and artistic life of the city, expand their commercial route and attract a more diverse audience.
- 44.25. Peter said there should be a civic leadership responsibility of arts and cultural organisations to see beyond their own organisations as to what was good for the city, as the success of the city would not be achieved just by a cost-cutting agenda. Efficiencies could be made not only through cutting, but through strategic decisions to try to achieve more from the venues. The venues were on a journey and Curve was bucking the national trend. The reviews in national newspapers, combined with commercial success, for example, 73% house when showing 'Entertaining Mr Sloane', was an excellent rate for a new production of a piece of drama. Also community pieces could have 100% audience. The show 'Some Like It Hip Hop' attracted a diverse audience not seen elsewhere in the country.
- 44.26. Peter added that one difficulty in Leicester was people did not recognise where the cultural quarter was, and Phoenix faced a particular problem as they were on the edge of the cultural quarter. He said that working on initiatives to draw the attention of people to Leicester on what is available would achieve the three-legged stool of commercial, public and audience success.
- 44.27. Brian added that ACE was very clear that future success was more likely if the development of new models was driven by the partners. While ACE could share with Leicester City Council alternative models of doing things

based on practice elsewhere, the best solution was likely to be developed locally to meet local circumstances.

44.28. Councillor Waddington stated that in pages 7-8 in the report, some of the successes of Curve were highlighted and more examples were given during the presentation, but the comments on Phoenix were not so fulsome. Councillor Waddington invited ACE to explain.

44.29. Peter explained that Phoenix was new to the portfolio of ACE, and investment into Phoenix was on a smaller scale than Curve, and at its commercial heart was the cinema which was not funded by ACE. He said it was a different proposition to Curve, but this did not imply any criticism. The relationship with Phoenix was newer, and it was brought into the portfolio for ACE when there was £18 million less funding, and funding was being cut to other organisations which spoke volumes on how important ACE saw Phoenix as being part of the cultural offer of the city. He added that with any new venue opening in the peak of the worst economic crisis there would be some problems in the business model. He thought it unfair to compare the artistic and cultural successes of Phoenix with Curve, as the first 18-24 months of Curve had also been challenging. There was a business model ACE felt clearly could work and it did combine artistic integrity but had a programme that could attract large audiences. ACE agreed that there was more work to be done in Leicester and across the country in trying to ensure that England's rich and diverse communities enjoyed cultural venues, but Leicester was not alone in facing the challenge.

44.30. Councillor Cassidy asked if the Chair of ACE was planning to visit Leicester. Peter responded that there were no plans for the immediate future as the Chair did not officially start until 2013.

44.31. Councillor Porter asked if the principles that worked in other parts of the country could be used to try to guide Leicester. He asked ACE what their criticisms would be about the current operations, specifically regarding Phoenix or Curve that could be changed. Peter informed the meeting that an annual review was undertaken of ACE's national portfolio, and as part of the process strengths and weaknesses were highlighted. Peter said he would encourage both organisations to be fully engaged with the 21st Century because things had moved on from five years ago. He added that a constant and thorough reviewing of the business model and trying as hard as it could to raise funds as it could help bring improvement.

44.32. The Chair thanked Brian and Peter for their contribution to the review.

45. LE1 CITY CENTRE BOARD

Chris Maughan, Consultant at De Montfort University informed the meeting that the City Centre Director had spoken with him and it was agreed that the survey being undertaken in the business community would cover the views of the City Centre Manager.

46. LEICESTERSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

- 46.1. Martin Traynor, Chief Executive, Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, presented a report on the Economic Impact of Leicester's Arts and Leisure Venues. Martin informed the meeting that the report had not looked specifically at the social impact of the venues, or the direct impact of the businesses as trading companies, but at the wider economic impact, for example, visitor numbers and what it meant for the local economy.
- 46.2. Martin referred to STEAM data that looked at the wider economic impact, for example, of the spend of visitors to the city, and how many additional jobs would be created outside of the actual attraction or venue. He added he had looked at the venues as part of leisure and tourism. He informed the meeting that for 2011 leisure and tourism in Leicester and Leicestershire was worth £1.4 billion, out of a total economy for Leicester and Leicestershire of £18.5 billion, which made leisure and tourism a big economic driver.
- 46.3. Martin said Leicester was a credible destination. He informed the meeting that figures from national data revealed the 8% of all organised days in cities included trips to theatres, and when converted to figures for Leicester would equate to approximately 23,000 visits. Martin reported that the figures for Leicester in reality would be slightly less as the city was still underdeveloped in that field.
- 46.4. Martin referred to point 2.1 in the report and the production 'Finding Neverland' at Curve which generated approximately £50,000 worth of business for a new hotel. He reported that STEAM data for Curve for the 11 months between January and November 2012 revealed Curve generated an economic impact of £4.65 million, contributed 9,700 bed nights in the city and supported 105 jobs indirectly and directly. It was also recognised that visitors to the city did other things outside of the venue which were key to the economy.
- 46.5. Martin reported that one of the challenges in Leicester was in promoting the city as a place where people could come and stay. He added that there were 24 million people living within two hours travelling distance to Leicester, so it was very much a day visit city. He informed the meeting that packaging visits to encourage overnight stays would provide a greater economic benefit, for example, including restaurants and accommodation.
- 46.6. Martin said that when looking at Leicester as a credible tourist venue, it had to be recognised that it was a secondary tourist destination, i.e. it was not London, Stratford-upon-Avon or Warwick. He added that secondary tourist venues had to work a lot harder to generate business, so therefore the cultural offer of a city like Leicester became more important. He said the three venues were an important and intrinsic part of the offering of

