

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
REPORT FOR RESOLUTION

COMMITTEE: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 13TH FEBRUARY 2008

SUBJECT: MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL 2007 -
EVALUATION

REPORT OF: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To report to Members on the full evaluation results of the 2007 Manchester International Festival and to introduce plans and progress on Business Planning for the 2009 Festival, including the launch of the Manchester Open.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:-

1. Welcome the findings of the evaluation study 'The Ascent of Man' undertaken for the Festival by Morris Hargreaves and McIntyre and Arts about Manchester which confirms that this first event was an outstanding success both for the city, the Festival and all those partners and stakeholders associated with it.
2. Confirm the commitment to support the International Festival 2009, to be held from 2nd July to 19th July 2009, and endorse the proposals to build on the lessons learnt from the first Festival.
3. Ask the Chief Executive to report on the budget and business plans for the 2009 International festival within the next six months as funding commitments become clearer.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE REVENUE BUDGET

The three year financial plan 2007 – 2010 already includes provision of £1m pa as the Council contribution to an ongoing Festival.

FINANCIAL CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CAPITAL BUDGET

None.

CONTACT OFFICERS

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IMPLICATIONS FOR:

Anti-Poverty

Equal Opportunities

Environment

Employment

Yes

Yes

Yes

Yes

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Executive Committee report dated 12th September 2007.

'The Ascent of Manchester' independent evaluation of the first Manchester International Festival 28 June – 15 July 2007 by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts About Manchester available from Cultural Strategy Team, Room 9023, or the Press Office.

WARDS AFFECTED

All.

INTRODUCTION

1. Members will recall that a report to this Committee in September 2007 outlined the initial findings of an evaluation study into Festival 07, indicating a substantial success in reaching visitor number and financial targets. Additionally, early indicators were that the Festival had been a huge media and critical cultural success. A full evaluation study, 'The Ascent of Manchester', has now been completed undertaken for the Festival by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre and Arts about Manchester. This report outlines the key findings of that evaluation and introduces some new initiatives for the 2009 Festival building on the experience of the 2007 Festival. The Festival Board has now confirmed dates for the next festival as Thursday 2nd to Sunday 19th July 2009.

2. The headline findings of the report noted that the 2007 Festival had:-
 - Created 25 world premieres, against a target of 10, with a total of 105 different activities in 25 venues
 - Attracted an audience of more than 200,000 people against a first year target of 160,000
 - Secured the greatest amount of sponsorship ever raised by a UK arts festival, achieved a £9 million turnover and achieved a break even position (after additional funding from the City Council of £250K)
 - Collaborated with 87 Manchester and Salford arts and community organisations
 - Generated an economic impact to the value of £28.8 million, against a target of £19.1 million
 - Attracted audiences not generally well represented amongst conventional arts attendees in Manchester, and encouraged people to take risks with their choices
 - Recruited a task force of almost 300 volunteers who between them donated more than £200,000 worth of work hours to the Festival
 - Produced three events with international co-commissioning partners and five events with local and national co-commissioning partners.

The Executive agreed in September 2007 to commit support for a further Festival in 2009 subject to the formal evaluation report being presented.

DETAILED EVALUATION 2007 FESTIVAL

3. The evaluation set out to report on the elements of the 2007 Festival against its four main aims, 16 objectives and 14 specific targets. It was based on a survey of bookers (via Ticketmaster and Palace and Opera House), a

telephone survey of 1,556 people in Greater Manchester, an internal audit, stakeholder interviews and e—surveys of stakeholders and volunteers. It is important to note that data is based on paid ticket sales, largely with Ticketmaster and does not include data from attenders at free or unticketed events.

The Festival had four overall aims and the evaluation report recognised significant achievements over all four aims:-

4. **AIM 1**

‘To create an international, ambitious and extraordinary festival, dedicated to commissioning new work from across the spectrum of creativity and human endeavour.’

Overall the Festival overachieved in the delivery of the artistic programme with 31 premieres against a target of 10 and 105 different activities in 25 venues against a target of 50 events in 5 locations. There were 4 international co-productions against 3 targeted, these being ‘Monkey-Journey to the West’; ‘Il Tempo del Postino’; ‘Feedback’ and ‘For all the Wrong Reasons’. All four have subsequently transferred internationally. There were several national and local co-productions and a highly successful free weekend, The Great Indoors attracted 10,000 people. In addition, the Festival collaborated with 87 Manchester and Salford arts and community organisations.

