

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - ECONOMY 9 SEPTEMBER 2004

VIBRAPHONIC FESTIVAL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the evaluation of the Vibraphonic Festival in 2004, which took place between 23 April and 2 May 2004.
- 1.2 To seek support for the proposal for the development of the Vibraphonic Festival in 2005 to take place between 4 and 20 March 2005.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Exeter City Council supports a wide-ranging portfolio of events throughout the year, both directly as producer, and by contributing to project funding. In relation to Festivals, the core Council objectives, as defined in the Exeter Vision, which provide the context for future delivery, are:
 - **A cultural and fun place to be**, to establish Exeter as a major cultural and leisure centre in the region increasing the vitality of the city for the enjoyment of both residents and visitors.
 - **A city of strong communities**, to ensure Exeter is a city where every resident is to play a full and active part in its social, economic, political and cultural life
 - **A learning city**, to generate a culture of learning in Exeter, raising the quality of education and training for everyone in order to maximise personal achievement, promote social inclusion and support economic development
- 2.2 The Vibraphonic Festival is a new festival proposed as part of the enhancement of Exeter Festivals in the report to Scrutiny Committee Economy in November 2003.
- 2.3 The key characteristics of the proposal were to:
 - develop an annual festival attracting both visiting and local audiences, that will be recognised in due course for its unique presentation of Soul, Jazz, R'n'B, Hip Hop, Funk and related music from all over the world
 - develop an event which works with a wide variety of venues and spaces to encourage the development of promoters, artists, and new audiences

3. VIBRAPHONIC 2004

- 3.1 The programme for Vibraphonic 2004 took place in 9 different venues across the City including the Phoenix Arts Centre, Barnfield Theatre, St Georges Hall, the Lemon Grove, the Cavern, Timepiece, Hotel Barcelona Kino Bar, Three Fat Fish and Riverside Leisure Centre. The festival was programmed and delivered in partnership with venues and music promoters with the support of a voluntary Steering Group.

- 3.2 The programme of 25 events was made up of 21 ticketed and 4 free events. The City Council directly promoted 11 of the events, 5 were co-promotions by City Council and promoter and a further 9 events listed in the brochure were promoted by others under the festival umbrella. Four music, MC and DJ workshops took place and each night of the 10 day festival there were live 'jam' sessions and DJs playing in the Phoenix bar.
- 3.3 Running parallel with the festival was the Vibraphonic FM radio station operated under a twenty-eight day Restricted Service Licence. The aim of the radio station was to provide news and information about Festival events and provide local volunteer and budding presenters and producers with radio experience.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1 The Vibraphonic Festival 2004 including the launch event on 7 April and Party event on 12 May attracted 5,127 young people and adults to the ticketed events.
- 4.2 The target audience age range of the festival was identified as between 15 and 35 year olds because this was the age range not particularly catered for by previous Exeter Festivals. The independent non-attender survey commissioned to inform programming for the Vibraphonic Festival interviewed 510 Exeter residents. The results indicated that the most popular music genres for 15 – 19 year olds is Soul, for 20 – 34 year olds it is Drum 'n' Bass, with Soul being the most popular with 35 – 39 year olds and with those over 40 it was Jazz. All of these genres were included in the programme.
- 4.3 An audience survey was undertaken and despite survey forms being available at all events and venues, disappointingly only 81 were returned. This response, though not unexpected, only provides limited feedback.
- 4.4 Of those surveyed over half came from the EX4 and EX2 postcode areas with most, younger people from EX4 which includes the University halls of residence. Of these 85% considered the quality of the event to be good or excellent. Over 80% considered the quality of the brochure good or excellent, that events met their expectations well or very well and that value for money was either good or excellent. Just under 80% felt the appropriateness of venues was either good or excellent.
- 4.5 The combination of the Vibraphonic Festival and the Vibraphonic FM radio station contributed to the Council's core objectives by:
- raising the cultural profile of the city by providing a contemporary mix of popular entertainment
 - generating a strong volunteer commitment among those interested in furthering the development of the festival
 - providing education and training opportunities for young DJ's, promoters and musicians.
- 4.6 Key points from the steering group evaluation report and other staff observations are listed below:

Programme

- 4.6.1 As the first festival of this type in the City, the programming set out to explore the levels of interest and suitability of venues for a range of music genres. This was partially effective with 9 of the ticketed events achieving more than 70% capacity audiences. Weekend and

Friday night events were well attended as were mixed events with a club night following a live act. A breakdown of music genre, audience, venue and capacity is given in Appendix 1.

- 4.6.2 There were some programming clashes where audiences were split and some event and venue miss-matches have been identified. The Northcott Theatre plus several other smaller city venues, which were not included in this first festival have expressed interest in future involvement. A wider impact and increased audiences could be achieved if these venues were involved in future festival programming.
- 4.6.3 The number of venues that were clubs and bars meant little provision was made specifically for under 18 year olds. Developing partnerships with those already providing such events locally would be a priority, as this would also extend the community reach of the festival.
- 4.6.4 The taster education workshops for MCs, DJs and musicians indicated there was a demand for such activity. There is potential for liaison with the formal education sector and other youth music and music industry training schemes. Moving the festival slightly earlier in the year to coincide with school, college and university terms could also help develop this strand of the festival.