Leicester, based on economics rather as opposed to the cultural value.

- 46.7. Martin discussed a campaign by Leicestershire Promotions Ltd. called 'Stay and Play', which was very much about packaging the accommodation with five local tourist attractions. He added that for families who recognised good value, Leicester and Leicestershire would become a place where people might be interested in visiting, and last year it had helped to generate 200,000 bed nights. Martin said that Leicestershire Promotions Ltd. had also managed to increase overnight stays during June and July, usually quiet months. Martin described the three venues under discussion as having different offerings. He said that in places like London, theatre breaks and leisure breaks were well established, and were within reach of Leicester as a secondary destination if packaged correctly.
- 46.8. Martin said that De Montfort Hall was well established, and along with Curve had put high quality shows, and Phoenix was coming into its own. He said it required the venues to work together with the accommodation providers. Leicestershire Promotions Ltd. could be used to coordinate the process and packages could be developed. Martin said if footfall was increased in the areas, it could increase audience figures and would be far more economically successful.
- 46.9. Councillor Naylor stated that the city needed to capitalise on festivals and events that were held in the city, as the big cities around Leicester were developing arenas. Martin responded that the city had a fantastic offering, for example, the Comedy Festival and Caribbean Carnival, and required smarter marketing alongside the packaging. He added he had visited Derry in 2011 as the City of Culture, which was at the time rebuilding venues. Martin said Leicester had already made capital investment and achieved new venues, and they needed to be joined up.
- 46.10. Councillor Cassidy asked that with regards to bringing people into the City, did the Chamber of Commerce's members know the value of the three venues, and was there anything further that the Chamber and other organisations, such as the Federation of Small Businesses, do to get businesses involved? Martin responded that businesses were still going through a difficult time. He added that businesses would want to see a very clear relationship between the money they put in, either through columns in the press, and how it could add to their brand value. He added that something like the City of Culture was a brand where people bought into a concept, and Leicester was rich with events as a multi-cultural city.
- 46.11. Councillor Chaplin asked if the city had the infrastructure required, for example, was the city lacking in 5* hotels? She also said that Curve and Phoenix had been spoken about, but should keep in mind De Montfort Hall, where people travelled a long way to see something in the venue that had fantastic acoustics and was more intimate than an arena.
- 46.12. Martin said the market would determine whether Leicester would get a

5* hotel, but the reality was that 5* hotels rarely made money, as the service level was so high, with approximately 2.5 people per guest. He added he doubted the occupancy level would be reached in Leicester as there were not many blue chip companies around who could afford to put people up in a 5* hotel. Martin said a Travel Lodge received 45-50p in the pound profit, and the vast amount of people would stay there because they just wanted a room for the night, whereby people staying in a 5* hotel went for the hotel experience, and the market in Leicester would not sustain the hotel.

46.13. Councillor Chaplin asked if the level of hotel accommodation in the city was attractive or adequate enough to get people into the city. Martin said the 5-6 hotels had been built in recent years, but they had been at the budget level, which was what a lot of business people wanted. He added that the Marriott Hotel was a 4* and people stayed there for the hotel experience.

46.14. Councillor Porter made reference to the STEAM data figures of £4.65million, 9,700 bed nights and 105 jobs. He stated they were significant figures and based on the evidence why weren't businesses linking up with the venues because there was clearly a return to be made. Martin stated he did not believe the proposition had been put forward. He added that it needed to be demonstrated that Leicester was a tourist destination, and there had to be significant packaging, at the right price and the right numbers. He reiterated that by getting the venues to work together, and including others, such as the Y Theatre, then they could drive up visitor numbers.

