

Subject:	Brighton Dome & Festival Trust Annual Report 2022/23		
Date of Meeting:	10th March 2022		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Croston	Tel: 01273 292571
	Email:	mark.croston@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival is a key cultural asset which enhances the city's reputation nationally and internationally. The organisation is recognised for artistic excellence, as well as for supporting a wide range of creative initiatives for young people and communities across Brighton and Hove. In March 2021, this committee requested that a report, detailing the impact of the trust throughout the previous 12 months, combined with plans for the year ahead, is presented annually.
- 1.2 The organisation has been greatly affected by the pandemic but has continued to deliver all of its core activities (albeit often in altered forms) over the past 24 months. The Council provides annual funding for Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival as part of the lease arrangements. This report provides detail on the outcomes achieved by the organisation over the last year, an overview of the ongoing capital investment into the site and plans for 2022/23.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Councillors note the difficult circumstances facing the Trust as it moves forward into 2022/23 as a result of successive lockdowns, audience restrictions and challenges faced with the capital programme over the course of the past year.
- 2.2 That Councillors support the outline plans for 2022/23.

3. CONTEXT/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Funding to Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival (BDBF) is one of the principal investments Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) makes in arts and culture. Brighton Dome is a Grade I listed building owned by the city council. It provides a programme of work across all art forms and delivers the annual Brighton Festival in May. There are three spaces within Brighton Dome: the Concert Hall, the Corn Exchange and the Studio Theatre. BDBF also manages both Brighton & Hove Music & Arts Service and East Sussex Music Service.

- 3.2 BDBF has an annual turnover of £12.5m and is a registered charity. A recent economic impact study indicates the organisation's activities support 1125 FTE jobs in the city centre and, together with the Royal Pavilion & Museums, contributes £60m per year to the local economy.

Legal Structure & Funding

- 3.3 BDBF was established as a registered charity 'Brighton Festival Limited' in 1999, its predecessor Brighton Festival Society having been formed in 1966. On 30th April 1999 the council set up a 50-year lease agreement with annual revenue funding to BDBF linked to the lease. The Lease determines the obligations on BDBF and requires the city council to provide funding to support the activity of both Brighton Dome and Brighton Festival. In 2021/22 this funding amounted to £1,757,460.

Activity Report

- 3.6 In 2020/21 the charity earned 26% of its operating income from ticket sales, sponsorship, catering and the private event income and 74% of its income through grants and donations. This is almost a complete reversal of previous non-Covid years (e.g. in 2019 63% from commercial activity and 37% via grants and donations). Ordinarily, 31% of income comes from the Charity's two public funders: BHCC and Arts Council England (ACE). The Charity is a long-standing ACE National Portfolio Organisation with just over £4,500,000 of committed funding in the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2022.
- 3.7 Further to significant support received in 2020/21 from ACE Emergency Funds and the DCMS Culture Recovery Fund (reported to this committee in 2021) a further £915,505 was received in Rounds 2 and 3 of the Culture Recovery Fund to support its operations through the continuing impacts of Covid-19.
- 3.8 Creative Learning programmes, principally for children & young people, have been enhanced since the addition of the Brighton & Hove Music Service in 2017 and the East Sussex Music Service in 2019, now 'Create Music' (see 3.21 below). Total expenditure on Creative Learning activities totalled £2,817,673.
- 3.9 BDBF is a Living Wage Employer and has 143 permanent employees, 84 casual music teachers and around 170 casual staff working across venue operations. Existing close working relationships with trade unions BECTU and NUTs have been furthered strengthened during 2021 with the aim of protecting jobs.
- 3.10 Attendance at Brighton Dome Concert Hall during 2021/22 has been significantly affected by Covid 19 and the restrictions on live events. BDBF was the first major arts festival to take place in 2021, with an adapted outdoors, online and safely back onstage Brighton Festival. BDBF continued to deliver socially distanced events in the concert hall between April and August 2021 and returned to full operation without social distancing from September 2021.
- 3.11 Ticket sales for Brighton Festival 2021 were 74% lower than the 2019 Festival as BDBF limited the volume of indoor larger capacity events. The overall subsidy of work in the festival increased by £120k (27%) because BDBF still maintained high levels of investment in new artistic content.

