

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member Lifelong Learning and Culture
2.	Date:	6th December 2011
3.	Title:	Use of Civic Theatre
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The Theatre & Arts Service and Members are receiving an increasing number of applications for free use of the Civic Theatre. It is therefore proposed to introduce an application process to manage this situation and provide an open and fair system within a set budget

This would facilitate the support of local groups and charities who may otherwise find the full cost prohibitive.

6. Recommendations

That a fund of £5,000 is agreed to provide no more than 4 free uses of the Civic Theatre to local groups and charities based within Rotherham, covering both theatre hire and staffing costs.

That Cabinet Member approves the process detailed within this report for applications.

7. Proposals and Details

Currently the Theatres Service agrees concessionary use of the Civic Theatre, where appropriate, based on criteria which apply across Cultural Services. This process can agree reductions in charges of up to 35%. However, in addition, Members and officers receive a number of applications each year from local groups and charities for “free” use. Where this has been granted in the past it has tended to cover free hire of the Theatre, but exclude some staff costs.

To ensure that the process is fair and transparent, it is proposed that decisions are referred to Cabinet Member based on a formal application process. A draft application form is attached as Appendix A. Officers would comment on the technical and professional qualities of the application. Applications would then be brought to appropriate Delegated Powers meetings. Bearing in mind the numbers of requests in recent years, it is proposed that the number agreed is initially limited to no more than 4 in a financial year.

It is proposed that an initial allocation of £5,000 is made to cover the associated costs.

8. Finance

The suggested contribution of £5,000 is based on income lost to the Civic Theatre in the last financial year as a result of free use.

The funding allocation would be sourced within the Planning, Regeneration & Culture overall budget.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

It is likely that the fund would be over-subscribed.

The assessment process needs to be clear and unambiguous. It is proposed that this is based on the “Funding Arts in Rotherham” criteria as this is familiar to arts groups.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

This supports the following corporate outcomes:

More people come to the town centre for work, shopping and for things to do and see (08)

People enjoy parks, green spaces, sports, leisure and cultural activities (23)

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- N/A

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