46.15. Councillor Bhatti asked with regards to a joined-up approach, did Martin have a model in mind? Martin answered that what Leicestershire Promotions Ltd. had achieved showed that bringing attractive venues together through packaging worked.

46.16. Councillor Waddington thanked Martin for the report and his contribution.

Councillor Porter left the meeting at this point and was not present for the remainder of the meeting.

John Rance left the meeting at this point and was not present for the remainder of the meeting.

47. CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD

47.1. Geoff Rowe, CEO of Big Difference Company and Director of Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival delivered a presentation to consider how the three venues related to the broader city cultural landscape. The presentation is attached to the minutes for information.

47.2. In the presentation Geoff referred to the great things about the culture in

Leicester, such as its unique range and diversity of the audiences in Leicester which was something to be applauded for. He said there had been investment in infrastructure by Leicester City Council, Arts Council England and Dave, and the political support and the wider city support was really important.

47.3. Geoff referred to the challenges faced as a cultural setting, in particular footfall had been talked about and how people navigated their way around the city centre, how did people use the cultural quarter, how did people use the streets and spaces of the city and where did they go was really important.

47.4. Geoff reported that the Cultural Ambition Statement was aspirational and was supported by a huge range of people, as outlined in the presentation. Geoff said that as Chair of the Cultural Partnership Board, three tasks had been agreed with the City Mayor:

- Establishing a cultural strategy for Leicester
- Advising on the potential for Leicester to bid for City of Culture
- Advising and acting as a 'critical' friend to the Festival and Events Review

47.5. Geoff stated that when there was a review of partnership working by the city council, people were surprised that people applied to join the Cultural Partnership, as usually members were asked to sit on Partnership Boards.

47.6. Geoff stated there was a lack of evidence of the cultural benefit, economic, social engagement, health and wellbeing of the citizens of the city. He added that a lot more could be done to share the success and news of the three venues. He added that from experience, sponsorship was what the venues required. He informed the meeting that what had made the TV channel Dave sponsor the Leicester Comedy Festival was the provision of evidence of what the Comedy Festival had achieved.

47.7. Councillor Chaplin asked, with regards to the Cultural Ambition Statement, talk around joining up the three venues, and the list of venues in the presentation, did the Cultural Partnership Board have a strategy or a project plan for dealing with a private venue or production company that wanted to put on a show, but was not connected with any of the other venues or organisations signed up to the Board. Geoff responded that the Cultural Ambition Statement (CAS) had been produced by 11 enthusiastic individuals who had a lot of experience in terms of culture in the city. He added that people could engage with the CAS, through a website and twitter. Geoff said that in terms of people signing up or being part of the CAS, it was an open statement that anyone could sign up to, and were indeed doing so.

47.8. Councillor Chaplin referred to venues that had no part in the strategic planning or any connection with the three venues, or any wider organisations that had already embarked on the joint venture. She asked

what the strategy was for dealing with organisations that could cut across years of planning for a whole set of events that might be going on. Geoff responded that any cultural activity that might take place in the city that helped to realise the CAS was a good thing and would not be prevented.

47.9. Councillor Cassidy asked that with Geoff's experience and representing the views of the partnership, how would the three venues play a role as a stakeholder in the city, and how much of a role did they play in making the city? Geoff responded that they played a key role already and there was a lot of engagement between the cultural venues and the rest of the cultural sector in other agendas, for example, health, economic, crime. Geoff said the venues should continue to do so and provide evidence on how culture could impact across the city and agendas that had to be addressed in Leicester. He added there needed to be clear leadership about the role that culture could play in Leicester.

47.10. Councillor Cassidy asked with regards to the value of investment in the venues, if one of the venues was taken away, how the city would change. Geoff stated that as a resident of the city it would be hugely detrimental to the city, as it was about the sum of parts that made a contribution, the whole benefit it could offer to Leicester, and made Leicester a unique place for residents, investors and visitors to the city. But he added there was a lot of room for improvement and development around social regeneration, as stated previously.

47.11. Councillor Chaplin left the meeting at this point and was not present for the remainder of the meeting.

47.12. Councillor Waddington stated that one issue that had been raised was the need for the three venues working together as a whole and taking a leadership role in the cultural life of the city, but it had not been discussed who that would be, either Leicester City Council, one of three venues, or joint management with an overarching ambition statement that all could contribute to, not just in terms of arts, but further education, social inclusion, etc. Councillor Waddington asked if it should be addressed as a concrete issue, or would the three venues continue in their current format of governance?

