

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report To: Executive – 14 January 2009
Subject: Manchester International Festival 2009
Report of: The Chief Executive

Summary

This report sets out the emerging plans and proposals for the Manchester International Festival in July 2009 and organisational arrangements which seek to maximise the involvement of local people.

Significant progress in securing private sponsorship in line with targets established prior to the economic downturn is reported along with proposals to address the remaining funding shortfall with a contingency.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- 1) Note the significant progress to date in confirming 6 top tier official sponsors for the Festival in July 2009.
 - 2) Request the Chief Executive and MIF team continue to address the current funding gap through engagement with mid-range sponsors.
 - 3) Agree that the scope and scale of the programme planned for 2009 which includes innovative and large scale events that will engage and give greater access to local people be supported.
 - 4) Approve the inclusion of provision of £700,000 additional funding from the 08/09 and draft 09/10 budgets which will be considered next month – up to £500,000 to be used by MIF as contingency funding in the event of a sponsorship shortfall and £200,000 towards additional overheads costs incurred by MCC in supporting MIF.
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Wards Affected:

All

Community Strategy Spine	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
Performance of the economy of the region and sub region	The Manchester International Festival drives economic development by substantially raising the profile of Manchester, draws in tourism and attracts inward investment by positioning the City as an international centre for culture. The Festival achieved an economic impact value of £28.8m in 2007.
Reaching full potential in education and employment	Significant opportunities to increase work with schools, FE and HE institutions, create new jobs and recruit volunteers. Over 180 schools took part in MIF in 2007, 38 jobs were created and 294 volunteers recruited, of whom 150 received training.
Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect	An objective of the Festival is to play an important role in increasing community cohesion through facilitating community participation.
Neighbourhoods of Choice	New cultural opportunities and a wider cultural choice for Manchester residents, in particular opportunities to experience and participate in such events, improves the quality of life for people who live, work and study in the City.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

There is an annual provision of £1m contribution to the Festival in the Council's revenue budget and additional provision of £700,000 will be met from across the current years budget and the 09/10 draft budget strategy to be considered by the Executive next month.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no implications for the capital budget.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

MIF 2009 Press Releases – 9 October 2008
The Ascent of Manchester – Independent Evaluation of the first Manchester International Festival – Morris Hargreaves McIntyre

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Manchester International Festival, the world's first festival of original, new work was launched in 2007, to take place biennially, as an artist-led, commissioning festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture.
- 1.2 The Festival significantly enhanced Manchester's reputation as a leading cultural city, renowned for the successful delivery of major large scale events. The inaugural Festival was acclaimed across the UK and internationally, winning a host of awards (including 2 MEN Awards, a South Bank Centre Award Nomination and Best Music Show for Young People from the European Youth Music Organisation (for Feedback as part of The Great Indoors)), most recently acknowledged by England's Northwest Tourism Awards as the Tourism Event of the Year. It attracted over 200,000 visitors with an estimated economic impact of £28m.
- 1.3 Among the 25 world premieres in the 2007 Festival were 'Monkey: Journey to the West', a new opera directed by Chen Shi-Zheng, composed by Damon Albarn and designed by Jamie Hewlett. Performed in Mandarin, 'Monkey' has subsequently played in Paris (30 sold out performances), London – Royal Opera House (7 sold out performances) and has recently performed for 6 weeks at a specially constructed Monkey Palace at the O2 Arena in London.
- 1.4 A group show 'Il Tempo del Postino' by 15 of the world's leading contemporary artists such as Matthew Barney and Olafur Eliasson played to critical acclaim. As well as new theatre productions (eg The Pianist), site specific work 'Interiors' with Johnny Vegas, there were debates, food events and inventions and an international music series featuring Lou Reed, Kanye West, P J Harvey and Happy Mondays.