- 3.12 BDBF's total audience reach was just over 200,000 during 2021/22, which is around 50% of 2019's total reach and less than one third of the anticipated reach when all three performance spaces return to full operation. Occupancy levels were still high at 79% (91% for outdoor ticketed events during Brighton Festival).
- 3.14 Across the remainder of 2021, BDBF continued to deliver experiences online for audiences (theatre, spoken word, literature and music events both live-streamed and made for online) and engagement with children and young people. The two music services, when not able to teach in schools, developed an online offer and continued to teach around 3000 students a week.

Royal Pavilion Estate Phase One: Capital Project

- 3.16 Phase one of the Royal Pavilion Estate masterplan currently on site sees the restoration and redevelopment of the Council's Grade I listed Corn Exchange and Grade II listed Studio Theatre, protecting at-risk heritage buildings, lowering environmental impact and operating costs and providing new space for community and artist rehearsals.
- 3.17 Managed by BHCC's Major Projects team, the project has attracted over £19.6m of investment from ACE, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Coast to Capital LEP and private fundraising. Project costs have increased since works began on site in February 2017 due to finds on site including a former Quaker burial ground, significant structural defects in the 200-year-old Corn Exchange timber roof and wall frame, and the former Main Contractor leaving site and entering administration. The project is scheduled for completion in Autumn 2022.

Looking Ahead into 2022 – 2023

- 3.18 In 2020 BDBF developed a plan for managing the impact of Covid-19 and ensuring the organisation's future sustainability. Titled 'Recovery, Renewal, Reopening', the plan ensured financial viability through the two financial years 20/21 and 21/22, assuming significantly reduced activity through until October 2021, which proved largely correct. It also sets out principles to guide planning throughout the pandemic and for the future:
- engage and connect with audiences and residents
 - be an open and porous organisation for artists and partners, facilitating and brokering new ways of working
 - reflect and celebrate the international outlook of Brighton & Hove
 - prioritise artistic work that enhances their distinctiveness and that of the city through:
 - a focus on marginalised voices, on inclusivity and social justice
 - a sense of physical location and scale
 - fostering partnerships nationally and internationally
 - exploring new technologies (specifically 5G) and developing their online offer
 - having a clearly curated, artist-led identity
 - develop artists of the future and deliver creative opportunities for all children & young people