47.13. Geoff responded he believed the issue should be addressed by the city as a whole. He added he was not familiar with the specific funding agreements with ACE and Leicester City Council, but ACE had previously stated that as part of their agreement, stakeholders played a role.

47.14. Peter said that as a Local Authority it could be suggested but suggested proceed with caution. He added that as a joint solution to opportunity, shared programming and functions was not unique to Leicester, but care should be taken when talking about shared management, as each venue would have a delicate ecology, and that a raft of options should be considered.

47.15. Chris informed the meeting that issues regarding the scope for shared resources had been discussed, and the CEOs of the venues had been asked, and had been invited to think outside of the needs of venues and think of needs of city.

47.16. Councillor Waddington thanked everyone for the contributions to the deliberation and report.

48. OUTCOME FROM LAST YEAR'S BUDGET STRATEGY AND OPTIONS FOR CURVE, DE MONTFORT HALL AND PHOENIX

48.1. Councillor Clair, Assistant City Mayor and Mike Candler, Cultural Quarter Project Director, presented a report on the budget decision made in February 2011, and the strategy for implementation. The meeting was informed that the budget strategy approved by Council in February 2012 required an additional reduction to the venues budget of £55,000 in 2013/14 and £60,000 in 2014/15. Councillor Clair reported that he was minded to proceed with Option 2.

48.2. Mike informed the meeting that there were four options in the report that were shared with the City Mayor. Mike explained that Option 2 was a proportionate reduction, where each of the venues budget would be reduced by 14.1% in 2013/14 and 14.4% in 2014/14 which would meet the additional £55,000 and £60,000 reduction agreed in February 2012.

48.3. Councillor Waddington stated that De Montfort Hall sometimes did so well that resources were handed back and asked what happened to the money. Liz Blyth, Director Neighbourhood Services, informed the meeting that when De Montfort Hall came in under budget in 2011 because of good ticket sales, the money was put towards the Capital Fund for maintenance, and some was used to balance some budgets in the service. The City Mayor stated that he and the Assistant City Mayor took responsibility on how the money was spent. He informed the meeting that when De Montfort Hall came in under budget, it meant it was making less of a loss, and the money was used to maintain the venue. He added that the revenue budget monitoring reports went to the Overview Select Committee and that everything was transparent.

48.4. Councillor Naylor asked if external funding could be sought to counter-balance the reductions. Liz responded that external funding was constantly sought for all three venues to try to raise incomes. Councillor Naylor stated that during the previous review of De Montfort Hall discussion had taken place over the artistic content, and asked if the programme content needed to change to bring people in. Liz informed the meeting that Antony Flint, De Montfort Hall, was looking at the programme to achieve the right balance, including a commercial programme for special events.

48.5. The Chair agreed that Option 2 in the report was the fairest, but asked what the impact on the venues would be. Liz stated the funding reduction

had been discussed with the venues, and was sure it could be accommodated without significant detriment.

AGREED:

The Scrutiny Commission agreed to the recommendation Option 2 as outlined in the report.

49. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.39pm.

Minute Item 47

Presentation to Economic Development Culture and Tourism Scrutiny Commission 28th November 2012

Purpose of report

To provide a personal perspective on the scrutiny review and some of the emerging themes. This report will consider how the 3 venues relate to the broader city cultural landscape.

Background

I moved to Leicester in the early 1990's to study Arts Management at De Montfort University, having previously promoted music concerts in venues across the UK (including Milton Keynes and London). Whilst studying at DMU, I founded the annual comedy festival which is due to celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2013.

Positions held:

Director of Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival and Producer of associate performances including Comedy in the Dark

CEO of Big Difference Company, the charity behind the annual festival and producer of other creative and cultural events across the UK

Awarded an honorary degree from De Montfort University in July 2012

Chair of Leicester's Cultural Partnership Board and the Chair of the LE ONE City Centre Marketing Forum

Particular experience in the following areas:

- Generating diverse income streams
- Partnership working
- PR & Marketing
- Community engagement
- Sponsorship & commercial partners

Great things

- Diversity of product & audiences
- Investment in infrastructure
- Community inclusion and participation
- Continued political & city support
- National & international profile for some activity

Challenges

- Greater & diverse income streams
- Defining culture as arts activity rather than ethnicity/diversity
- Defining why culture is a good thing for Leicester; what is its role?
- Joined up promotion/marketing
- Developing the social regeneration of Leicester