2.0 Context for MIF 2009

- 2.1 The aims of the 2009 Festival are to consolidate its position as the leading Festival of original new work, created by a wide range of major international artists. This includes sustaining relationships with some key artists across a number of festivals and working with leading cultural organisations locally, nationally and internationally.
- 2.2 Alex Poots, the Festival Director, and his team aim to create an ambitious, risk taking festival that animates the city centre, attracts a broad audience from across the region, nationally and internationally, which will gain significant media coverage, continuing to build Manchester's reputation.
- 2.3 One of the conclusions of the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre evaluation following the 2007 festival, was that if anything was missing it was the absence of a large, free spectacular celebratory event that would have attracted a diverse cross section of local people and this will be a key objective of the 2009 Festival.
- 2.4 A further lesson from the inaugural festival concerned the ticketing arrangements which were felt to be inflexible and slow. Following a procurement process, MIF

has appointed Quaytickets (The Lowry's ticket agency) as the ticketing partner for the '09 Festival. Working with Quaytickets will allow the Festival to operate a system where there will no booking charges for Festival tickets.

- 2.5 Whilst the festival pavilion, located in 2007 outside Manchester Central was enjoyed by many, it was also felt to be too peripheral and plans to locate the pavilion in Albert Square for this year's festival will address this. The Festival also plans to add a second performance space to the pavilion it used in 2007 and ensure that there is an extensive programme of music, talks and other events in Albert Square so that a vibrant hub of activity is created at the heart of the Festival and the city.

3.0 Involving Local People

- 3.1 An important objective of the Festival is to build the creative potential of Manchester's different communities through a series of innovative, high quality community based commissions and creative development programmes.
- 3.2 The Festival is launching a major new creative learning programme for 2009 – MIF Creative – which will provide opportunities for local people to engage with the Festival and work alongside high profile artists and develop their creative skills. This programme begins with a new trainee producers scheme which has just been launched and will provide paid opportunities for 5 Manchester-based producers to join the Festival team and develop their producing skills. MIF Creative will continue with a series of community commissions which will provide opportunities for different community groups across Manchester to work alongside major international artists to develop new projects for the 2009 Festival. The largest of these projects will be a community procession created by Turner prize winning artist, Jeremy Deller and which will be one of the opening events of the 2009 Festival. Mindful of this project, MCC officers are working closely with the Festival to ensure that MCC's plans for a Manchester Day Parade dovetail effectively with the Festival's procession and that lessons learnt from the Festival's experience are fed into the planning process for the Manchester Day Parade.
- 3.3 It is important that the Festival maximises the opportunities for Manchester residents to attend events and this will be done through a programme of free events, discount tickets and audience access programmes. In 2009, this will include a new community box office initiative delivered in partnership with Arts About Manchester. This will provide heavily discounted tickets for all festival performances targeted at people across Manchester who have limited access to arts events.
- 3.4 Running throughout the Festival will be a series of major free events. This will include The Great Indoors – which attracted in excess of 10,000 people in 2007 - which will take place in the Town Hall over a period of 5 days and in 2009 will include a special schools programme.
- 3.5 In 2007 some 300 local people were involved as volunteers with the Festival, helping to welcome artists and the public to the City and the Festival. MIF plans to build on these volunteering opportunities in 2009.

4.0 Festival Programme 2009

4.1 The Festival will run from Thursday 2nd July to Sunday 19th July.

4.2 The complete festival programme will not be released until March 2009. However the first three shows have been announced. These are:-

(i) Prima Donna

This is Rufus Wainwright's debut opera which is a portrait of a fading opera singer, set in Paris and sung in French.

Prima Donna is produced in partnership with Opera North with five performances at the Palace Theatre.

(ii) Everybody Loves a Winner

Created by Director Neil Bartlett with Struan Leslie and Simon Deacon, this is a new theatrical experience co-commissioned with the Royal Exchange which focuses upon a very British institution – Bingo.

The Royal Exchange will become a bingo hall with added music and dancing and the audience will become cast members with the possibility of a chance to win.

(iii) J S Bach / Zaha Hadid Architects

Zaha Hadid Architects will visually and acoustically transform one of the exhibition spaces in Manchester Art Gallery into an intimate chamber music hall in which to hear the solo works of J S Bach.

4.3 The three shows outlined above went on sale in October 2008. Initial ticket sales have been extremely encouraging with sales up on the comparable period prior to the 2007 Festival. 55% of bookers to date are from Manchester and the Northwest, 35% are UK bookers from outside the Northwest and 10% are international bookers (including Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA).

4.4 Regular communications meetings between the MIF management team and an MCC Officer Group chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive (Neighbourhood Strategy and Delivery) are taking place and a number of specific functional sub-groups have been established to ensure that adequate planning and support is provided to the festival.