‘I think that the diversity of the various events made for an interesting and culturally vibrant festival. It offered lots of choice, something for everyone, not too biased toward one area.’

Festival attender

5. **AIM 2**

‘To help secure Manchester’s reputation as a world class cultural city, celebrating its pivotal role in music, the arts, science, culture and innovation.’

The Festival attracted Press coverage to the value of over £12 million. It drew press attention regionally, nationally and internationally. There was an estimated 12 hours of coverage on BBC National Networks as well as an estimated 288 articles in the national printed media, 241 articles across regional publications and 302 across international, online, trade and consumer publications. There were 7 features in national supplements, including 2 supplements exclusively dedicated to the Festival (The Guardian, 36 pages and MEN, 8 pages), and the Festival recorded coverage on 78 websites.

The Press confirmed that the Festival had achieved its vision.

‘Manchester is the beating cultural heart of Britain.’

Miranda Sawyer, The Observer July 2007

'Manchester manages a mix of business brio and pleasant public spaces. Against that backdrop the festival makes perfect sense, crystallising 'The Ascent of Manchester'

An independent evaluation of the first Manchester International Festival: 28 June – 15 July 2007

6. The Festival was seen to help boost the image of Manchester and its position as a desirable destination. 43% of the Greater Manchester population and 60% of bookers agreed that MIF contributed to making Manchester 'a great place to live, work or study'.

This was a resounding endorsement of the effect of large scale cultural events on the image and desirability of a city and was seen by stakeholders to justify the investment made. The Festival also succeeded in attracting a diverse audience, with 25% of bookers using Ticketmaster coming from outside of the Northwest. 1% of bookers came from overseas, slightly below target but excellent for a first festival.

7. **AIM 3**
'To welcome Manchester's talent, resources and communities to take part in their City's Festival, in extraordinary ways that reflect the Festival's ambition.'

In achieving this aim some important objectives around reaching out to new audiences and encouraging partnership and development opportunities for volunteers and community groups were embraced by the Festival team, and there were some surprises.

The target of 160,000 people for the first Festival was exceeded by 26% with 200,930 attendees and participants, including free events. 23% of bookers at ticketed events came from the city of Manchester, 32% from the rest of Greater Manchester, 19% from elsewhere in the Northwest, 25% from the rest of the UK and 1% from overseas.

'Though Il Tempo del Postino drew audiences from New York, Tokyo and Los Angeles, the place was also full of young Mancunians, as you could hear from their accents.'

Paul Valley, The Independent Extra July 2007

8. We also set a target of 5% from regeneration areas of Manchester and measured 8.7% of total bookers from the most deprived Super Output Areas, although in reality if this included free events the percentage would undoubtedly be higher. What was also encouraging was that the Festival attracted a broad age range, in particular the traditionally non-attending 25-34 year olds. Events also attracted a high proportion of first time bookers to arts venues at 69% of bookers, and 27% were attending an art form for the first time.

'What's most encouraging, however, is the sense of something new and exciting being created from the melding of many disparate styles – pop and classical, Western and Eastern, visual and aural. The audience, about 50 years younger on average than the usual opera crowd, loved it. (Monkey – Journey to the West)
The Times

9. The Festival also had a profound impact on people, 26% describing it as 'inspirational', 29% as 'uplifting' and 33% as 'unforgettable'.

Volunteers were particularly enthusiastic in their responses with 90% saying they felt a real sense of achievement. The aim was to recruit 200 and this was exceeded by 94, including 40 from sponsoring organisations. The total value of volunteer time was estimated to be over £200,000.

Other statistics include 38 jobs created against a target of 29 and the Festival partnership with the higher education institutions and the employment of an HE festival manager worked well. 310 local suppliers were used against a target of 20.

10. **'AIM 4
To be a sustainable driver in the City's economy, ensuring that there is a lasting legacy for the City.**

A major impetus for establishing the Festival after the success of the Commonwealth Games was economic gain and increasing profile and as such, this final aim was seen to be an essential condition to embarking on further festivals. The initial study by Cambridge Policy Consultants identified an economic impact potential of £19.1m for a first festival based on an operating budget of £5.5m. In reality through the great success of the sponsorship alone, the budget was actually closer to £9m and the economic impact £28.8m, 51% over target, and closer to the target for a second established festival.