A series of observations & comments

Ambition Statement & Cultural Partnership Board

The Board was formed around 18 months ago and has a diverse membership which was agreed following an application process. There were over 40 applications from individuals to join the board and 11 were recruited. Full details about the board membership can be found <http://www.culturalambitionleicester.co.uk/aboutus.html>

The board was set up by City Mayor with 3 tasks:

- Establishing a cultural strategy for Leicester
- Advising on the potential for Leicester to bid for City of Culture
- Advising and acting as a “critical” friend to the Festival & Events Review

With very limited resource, and time, the board decided to produce an Ambition Statement, rather than a full cultural strategy. The ambition statement was produced after extensive consultation with individuals & organisations from both within and outside the city. There was also a series of workshops and consultation sessions with professionals over a number of months. The purpose of the statement is to have a rallying cry, a flag to wave to help advocate and promote for culture across the city. The statement has been supported by a range of organisation (see below). More work needs to be done to embed the spirit of the statement across partners & stakeholders.

There is some work being undertaken at the moment about the potential for Leicester to bid for City of Culture but there is nothing confirmed at this stage.

The Cultural Partnership Board sent several submissions to Leicester City Council as part of the Festivals & Events Review.

Dave’s Leicester Comedy Festival

- The longest running comedy festival in the UK managed by Big Difference Company (registered charity)
- Independent organisation with key strategic partners (including Leicester City Council, De Montfort University, BBC Radio Leicester, Harvey Ingram Shakespeare, Curve, De Montfort Hall, The Y, The Little Theatre, Leicester Mercury, East Midlands Trains, Reach Marketing)
- Over 525 events in 17 days in 2013; over 75,000 attend
- Nationwide coverage: OTV 342 million, AVE £1.15m
- Lots of local, community engagement in addition to national/international acclaim
- Contribution of over £2m each year to the local economy
- Commitment to the Make Me Happy community programme
- Regular funding from Leicester City Council of £18k; turnover of BDC last year £412k
- Regularly tours performances to Edinburgh & across Europe

Research/Evidence

One of the key strengths of Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival is the fairly basic data that exists on the impact of the annual event. There is clear evidence about the numbers of people/venues/performers who participate in the festival programme but there is also a broader assessment on the economic and social impact. This assessment is based on research carried out by De Montfort University, and funded by Leicester City Council & Leicester Shire Promotions. The full report is available on request.

This evidence can be used in a variety of ways, not least to try and secure support from commercial sponsors from across the UK. This was most recently completed when the festivals relationship with Dave started in 2011.

It is my personal view that there is a real lack in good quality research and evidence about the impact of culture in Leicester, especially given the relatively high investment from the city council. The benefit of a good evidence base would be varied, but would include:

- Demonstrating the contribution culture makes to the local economy
- Helping to attract additional investment, including commercial sponsorship
- Help shape future understanding of the role of culture

Any evidence and research which does exist, needs to be better shared and used as an advocacy tool across the sector.

Some very basic, initial evaluation could be produced and used as an advocacy document. This could be based on the work undertaken by Performing Arts Leicester; see below.

Promotion

"Having worked in the City for over 20 years, I find it an incredibly difficult one in terms of promotion to the local audience & communities. There are various theories in terms of why this might be the case; one of the most convincing being some link between the diversity of our communities and the diverse ways in which they receive information. How many times are we all told about events that have taken place in Leicester, which we knew very little about? There does seem to be a lack of joined upness, a lack of central media which can support the promotion of cultural activity in the City. I think it is also extremely difficult to engage the entire city, together, in any one central form of cultural activity or festival. Of course, people from different ethnicities attend all sorts of culturally specific events but there is a lack of activity which helps to celebrate the whole of Leicester, in all its many different forms. We probably see this at some sporting events; where people from different communities join together. I think we rarely see it at arts/heritage cultural events."

A joined up City

"Much has been made recently about campaigns to promote and join up Leicester. In particular there is the Story of Leicester programme and the Connecting Leicester proposals. Culture doesn't form part of these in any major way, and certainly it seems to me that the 3 venues which are subject to this scrutiny don't feature in any significant way. I have long thought there could be a theme to the Story of Leicester which highlights the arts/cultural

heritage of the city. The impact the Haymarket Theatre has on the City, the early days of the “old” Phoenix, the Princess Charlotte, Curve, The Little Theatre, The Musician venue and comedy festival – these are arguably all iconic Leicester based cultural brands and could form a useful addition to the Story of Leicester programme.”

Key Messages

The Scrutiny Commission is requested to take particular account of the following key messages as a summary of this submission.