5.0 Sponsorship

5.1 At the time of writing this report the Festival have confirmed 6 top tier Official Sponsors for this years Festival, compared with 7 in 2007. The Festival Team is in active discussions with several potential top tier private companies and are

hopeful that at least one additional sponsor will be confirmed for the 2009 Festival. This is a very impressive performance given the inherent difficulties in attracting major sponsorship during these difficult times, and underlines the strength and quality of the international product which is being developed.

- 5.2 While the Festival will continue to attract one of the highest levels of private sponsorship for an event of its kind in the UK, and has successfully attracted new public sector partners such as NESTA and AGMA, a gap currently exists between the target set for sponsorship and what has been delivered to date. This applies particularly to the mid-range of sponsors who while still supporting the Festival in significant numbers, are not generating the level of support which was anticipated when the funding strategy was conceived earlier this year. This is directly attributable to the economic downturn and other competing claims for scarcer private resources.
- 5.3 Officers and the Festival Team have considered changing the programme to reflect this emerging position, and in particular reducing the programme of free events for local people which, while a very positive development on the 2007 Festival, could be seen as an ambitious strategy for additional private funding given the changed economic circumstances. Their view is that such changes should be resisted. Local participation is rightly regarded as a fundamental requirement by the Festival Team, has been identified as an important performance indicator and a necessary platform for the continued development of a world class Festival going forward.
- 5.4 In the context of the overall projected £9.6M costs of the 2009 Festival, the current sponsorship shortfall of £500,000 represents, in the current economic climate, an excellent achievement to date and there are still opportunities to secure additional sponsorship which will be explored vigorously. The Council believes that it would be prudent at this stage however to make provision for a contingency of £500,000 which will allow the Festival team to move forward with the proposed programme whilst continuing to seek the remaining sponsorship. Additional expenditure by MCC of £200,000 has also been identified by officers to meet activity to support the event, including city dressing, banners and additional cleansing costs.
- 5.5 Appropriate provision can be made from the current years budget and by inclusion in the draft budget strategy to be considered by the Executive next month.

6.0 Summary

- 6.1 Commissions and plans for the Festival are well in hand. The second Festival promises to be as ambitious, ground breaking and original as the first. The collaboration between the City Council and the Festival has been built on the experiences and lessons from the inaugural Festival and is working well. Involving local cultural organisations and providing an innovative range of opportunities to engage with Manchester's different communities are part of the Festival's core aims for 2009.

- 6.2 Significant progress has been made in securing private sponsorship and additional public sector partners given the current economic difficulties, nevertheless there remains a shortfall in funding support which could partially impact on the programme for local participation. Changes to the scope and scale of this element of the Festival are not recommended and additional funding support is proposed.
- 6.3 Further briefings for Members will be provided in the coming months, particularly as the Festival programme is launched in March 2009.
- 6.4 Recommendations appear at the front of this report.

7.0 Contributing to the Community Strategy

(a) Performance of the economy of the region and sub region

The Manchester International Festival drives economic development by substantially raising the profile of Manchester, draws in tourism and attracts inward investment by positioning the City as an international centre for culture. The Festival achieved an economic impact value of £28.8m in 2007.

(b) Reaching full potential in education and employment

Significant opportunities to increase work with schools, FE and HE institutions, create new jobs and recruit volunteers. Over 180 schools took part in MIF in 2007, 38 jobs were created and 294 volunteers recruited, of whom 150 received training.

(c) Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect

An objective of the Festival is to play an important role in increasing community cohesion through facilitating community participation.

(d) Neighbourhoods of Choice

New cultural opportunities and a wider cultural choice for Manchester residents, in particular opportunities to experience and participate in such events, improves the quality of life for people who live, work and study in the City.

8.0 Key Polices and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

The Festival aims to provide a range of opportunities for participation by local people, MIF Creative for example and large scale family focussed spectacular events. Free and discounted ticketing and audience access programmes will be important to ensure people across the City who have limited access to arts events are able to attend.

(b) Risk Management

The attraction of further sponsors, in particular mid-range sponsors will be an important and key activity for the Festival Team and Officers over coming months. The approval of additional funding support from the City Council manages the risks associated with not meeting the funding targets that were established prior to the economic downturn. There are a full range of performance indicators in place against which risks will be managed.

(c) Legal Considerations

No issues at the current time.