As stated previously, in terms of ticket sales the Festival exceeded its target of 160,000 with over 200,000 attendances at ticketed events, trailblazers, workshops, exhibitions and community events. Of the 98,000 tickets available for sale 78% were sold, with very few below target performances, the most notable being Industrial Resolution which failed to appeal to its target audience.

11. The Festival over-achieved on its income target of £5m by £4m largely due to very positive private sector contributions. This enabled the original budget to be recast allowing a wider and more enhanced range of events and more ground-breaking commissions to improve the overall added value of the Council's contribution. The City Council's contribution of £2.3m was matched by £1.2m other public funding, including the Arts Council, £3.6m sponsorship and £1.3m ticket sales. £0.6m was raised from other sources. The Festival was particularly successful in attracting private sector sponsors.

GENERAL FEEDBACK

12. The evaluation report picks up a number of issues raised by stakeholders and members of the public – either those who had bought tickets or through letters or contact with the Festival team. Some of these issues underline areas identified for review in the September report to this Committee.

- **Ticket Arrangements**

There were some criticisms of the ticketing arrangements, particularly in relation to the slowness and inflexibility of the internet booking system. People booking tickets questioned the booking fees and the inability to make bookings for multiple events. These issues are being addressed in the planning for 2009.

- **Festival Pavilion**

Whilst the Festival pavilion, located outside Manchester Central was enjoyed by many, there was a view that it's location was too peripheral to the City Centre, so for some people they were unaware that the Festival was happening. Consideration of locating the pavilion in one of the main squares such as Albert Square or Piccadilly Gardens will be further evaluated to encourage greater participation from Manchester residents and to raise the profile of the Festival in the city.

- **Buzz in the City**

The report suggests that if anything was missing from this first Festival (apart from the weather) to help the buzz and the impact of the Festival throughout the City Centre, it was possibly the absence of a large, free, spectacular celebratory event that would have attracted a diverse, cross section of local people. Dressing the city through banners and other forms of animation will be part of the collaborative planning between the Council and the Festival.

- **City Profile**

Clearly the Festival has provided the appropriate launch pad for the original modern concept and there still remains significant potential to use the Festival to position the city and its unique strength to a growing international audience. Work over the last six months to better integrate the councils marketing activity with that of Marketing Manchester to enhance the profile of the city and maximise the tourism potential marks good progress in this area and the 2009 Festival will provide a tangible opportunity to measure progress in the future

- **Festival vision**

Clearly the vision for the Festival was for a groundbreaking original "modern" event that would bring the best international artists and collaborators to the city. For some communities and arts organisations there was therefore a little disappointment that there were not more Manchester grown events. This was in part a symptom of it being the first festival and such partnerships need time to develop but nonethe-

less the lesson has been learnt that we need to ensure that Manchester's cultural sector enjoy every opportunity to engage with the best in the world and raise their game for the period of the festival. Proposals for the Manchester Open and Trust concept will seek to address this concern.

- **Maximising support**

The previous report in September referred to a review of the collaboration between City Council officers and the Festival team to maximise existing skill sets, expertise and opportunities for staff development. Identifying these opportunities and appropriate resources well in advance will be factored into ongoing planning and liaison between the Council and the Festival.

13. Apart from these 'lessons learnt' the data and the qualitative feedback detailed in the Evaluation Report confirms that this first event was an outstanding success both for the City, the Festival and all of those partners and stakeholders associated with it.

2009 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

14. The dates for the 2009 Manchester International Festival have been set as 2-19 July 2009 and have been publicly announced. For 2009, the festival team, led by Alex Poots, will be looking to build on the brand, which was so successfully established in 2007; that is as the world's first commissioning and producing Festival. This will also allow further enhancement to the 'original : modern' branding of the City. The breadth of the Festival programme will also be maintained, including a wide range of events – debates, rock & pop, classical music, visual arts, theatre, food etc.