Marketing

- 4.6.5 The main marketing tool was 30,000 Vibraphonic brochures and an Adshel campaign that was supplemented by press and media coverage. Publicity was also generated by the radio station running in parallel, although this did not make an impact until their audience had built up, which was not until the festival started.
- 4.6.6 As a new festival there was no brochure mailing list and the distribution network for the brochures was the same as that used for the Exeter Festival. This meant that for the younger audience word of mouth and familiarity with particular venues became the most useful publicity tool.
- 4.6.7 Where there was very little marketing done by the venues, such as at Riverside Leisure Centre and Timepiece, reliance on the brochure was not sufficient to attract the scale of audiences required at the bigger events.

Partnership development

- 4.6.8 The interest in taking part in the new festival by venues and promoters exceeded expectations. This enthusiasm helped establish a strong and committed steering group and range of partners bringing a range of local music knowledge and expertise from the commercial and voluntary sectors. The feedback from partners suggests that they would be keen to participate in future festivals.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 In order to focus the City Council resources and maximise the impact of the festival it is recommended that the Vibraphonic programme in 2005 takes place over 10 days rather than 13 days. It is also suggested that City Council direct and co-promotions are focused on 6 days (Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays).

- 5.2 To maximise the young target audience it is proposed that Vibraphonic 2005 dates fall within school, college and university terms. This would particularly develop the student audiences and student involvement in a more developed educational workshop programme. The balance of events could also be programmed to have more for younger audiences (under 18 years) in un-licensed, alcohol free venues.
- 5.3 To broaden the spread of the festival across the City, more smaller city venues would be encouraged to promote under the festival umbrella. Live internet streaming of Vibraphonic FM could also increase audiences from outside the City.
- 5.4 In order to enhance the quality and promotion of Vibraphonic 2005 the venues and organisations promoting events in the brochure should be required to commit to adequate levels of promotion and marketing.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The total costs of delivering the festival, including promotion, venue and artist costs amounts to £48,000. Ticket receipts fell short of projected sales of £41,000 and amounted to £25,300. Some sponsorship was obtained in the form of additional marketing activity which was organised and provided directly by Stagecoach and Think Tank. As it was the first time for this event in the City, sponsorship proved difficult to secure.
- 6.2 An allocation of £10,000 had been set aside by the City Council for this festival in the expectation of higher ticket sales and sponsorship. The difference of £12,700 will be found either from within Economy and Tourism budgets, or, if necessary, depending on remaining expenditure this year, the Events Reserve.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the working assumption at this stage for Vibraphonic 2005 is for a £10,000 contribution from the City Council with the remainder from income, grants and sponsorship. A funding strategy to attract increased external funding will be developed to inform the development of the festival, but will be kept under review in the light of the financial outcome of all festivals later in the year. As recommended at 5.1 above, this festival will run over a shorter period with fewer events directly promoted by the City Council.

7.0 RECOMMENDED that

- 7.1 The report on Vibraphonic 2004 be noted.
- 7.2 Support be given to develop proposals for the delivery of a 10 day Vibraphonic Festival for March 2005.

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ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background Papers used in compiling the report:-

Scrutiny Committee – Economy 6 November 2003

Vibraphonic Festival Programme Analysis**In summary 25 events were involved attracting a total audience of 5,127**

Event	Genre	Promoter	Venue	Capacity	Audience	% capacity
Roy Ayres	Acid Jazz	ECC	Phoenix	450	345	77%
James Taylor Quartet	Acid Jazz	Phoenix	Phoenix	450	450	100%
Tali & DJ Suv	Drum'n'Bass	ECC	Phoenix	450	313	70%
Blues Film	Blues	ECC	Phoenix (free)	234	114	49%
Valentine Flyguy	Comedy	ECC	Phoenix	234	35	15%
Closing Party	*Mix	ECC	Phoenix	450	373	83%
Beinji Reid	Dance	Phoenix	Phoenix	234	66	28%
Jazzcotech Dancers	Dance Jazz	Rebop	Phoenix	234	125	53%
Soul Jazz	*Mixed	Rebop	Phoenix	450	359	80%
Ty /Critically Ill	Hip Hop	Cavern	Cavern	210	210	100%
Lydia Lunch	Lounge Jazz	Cavern	Cavern	210	75	36%
Koma & Bones	Break Beat	Fun	Cavern	210	210	100%
Jaqui Dankworth	Jazz	ECC	Barnfield	289	100	35%
Alan Barnes / ExeterCollege	Jazz	ECC	Barnfield	289	100	35%
Kelly Jo Phelps	Blues	ECC	Barnfield	289	205	71%
Horace Andy	Reggae	Onion Heart	Lemon Grove	650	360	55%
Osibisa	Afro Beat	ECC/ Timepiece	Timepiece	400	190	48%
Black Twang	Hip Hop	ECC/ Timepiece	Timepiece	400	391	98%
Georgie Fame	Jazz	ECC	Riverside	600	243	41%
Art of 5	Jazz	ECC	Riverside	600	389	65%
Su McCreeth Trio	Jazz	ECC/Hotel Barcelona	Kino Bar (free)	75	75	100%
Peter Cantor Quartet	Jazz	ECC/Hotel Barcelona	Kino Bar (free)	75	60	80%
Louise Rutkowski Trio	Lounge Jazz	ECC/Hotel Barcelona	Kino Bar (free)	75	69	92%
Back to Basie	Jazz/Big Band	ECC	St Georges	500	120	24%
Groove-A-Thon	*Mixed	Record Lounge	3 Fat Fish	250	150	60%
*Mixed = Jazz, Soul, Funk, Blues, R'n'B, Hip Hop, Dance						