1. The 3 venues are critical elements to the broader, city cultural offer and are part of the city’s cultural ecology. Their continued success must be viewed through a broader lens, which considers the entire offer in the city
2. The “great things” listed in this report should be celebrated, and form the basis of any research/evidence base built up over the next period
3. The “challenges” listed in this report must be considered urgently; if there is not a full understanding of these then the potential to take full advantage of opportunities will be lost
4. The commission should consider the influence of the Cultural Ambition Statement and how the 3 venues can support the realisation of the statement
5. How the comedy festival can act as a framework model for other festivals and events in the city and how they relate to the 3 venues
6. How the work of the 3 venues can help support a better joined up city
7. How the 3 venues, and the cultural sector as a whole, can support the work of The Story of Leicester and Connecting Leicester.

Supporters of Cultural Ambition Statement

- [Aakash Odedra Company](#)
- Adam Cooper
- [Akram Khan Company](#)
- [ArtReach](#)
- [Arts & Museum Service, Leicester City Council](#)
- [Arts Council England - East Midlands](#)
- [Athena](#)
- [Big Difference Company](#)
- [Chamwood Arts](#)
- [Citizen 598](#)
- Cultivate
- [Cultural Olympiad East Midlands](#)
- [Cultural Quarter Business Association](#)
- [Curve](#)
- [Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival](#)
- [De Montfort University](#)
- [Diversity Hub](#)
- [Embrace Arts](#)
- [Festivals & Events, Leicester City Council](#)
- [Highfields Centre](#)
- [Indian Summer Festival](#)
- Kevin Fegan
- Kully Thiarai
- [LCB Depot](#)
- [Leicester Cathedral](#)
- **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**
- [Leicester Civic Society](#)
- [Leicester Council of Faiths](#)
- [Leicester Fringe Festival](#)

- [Leicester Libraries](#)
- [Leicester Mercury](#)
- [Leicester Print Workshop](#)
- Leicester Theatre Trust
- [Leicestershire Business Voice](#)
- Lets Do Saturdays
- [Manic Music Productions](#)
- [Mantle Arts](#)
- [Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham](#)
- [New Art Club](#)
- [New Walk Museum & Art Gallery](#)
- North West Leicestershire Children's Centres
- Paul Kerryson
- [Pedestrian](#)
- [Peepul Centre](#)
- Performing Arts Leicester
- [Phizzical](#)
- [QUAD, Derby](#)
- [Ramada Encore](#)
- [Refugee Action](#)
- [Ruth Singer Studio](#)
- [Shauna Richardson](#)
- [Sir Peter Soulsby](#)
- [Soft Touch Arts](#)
- [Spark Festival](#)
- Sports Partnership Trust
- [Summer Sundaes Weekender](#)
- The Exchange
- Tim Supple
- [University of Leicester](#)
- University of Leicester Archaeological Service
- [Vista, The Royal Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Society for the Blind](#)

Performing Arts Leicester – Impact study

November 2010

Contents

1. Headline figures and comments
2. Methodological notes, detailed figures
3. Background text for each organisation

Research completed by Richard Fletcher and Christopher Maughan, De Montfort University, Arts and Festivals Management. rfletcher2@dmu.ac.uk / ccm@dmu.ac.uk



1. Headline figures and comments

We will refer to PAL as though it were a single organisation, though it is clearly made up of a range of organisations with very different characteristics. The full detail of our findings is in section 2, though we feel that these headlines represent a summary of the most interesting points.

FUNDING

- PAL is 58% self-funding, through tickets, donations and concessions.
- The rest is contributed by Central government (24%) and Leicester City Council (16%)
- 6 of the organisations generate the greatest proportion of their income through self-funding.
- 3 of the organisations manage with less than £4 subsidy per head (from LCC+CG)

JOBS

- PAL directly sustains 164 FTE jobs
- The indirect impact of PAL sustains a further 213 FTE jobs
- This is a total of 377 FTE jobs

SPEND

- PAL spends £4.3m with local suppliers.
- The PAL audience spends £17m outside of PAL venues and shows; on transport, dining out, hotels and other ancillary shopping.