15. The following specific changes have been proposed in response to experiences in 2007:-

- Running more shows throughout the Festival and presenting fewer one-off events
- Building on the successes of the 2007 Festival – e.g. extending the free family event – *The Great Indoors* – from one weekend to run throughout the Festival
- Creating a more active events programme around the Festival Pavilion (e.g. via a dedicated performance space on site) and moving the Pavilion to a site that is likely to attract more passing traffic
- Improving Manchester Firsts with an initiative that provides opportunities for Manchester artists and arts organisations to create projects that are fully integrated into the Festival programme – *The Manchester Open* (see below)
- Developing and extending the education and community engagement initiatives that were trialed as part of the 2007 Festival – but to do so in a way that is commensurate with the scale, ambition and innovation of the

Festival – *The Manchester Trust* is the initial idea, subject to finalising funding arrangements.

THE MANCHESTER OPEN

16. The Manchester Open is a new commissioning initiative set up by MIF to offer professional artists or arts organisations from all disciplines who live or work in the city boundaries to propose exceptional new projects for the Festival. £100,000 each is on offer for up to three new commissions which will be produced by MIF as part of the 2009 or 2011 Festivals. The proposals can be for an existing venue or a found site. The festival team are looking for ideas, in any medium, which are new and not afraid to be different.
17. Information about The Manchester Open has been circulated via the Manchester Evening News as well as through an extensive range of local arts networks. Deadline for submissions was 1st February 2008. The proposals will be considered by a panel which includes Maria Balshaw (Director Whitworth Arts Gallery), Steve McQueen (Turner award winning artist), Simon Mellor (General Director MIF), Michael Morris (Co-Director Artangel), Alex Poots (Festival Director MIF), Peter Saville (Creative Director MCC). A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

THE MANCHESTER TRUST

18. The Manchester Trust would be a major new initiative driven and managed by MIF but delivered in partnership with leading Manchester organisations from across the arts and social sectors who have experience of working to reach some of the City's most disadvantaged community groups.
19. The Manchester Trust would provide a range of innovative opportunities for Mancunians, especially young Mancunians, to work alongside leading artists drawn from across the cultural industry sector in a year-long programme of creative activities designed both to develop the participants skills and social confidence as well as helping the artists themselves to develop their own creative and research skills. The proposed Manchester Trust programme integrates a range of initiatives which together create a strong platform to develop creativity in local communities, in young and emerging creative entrepreneurs, and in young, emerging and established arts organisations. It is imagined that The Manchester Trust would also play a key role in delivering the City's cultural entitlement for young people and would also assist in building community cohesion and developing links between communities within the city. Over time the Trust could become a platform for supporting the full range of artistic venues to penetrate more communities and allow young people to access them. Clear outputs and targets would be established at the outset and independent evaluators would be brought in to measure the success of the programme.
20. The Manchester Trust would start in September 2008 or January 2009 and run initially for 12 months. If successful, it is envisaged that it would continue

as part of a long-term strategy for creative skills and talent development within the City. Initial discussions have been held with a range of partners, including the Arts Council, Trusts and foundations and some major corporate partners and we would want to explore opportunities for limited public funding support.

2009 BUSINESS PLAN

21. A draft budget for the 2009 Festival will be considered by the MIF board on 7 February 2008. This will be kept under constant review by the Executive, the Finance & Audit committee of the board and the board itself as details of funding and programme are confirmed. It is recommended that the proposed budget and business plan for the 2009 Festival be brought back to this Committee within the next six months when funding commitments will be much clearer.
22. Discussions are underway with all 2007 top tier sponsors, including NWDA. These discussions have been given added impetus by the completion of the Morris Hargreaves McIntyre / Arts About Manchester evaluation. Extremely constructive discussions have also been held at Chief Executive level at the Arts Council and a formal application for funding for the 2009 Festival has now been submitted. An application for support for the Manchester Trust has also been submitted to Manchester Knowledge Capital's Innovation Fund.
23. Discussions with key stakeholders, including the City Council, have commenced in relation to setting targets for the 2009 Festival, as well as about establishing a performance management framework for 2009, which will enable effective evaluation of the next Festival to take place. It is essential that these indicators also contribute to the overall city targets with the emerging Local Area Agreement.

CONCLUSIONS

24. This report provides the detail of the formal evaluation of the 2007 International Festival and records a great many achievements. There were lessons learnt and many more people who would like to be engaged next time but the success of the Festival is not disputed and the data speaks for itself. Planning for the 2009 festival is now well underway and further reports on the budget and business plan will be brought to members as funding commitments are confirmed. Recommendations are set out at the front of this report.