### **EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY 10 NOVEMBER 2011

### **ANNUAL FESTIVALS AND EVENTS REVIEW 2011**

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To review and report back on the performance of the festivals and events portfolio which comprises Autumn Festival 2010 and in 2011 Animated Exeter, Vibraphonic, Respect, and Summer in the City.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The City has and continues to support a number of arts related festivals and events as part of its year round programme. Animated Exeter, Vibraphonic and Exeter Respect are grant aided by the City Council and are run at arms length either by independent companies and voluntary management boards. In addition, the City Council provides a small level of support to Exeter Open Studios which has run in conjunction with the Autumn Festival for a number of years.
- 2.2. Each festival, while serving specific target audiences or genres, has key themes or characteristics that link back into the strategic priorities of the Exeter Vision and the Arts and Media Strategy 2009 2012 as follows:
  - to develop and strengthen the arts and media infrastructure and support and encourage innovation and creative production in the City
  - to develop further the City's portfolio of Arts and Media Festivals and explore opportunities to create a festival of regional/national significance
  - to support creative industries growth and development
  - to develop access to arts programmes and opportunities within community settings to encourage greater participation and involvement with the arts and media by residents of Exeter
  - to work in partnership with relevant agencies and partners to provide more opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds, and in particular young people, to engage in arts education and learning programmes.
- 2.3 The budget for delivering Festivals and Events was reduced in February 2011 as part of the City Council's overall budgets savings for 2011/12. As a result the Exeter Autumn Festival will not happen in 2011 and as agreed at Scrutiny Committee on 9 June 2011 the former Exeter Summer Festival budget was used to deliver a programme of summer events called Summer in the City.

## 3.0 Programme Autumn 2010 - Summer 2011

3.1 The following section summarises the key characteristics of each of the festivals:

### **Autumn Festival 2010:**

- provided a showcase event to give local performers and artists a higher profile
- enabled local groups to create and manage their own programmes by

- supporting them with financial assistance and advice where appropriate
- encouraged interest and participation by residents
- provided events that were accessible to those on low incomes, young people and those with learning disabilities

## **Exeter Open Studios 2010:**

an artist led event, with support from City Council officers, which
opened studios and exhibitions of city based artists to the public over a
weekend in Exeter Autumn Festival

#### **Animated Exeter 2011:**

- operated by an independent company with financial and City Council officer support
- promoted Exeter as a learning city providing access and learning opportunities in new technologies especially for young people
- helped to develop creative industries showcasing and supporting the work and training needs of local film and media companies

## Vibraphonic 2011:

- an annual festival, operated externally to the Council, attracting both regional and local audiences to urban and non mainstream music from all over the world
- worked with a wide variety of venues and spaces to encourage the development of promoters, artists, and new audiences thereby helping to develop the city's arts and media infrastructure

## **Exeter Respect:**

 a community led two day outdoor, free festival with music, children's activities, and stalls targeted at Exeter's diverse communities with council officer and financial support

## Summer in the City:

- a new programme of arts events delivered in partnership with local promoters and young local artists/producers. The Arts and Events team supported the delivery of the events. The City Council provided a small amount of funding towards production support as necessary through event development, fundraising, production, marketing and box office management and stewarding
- in house production of the free Midsummer Party on the Quay
- 3.2 A more detailed review for each event is covered in Appendix 1.

### 4.0 REVIEW

- 4.1 The Festivals and Events portfolio remains under review in the light of continued financial constraints and Members are asked to note and consider the issues on the current and potential future portfolio raised below. At the time of writing this report, the budget position for 2012/13 has not been clarified. Recommendations for continued funding therefore are made with the understanding that the available budget may well change.
- 4.2 **Exeter Open Studios** remains a low risk, cost effective event managed by the artists themselves. The event is supported by a small grant as well as limited officer support. Participating artists and audiences increase year on year and the event is an excellent means of demonstrating that Exeter is a creative city. It is recommended that support for Exeter Open Studios continues.