ATTENDANCE

- PAL attracts an audience of 602k (to shows in Leicestershire). We estimate that this is made up from:
 - 439k local day visitors, who live within a short journey of the venue (Leicestershire)
 - 102k non-local day visitors, who live a long distance from the venue (Nottingham, Derby, Coventry etc)
 - 60k non-local overnight visitors who stay in Leicester for the show/festival (UK wide and international)
- PAL tours to an audience of 23k (to shows outside of Leicestershire)

VOLUNTEERS

- Volunteer staff and board members contribute 26,000 hours of time to PAL
- We estimate this has a value of £161k
- 26,000 hours is roughly the yearly equivalent of 16 FTE UK staff. (OECD, 2004)

2. Methodological notes

The organisations involved:

- 2 funky arts
- Curve
- Foot in hand
- Metro boulot dodo
- Centre stage
- Big difference company
- Phizzical productions
- The Y theatre
- De Montfort hall
- The spark
- Embrace arts
- Centre for Indian classical dance

From each organisation we have gathered the following data:

- Total expenditure
- Full time equivalent staff employed
- How much time is given by volunteers / board members
- How many visitors to shows / venues in Leicestershire
- How many visitors to touring shows / venues outside of Leicestershire
- What % of all visitors are day / overnight visitors?
- How much funding is received from:
 - o Leicester city council (project and revenue)
 - o Central government (project and revenue)
 - o Generated in house (tickets, concessions, rental, sponsorship, donation)
 - o In kind support (generally building lease)

Using this data, we were able to generate a total figure for PAL, which we compiled to produce the following headlines for PAL as a whole. These figures go on to provide the basis for further analysis and estimation. All figures are annual, unless noted otherwise.

Many thanks to all the organisations for contributing this data on a short timescale.

PAL total

	As #	As %
Spend		
Total expenditure	£14,340,143	-
Full time equivalent staff employed	164	-
Volunteers		
Hours contributed by voluntary staff	23,638	-
Hours contributed by voluntary board members	2,394	-
Attendance		
Visitors to shows in Leicestershire	602,470	-
Visitors to shows outside of Leicestershire	23,204	-
Tourism		
Visitors who are local day visitors	439,803	73
Visitors who are non-local day visitors	102,420	17
Visitors who are non-local overnight visitors	60,247	10
Funding		
Funding received from Leicester city council	£2,192,000	16
Funding received from Central government	£3,284,812	24
Funding generated in house	£7,829,298	58
Funding received as in-kind support	£185,000	1

Analysis and estimates used:

1. Spend with local suppliers is 30% of total expenditure.
2. Local day visitors spend £10 outside of the venue/show
3. Non-local day visitors spend £50 outside of the venue/show
4. Non-local overnight visitors spend £125 outside of the venue/show
5. £100,000 of turnover sustains one FTE job outside of the organisation
6. 1 hour of voluntary staff time is valued at £5.80 : minimum wage
7. 1 hour of voluntary board staff time is valued at £10

Notes on the above

Many of the estimates are very rough, and reflect the length and depth of this particular project. There may be some double counting of visitors when considering festivals and venues. Overall we think the final results are realistic, though not ruthlessly accurate. We have used other existing research as a starting point, as well as our own background in researching many of the festivals and events in Leicester. Finally, the initial enquiry only asked the organisations to provide % of day/overnight visitors, though it was felt by the researchers (and some organisations) that a third category was required for non-local day visitors. We have estimated a figure here to better represent this; however this information was not directly provided by the organisations. The % share among the three groups was estimated using the median result from the organisations as a starting point.

PAL impact

	As #	As %
Direct		
Spend with local suppliers	£4,302,043	-
Indirect		
Spend of local day visitors	£4,398,031	-
Spend of non-local day visitors	£5,120,995	-
Spend of non-local overnight visitors	£7,530,875	-
Total economic impact is	£21,351,944	-

Jobs	
Directly sustains	164 FTE jobs
Indirectly sustains	213 FTE jobs

Volunteers	
Volunteer hours contributed	26,032
Volunteer hours : estimated value	£161,040

3. Background on each organisation

Curve

Curve, run by Leicester Theatre Trust, is Leicester's state-of-the-art theatre designed by Rafael Vinoly.

'one of the most advanced stages in the country' The Stage

'Curve is a huge boost for culture in the Midlands' Dominic Cavendish, Daily Telegraph

'It appears that not much can stop the rise and rise of this brilliant and vital new theatre' Rutland and Market Harborough Living magazine, June 2010

2funkyarts

2 Funky Arts develop, design and deliver a range of creative projects both locally and regionally, as well as providing high quality creative learning programmes for young people.

"2Funky have always pioneered new work in the East Midlands - their ability to change with technology and the times is a true testament of their commitment to young people in the East Midlands." Ammo Talwar MBE (Director, Punch Records).

