

Sustainable Development Select Committee		
Title	Broadway Theatre Update	
Contributor	Executive Director for Community Services	Item 4
Class	Part 1 (open)	18 January 2018

1. Background

1.1 The Broadway Theatre is a Grade II listed art deco venue with two auditoria in the heart of Catford. The theatre is central to the regeneration of Catford and as such is the subject of a cross directorate development project. In November 2016 the final report to Full Council from the Broadway Theatre Working Group identified the following principles for the development project:

- Respect the art deco building and retain its historic charm whilst enabling the venue to meet expectations of artists and audiences.
- Improve access for disabled people.
- Ensure that the Theatre remains rooted in its local community and can respond to local audiences and users.
- Provide a cultural destination in the heart of a regenerated Catford Town Centre.
- Develop the bar and café offer to increase earned income and provide a safe, high quality, social venue.
- Enable a flexible main auditorium space with retractable seating that can accommodate a mixed programme of live performance, community events and films.
- Retain the studio theatre with a focus on theatre productions including youth theatre events.
- Support additional income streams through bringing into use under-utilised spaces in the building and exploring the potential for additional use of Town Hall Chambers.

These principles continue to guide the Broadway Theatre Development and this report seeks to provide an update on progress as well as information about the Theatre's programming policy.

2. Programme - ACT

2.1 The Broadway Theatre Operations Manager Carmel O'Connor will be attending to give a presentation on the current programme and plans for programme development. The Broadway Theatre has two auditoria, the main house seating 800 and the studio seating 120. ACT; Artistic, Community and Commercial Theatre is the Broadway's Programming Policy.

2.2 ACT 1 – Artistic Programme

- Encourage, nurture and support new and existing theatre groups, artists and musicians by building on the theatre's Associate Artist Programme
- Forge strong links with other venues with established artistic profile to encourage artistic partnerships and raise the profile of the venue
- Bring in additional funding for ACT 1 through external funding and cross subsidy from earned income
- Support a subsidised programme of events of artistic merit in the Main Theatre and a programme of high quality fringe theatre in the Studio
- One festival each year with a focus on performance, music, dance and the written and spoken word

2.3 ACT 2 – Community Programme

- Ensuring that the venue continues to be used for community events in both the main house and studio
- A series of large scale 'Takeover Days' where the entire venue will be opened up to the community to participate in activities ranging from dance workshops to theatrical make up, live performance and backstage tours
- Using two newly created spaces in the theatre basement for a programme of smaller scale regular community activity
- Using the café and bar spaces as part of the community offer

2.4 ACT 3 – Commercial Programme

- Continue to develop new relationships with commercial promoters producing high quality music, original artist shows and tribute nights
- Build on existing relationships with dance schools and commercial hirer's.
- Offer incentive to commercial Black Theatre Companies who strive to produce theatre with high production values
- Develop a programme of club nights – New 3am license
- Return of full scale Panto for 2018
- Build on film/TV hires

3. Three Year Plan

3.1 Over the past 12 months the following has been achieved in relation to the Broadway Theatre Development Project:

- PIDs developed and approved enabling £1.22m council capital funding to be earmarked.
- Cross Directorate Officer working group established to oversee the project
- A detailed minor works programme developed and costed.
- Café/Bar area given on licence to Little Nan's
- Conservation Management plan commissioned, workshops with internal and external cultural stakeholders undertaken

The next three years will be a transition period for the Broadway Theatre. Lewisham council will be working to achieve the following:

- Safeguard the future of the theatre at the heart of a regenerated Catford.
- Broaden community participation and involvement in the venue.
- Develop the artistic programme including the development of the associate artist programme.
- Improve the bar and catering offer and a review of ancillary income generation.
- Complete a programme of minor works to improve the operational efficiency of the venue.
- Raise external funds to enable repairs to the historic fabric of the building.
- Consider options for reconnecting the theatre to Town Hall Chambers to offer increased earned income potential.

3.2 The ambition is that at the end of the three years the venue will be in a stronger position for the council to explore new management options for the longer term.

4. Funding

4.1 The Broadway Theatre is directly operated by Lewisham Council. The council covers the building running costs such as utilities, cleaning, repairs and maintenance and the salaries of the two permanent members of staff. All other costs such as front of house staff, technical crew, marketing, box office, programming costs etc. have to be covered by hire fees and box office income. There is no programming budget. Building related costs are paid for from corporate property budgets with the staffing and other operating costs within a dedicated Community Services theatre budget. The dedicated theatre budget has been reduced by 72% since 2013/14. In 2013/14 earned income was 59% of turnover, last year it was 88%. In the first full year of the Theatre's reduced staffing structure they made a surplus of £65k (partly due to the high revenue from the BBC filming). Unfortunately it was not possible to carry this surplus forward to support programme development due to the overall financial position of the council.

4.2 The programme is also limited by the availability of the permanent staff members to act as Duty Managers. In order to be able to undertake some of the programme development ideas listed above, funding would be required for an additional Duty Manager and a programming budget that could be used to offset the risk of new programmes along with additional marketing support. It is proposed to bid for Grants for the Arts funding from the Arts Council to provide audience development and participatory programme support. It is anticipated that audiences would be developed over the three year period to enable new areas of the programme to sustain themselves. An additional 21 hour per week Duty Manager has been appointed on the basis of the current earned income profile of the theatre i.e. we need to continue to generate enough income to pay this additional salary.

4.3 It was also anticipated that the new partnership with Little Nan's would bring additional income to the theatre. Unfortunately to date the partnership has had a negative impact on the theatre budget as additional staff are needed to manage transfer of alcohol between the separate licenced premises and to facilitate studio

audiences entering via the main doors as Little Nan's can no longer be used as a foyer. The theatre has also lost the income from that bar. However, income expected to be achieved from the leasing of Little Nan's bar over the agreed licence period could be used to help support the programme development activities.

5. Summary of Actions

5.1 There are some fundamental issues that will continue to impact on the theatre programme for the next few years. The availability of revenue funding and the day to day operational disruption of the necessary minor works programme. However, in 3-5 years time the venue should be in a much stronger position to look at alternative management models. In the meantime staff involved in the operational management of the theatre and those with responsibility for the building and regeneration meet regularly through the Broadway Theatre officers group sharing expertise and working to common goals.

5.2 Short term actions

- Additional Duty Manager to commence work in Jan 2018
- Grants for the Arts bid submitted by end of March 2018 (awaiting outcome of Borough of Culture bid before submission)
- Associate Artists for Studio Theatre selection by Summer 2018
- Panto contract signed Feb 2018.
- Proactive promotion of the venue to music and dance promoters commences from Dec 2017
- Income from Little Nan's to support programming.
- Conservation Management Plan completed by March 2018.
- Listed building consent application submitted for first phase of minor works.
- Stage 1 HLF bid submitted

5.3 Medium term actions

- Review all ancillary income generation potential for the venue to inform venue redevelopment.
- Consider the business case for linking the Theatre back to Town Hall Chambers and using income generated to provide a sustainable future for the venue.
- Continue programme development as outlined above
- Submit full Heritage Lottery application.
- Produce an options appraisal on future management options

6. Conclusion

Clear goals for the development of the Broadway Theatre have been established and officers across the council are working well together to achieve them.

7. Background Papers and Author

Report Author – Liz Dart, Head of Culture and Community Development

Background Reports – final report of Broadway Theatre Working Party to full council on 23 November 2016