- protect jobs wherever possible and retain vital talent and skills in their permanent workforce
 - ensure the organisation's long-term financial and environmental sustainability
- 3.19 Brighton Dome Concert Hall will continue to operate a full diary of events throughout 2022 with strong support from promoters, artists and audiences. Although it is hoped that Covid-19 restrictions will not return, the BDBF team has managed Covid-measures throughout the pandemic and will respond accordingly.
- 3.20 Brighton Festival 2022 will take place from 7-29 May with a full programme launch in February 2022. Syrian architect Marwa al-Sabouni and theatre maker Tristan Sharps have been appointed Guest Co-Directors, the first time since its introduction in 2009 the role has been shared.
- 3.21 Create Music, a joint collaboration bringing together the educational services of Brighton & Hove Music & Arts (BHMA) and East Sussex Music (ESM), will offer music tuition to more children & young people and offer a broad range of music learning experiences both in and outside of schools across our region. Create Music will be one of the largest providers of music education in the UK, reaching over 18,500 children and young people across 262 participating schools and music centres, spanning from Hove to Hastings.
- 3.22 Initial testbed investment in 5G infrastructure (through partnership with Wired Sussex and Digital Catapult) has received a significant financial boost from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport via the 5G Create awards. This will deliver a 5G Powered Festival concept working with industry leaders Warner Music, O2 (Telefonica UK), Digital Catapult, Mativision, Metropolis and Sonosphere. The initiative will enable artists to collaborate creatively and audiences to engage and connect both remotely and live, using cutting edge technology. The 5G Festival in March 2022 invests in talent and idea development so that Brighton can continue to be at the cutting edge of art and technology, combining to create new cultural experiences.
- 3.27 Through support from the Cultural Recovery Fund, BDBF has implemented the Artist in House scheme. There are four awards of £10,000 to sustain artist creative practice and to contribute their voice to the BDBF team, influencing its ways of working and planning. BDBF received 55 applications with 69% of applicants identifying as diverse in one or more ways.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 There are no alternative options to consider. BDBF is a well-established charity operating successfully. Whilst the Pandemic has caused the venue to be closed intermittently and the capital programme in part, it is fully anticipated that it will re-open and return to normal operations by the end of 2022.
- 4.2 The alternative option is that the buildings come back to the city council, which is not considered reasonable. Despite the tremendous uncertainty and financial challenges faced by the Trust, it remains the case that the assets are best placed in an independent organisation which is supported by the city council.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 2021/22 inevitably saw a reduction in the opportunities for free open days and events, however, a number of events were still delivered. These included International Women's Day in partnership with Brighton Women's Centre and Black History Month Family Day, Heritage Open Day and Disabled Access Day BDBF provided a programme of assisted Audio Described, BSL and relaxed performances across a range of events including the family Christmas Circus programme. Brighton Dome also hosted the Mayor of Brighton & Hove and the Interfaith Group's Service of Compassion in October 2021, remembering those the city had lost during the pandemic.
- 5.2 Following the success of the community initiative 'Our Place' in Brighton Festival, partnerships with local steering groups in Hangleton and Knoll and East Brighton, Moulsecoomb and Bevendean are embedded in the year-round programme.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 BDBF has been able to weather the pandemic without redundancies over the course of 2021/22 because of the public funding it has received, both from BHCC and from ACE. Additional private funds have also been raised. This means the organisation is able to emerge quickly now that indoor gatherings in venues are able to resume.
- 6.2 Provided no further Covid-related restrictions are imposed the Charity is able to resume a full diary of events in Brighton Dome Concert Hall from February 2022 onwards. The Corn Exchange capital project is scheduled for completion, towards the end of 2022 and by 2023 the entire venue will be making a full contribution to cultural life of Brighton and Hove residents.

7 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.
- 7.2 The Council has a contractual arrangement to provide funding to BDBF of £1.766m including support for the annual Brighton Festival which is built into the council's budget. In addition, the council provides an annual contribution to a sinking fund to support the high maintenance costs of the Grade 1 listed building. This contribution is £0.221m in 2022/23 and forms part of the council's Planned Maintenance Budget.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 11/02/22

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The contractual arrangements with BDBF are described in the body of the report. There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations.

Lawyer Consulted:

Alice Rowland

Date: 11/02/22

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 BDBF continues to receive a rating of 'strong' from ACE for its Creative Case for Diversity, appraising both the inclusivity of its public-facing programme, audience accessibility and the organisation's work to increase the diversity of its workforce and its trustee body. An Equality Action Plan is monitored by an action group made up of representatives from all levels of the organisation and describes the partnerships across the community that help to achieve set targets.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 There are no sustainability implications.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 There are no Brexit implications.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.7 None.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.8 There are no crime and disorder implications. However, the Creative Learning strand of BDBF which works with over 5,000 young people each week, engages young people in the arts and creativity and provides meaningful activities during the evening and at weekends.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.9 There are no risk and opportunity management implications for the Council. BDBF is a professionally managed and governed organisation which assesses risk and opportunity carefully to ensure it is able to fulfil its obligations under the lease.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 Covid-safe measures have been successfully managed throughout the pandemic at Brighton Dome Concert Hall and across Create Music teaching. It is hoped activity throughout 2022/23 will be unaffected by Covid-19 restrictions as reintroduction of public health measures would inevitably impact on the Charity's sustainability. However, the BDBF team has demonstrated its ability to adapt and deliver events wherever possible within public health guidelines.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.11 BDBF is a major employer and a catalyst for creative collaborations which enhance the city's reputation for leading the arts in England. A return to full operation in 2022/3 is important for generating community wealth and as positive contributor to mental health and well-being for residents. Brighton and Hove has one of the highest levels of arts participation in the UK. The return of Brighton Festival in 2022 to pre-pandemic scale will be a visible signal that the arts and culture are ready to restart and livelihoods can begin to be restored.