Foot In Hand

Foot in Hand is an organisation based around creative contemporary dance and its related artforms, which employs and delivers to a wide range of people. It is driven by the vision and values of its Creative Director dancer-choreographer, Louise Katerega, who has dedicated over a decade to working independently in and for the East Midlands region. The company has been a nurturing and developing a company of 9 disabled and non-disabled professional dancers aged mid-20s to mid 60s of varying ethnicity. In 2006 the company made history as the first integrated company of disabled and non-disabled dancers to reach the semi-final of the Place Prize, contemporary dance's equivalent of the Turner or Booker Prize.

Metro Boulot Dodo

Metro-Boulot-Dodo (MBD) is a Leicester based organisation that consists of three talented artists who collaborate to create innovative cross art form performances. Since 1997 MBD has produced a strong catalogue of arts projects and a reputation for consistently creating work that combines high production values with innovative and contemporary presentation.

"METRO-BOULOT-DODO is one of the brightest of the new crop of theatre companies disregarding theatrical convention" The Guardian

Centre Stage

Centre Stage is the Rural and Community Touring Scheme for Leicestershire and Rutland bringing opportunities for professional live touring to village and community venues throughout the two counties.

Touring companies and performers with regional, national and international profiles who specialise in work for small spaces tour to venues across Leicestershire and Rutland offering a fantastic night out on your doorstep. These tours include a wide range of theatre, music, opera, dance, storytelling and poetry, children's theatre, puppetry and comedy theatre, with members of the local community hosting the event. When possible, and appropriate, allied participatory workshops are offered and these are placed in the local community.

Big Difference Company

Big Difference Company runs Leicester Comedy Festival which is now approaching its 18th year. It also manages a whole range of projects linked to comedy and arts & health.

"One of the best comedy festivals in the world" The Guardian

"The increasingly influential Leicester Comedy Festival" The Independent

"A veritable smorgasbord of mirth and merriment" Attitude

Phizzical

Phizzical is a touring dance and theatre company dedicated to tackling important and risqué issues in colourful, entertaining and exciting theatrical experiences. Phizzical has played a leading role in developing youth voice in British Asian theatre and has been responsible for a number of acclaimed productions, and free learning and participatory initiatives that have made a significant impact on the number of young people working in performing arts. The company is led by Samir Bhamra and finds inspiration from popular Indian cinema, world renowned as Bollywood.

The Spark Childrens Art Festival

The Spark Children's Arts Festival is a 2 week festival of performing and visual arts for children taking place in May and June each year in Leicester and Leicestershire.

"For many of our pupils it was their first experience of being 'an audience'. They have had a fantastic time and are fizzing over with excitement at what they have seen. I couldn't have wished for a better introduction for them!!" Teacher at Alderman Richard Hallam school on Penguin

"I have been compelled to write a letter of enormous thanks for some truly brilliant events you have hosted during this festival. The range of venues and pricing reflects access to all sorts of people living in all areas of Leicester." Parent by post

Embrace Arts

Embrace Arts is the University of Leicester's arts centre housed in a stunning award winning building named as one of the top 50 landmark designs in the East Midlands attracting over 25,000 visitors a year. With Lord Richard Attenborough as its Champion, Embrace Arts is recognised as a leading centre for its ground breaking work on arts and disability with a commitment to increasing access and connecting disabled artists into the mainstream. Working with a whole range of both local and national partners the centre is developing projects and networks that will place Leicester at the centre of thinking and research on disability arts.

Centre for Indian Classical Dance

CICD is one of the leading South Asian dance organisations in the UK. Its pioneering development over the last 25 years in Leicester has helped to put South Asian dance on the British cultural map. The Centre for Indian Classical Dance (CICD) was established in Leicester in 1981 and was awarded charitable status in 1997.

The Y

The Y is a bustling live performance venue based in Leicester city centre. Our eclectic programme includes music, comedy, theatre, dance and spoken word. The 300 seat theatre also comfortably hosts candle-lit cabaret style events and standing gigs. Built in 1900, The Y is the oldest surviving theatre in Leicester. The Y offers a diverse range of courses, classes and workshops that give people an opportunity to learn a new skill, follow a lifelong ambition or just try something fun. We are passionate about having the best people for the job; our tutors bring creativity to their teaching as well as being effective group facilitators.

De Montfort Hall

De Montfort Hall is Leicester's largest entertainment venue and has been serving the city with quality live acts since 1913. The venue is run by Leicester City Council and is particularly proud of their classical season which is headed by the renowned Philharmonia Orchestra who have been resident since 1997. The Hall is also proud to host two award winning outdoor summer festivals - The Big Session Festival in June and Summer Sundae Weekender in August. It has a formidable reputation for legendary appearances by major acts from Sinatra/Ellington, through to Clash/Jam, Duran/Spandau and the Roses/Manics.