- 4.3 **Animated Exeter** 2011 was successful, with attendance increasing from 18,420 in 2010 to 21,505 in 2011, primarily due to the exhibitions and high profile digital commission on Exeter Cathedral which attracted national press and regional television coverage. Attendance by schools was also markedly higher; however attendance at film screenings and other ticketed workshops was down.
  - The festival was unsuccessful in applying for National Portfolio funding (the Arts Council's new three year revenue fund 2012 15) because of it being a newly independent company without a three year business plan and because the company needs to improve and strengthen its board. Nevertheless the Arts Council recognise the expertise of the festival in its production of high quality commissions and has advised that the festival should apply for Grants for the Arts funding for a new commission in 2012 and a separate bid for organisational development. The festival awaits the outcome of the first Grants for the Arts application for the commission for 2012.
- 4.4 It is recommended that the City Council should continue to support Animated Exeter in 2012/13 with grant funding on the condition that the festival is able to raise sufficient future funding from Arts Council and other sources before the end of the current financial year.
- 4.5 **Vibraphonic** 2011 was successful despite being on a smaller scale as result of reduced funding. The number of main events was down from 25 to 18, and accordingly the festival produced a much smaller brochure. Attendances held up well with 4500 ticket sales compared with 5734 in 2010.
- 4.7 **Vibraphonic** 2012, with less City Council support, will need to make concerted attempts to raise alternative funding either from Grants for the Arts or other sponsorship. It is recommended the City Council should continue to support Vibraphonic in the coming financial year (2012/13) on the condition that the festival is able to raise additional funding from alternative sources by September 2012.
- 4.8. **Exeter Respect** 2011 was a resounding success with over 20,000 people passing through the park over the weekend. The festival was included in the Summer in the City programme. The City Council supports the event with a small grant and officer time. It is recommended that the City Council continue to fund and offer support for 2012.
- 4.9 **Summer in the City** while it did not have the profile of the former Summer Festival, managed to garner positive regional and local press and radio coverage and some 30,000 people attended the various events. The PR company established a very successful Summer in the City Facebook site which attracted over 48,000 hits. Despite several events, specifically Midsummer Party on the Quay and the three Rougemont Sessions, which took part on some of the wettest days this summer, the event can still be considered a success. Four events in the programme Burn the Curtain Theatre, Exeter Respect, the Classical Music Event and Midsummer Party on the Quay made successful applications, with the help of the City Arts Officer, to Grants for the Arts to gain a total of £33, 673 using City Council support as match funding. (See item 6.2 Summer in the City Budget breakdown)

### 5.0 WAY FORWARD

5.1 The City Council reached a difficult decision to no longer deliver the Exeter

Summer Festival as a result of reduced budget pressures. To have tried to run an event of similar scope with less money would inevitably have drawn negative comparisons. The Summer Festival 2010 had developed strong working partnerships with the venues and businesses, including the production or commissioning of exciting and innovative outdoor events (Flash Opera, Circus Parade, and Theo Jansen sculpture).

This break may allow the development of a new look festival which would aim to:

- focus on the best of former events and allows for a new approach.
- include the production of large scale free events to large audiences
- happen slightly later in the year, perhaps bridging the gap timewise between the former Summer and Autumn Festivals to take place in September.
- retain the close partnership working developed with key venues in the previous Summer Festival
- work collaboratively with the City's core venues and other partners to maximise benefit and minimise risk to the Council
- produce a programme which benefits the local economy and enhances the City's cultural image regionally and nationally as a vibrant visitor destination
- 5.2 One of the strategic aims for the City Council is to promote Exeter as a regional centre of culture. Innovative arts events provide excellent opportunities to project the cultural image of the city. The successful press and media campaign of Summer Festival 2010 highlighted this. By employing an effective specialist arts PR company, the City can gain national press and regional TV coverage which help to:
  - develop Exeter's profile as an ambitious regional centre for the arts
  - highlight Exeter City Council's leadership role at producing accessible arts events and its continued support for the arts
  - portray the city as a thriving cultural centre to encourage business and key employee relocation
  - help to generate audiences and increase economic benefit to the city
- 5.3 The Arts and Events team have established worthwhile links with city venues, promoters, key Higher Education institutions and other organisations, through partnership working on the delivery of a range of events. There is also a wealth of knowledge about arts marketing and arts PR companies and good working relationships with relevant officers of the Arts Council. In addition the new structure of the Council will enable even closer working partnerships with RAMM, and the team has already established good working links with other internal event providers, Park and Open Spaces and Rivers and Canals. With the support of Members, there is potential to develop the shape of any future festival in partnership across the public, commercial and voluntary sectors. These links will provide a sound platform for the development of a new festival.
- There are indications that the Arts Council, using the funding set aside for "theatre in the city", are minded to support a new festival of theatre in the city and are currently in discussion with the City Council about processes and ways forward. In approaching the City Council with this option the Arts Council have recognised the City Council's expertise of running major festivals in the city. However this funding is from the National Lottery and will have to be applied for in an open application process.

- 5.5 The successful 2010 Children's Literature Festival partnership, comprised the University of Exeter, Exeter College, Exeter Phoenix, Devon Library Service, Cyprus Well, Spacex, Exeter Northcott, RAMM, Bike Shed, DAISI and Double Elephant and Waterstones is currently in the process of making an application to the Arts Council Grants for the Arts for £35,000 towards the delivery of a broader Exeter Literature Festival for 2012/13. The City Council is a key partner and could be in a position to offer to contribute a small amount of match funding together with Devon County Council to the application to act as leverage for Grants for the Arts funding.
- 5.6 In light of the potential Arts Council funding both for a new Festival and also the Exeter Literature Festival it is recommended that the current Arts and Events budget of £65,000 is retained as match funding as follows: £5000 towards Exeter Literature Festival and £60,000 towards delivery of the proposed new festival for Exeter.

## 6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

6.1 City Council funding for the festivals covered in this report is as follows:

Festival/event	Budget (£) 2011/12
Autumn Festival	13,000
Animated Exeter	20,000
Vibraphonic	7,000
Exeter Respect	2,000
Exeter Open Studios	1,350
Summer in the	
City/Festival	65,000
Literature Festival	0
TOTAL	108,350

## 6.2 Summer in the City Budget Breakdown

	Expenditure (£)	£ leverage from Arts Council Grants for the Arts (GFA)
Overall Programme		• •
Marketing	12,130	
Production	7,451	
In House production:		
Party on the Quay	41,405	9,110
ECC Partnership support:		
Burn the Curtain Theatre	1,483	9,225
Classical Music Event	2,515	9,223
Exeter Respect	2,000	6,115
Rougemont Sessions x 3	3,595	
Sub Total	72,387	
Less GFA for Party on the	9,110	
Quay		
TOTAL	63,277	33,673
Balance	1,723	

6.3 There is no box office breakdown for Summer in the City as the financial risk on shows was not taken by the City Council.

## 7.0 RECOMMENDATION that:

7.1 Members note and comment on the report and its recommendation for the future development of the arts and events portfolio in 2012/13.

## RICHARD BALL HEAD OF ECONOMY AND TOURISM

## **ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

## Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

Exeter Arts and Media Strategy 2009 – 2012 Exeter Arts and Media Strategy Action Plan 2009 - 2012

### **APPENDIX 1 - INDIVIDUAL REVIEW OF EXETER FESTIVALS**

## 1.0 AUTUMN FESTIVAL 2010

- 1.1 The Autumn Festival took place between 29 October and 16 November 2010. The core programme featured 33 events and culminated in the Christmas Lights Switch On.
- 1.2 Attendance figures are based on evaluation forms completed by 25 of the 33 events. Audience numbers were down from 12691 in 2009 to 9006 in 2010 as were the number of events and there was a sharp drop in the number of free events:

	2010	2009	2008
Number of events	33	64	56
Number of organisations taking part	29	42	48
Number of free events	6	35	17
Number of ticketed events	27	29	39
Audience totals	9,006	12691	7594
Artists/performers	573	1142	722
Volunteers	179	295	170

1.3 The Exeter Festival Awards scheme was established in 2004 to provide a low level of financial assistance to encourage community and youth groups, clubs, organisations and individuals to develop activity for performance at Exeter Barnfield Theatre during the festival. The awards covered the hire fee and technical support at the theatre.

Two awards were made in 2010:

**Multi-Cultural Celebration** produced by the Centre for Human Rights and Social Equality

**The Merry Wives of Windsor** produced by the Countess Wear Community Theatre.

- 1.4 The festival also incorporated the following events:
  - EXE-treme Imagination, the first Exeter Children's Literature Festival led by Exeter University with support from Arts Council Grants for the Arts and the City Council. This event was produced in partnership with Exeter Phoenix, Exeter Northcott, DAISI, RAMM, Spacex, Cyprus Well, Devon Library Service, Riptide, CCANW and Waterstones. The festival comprised 23 events across the city with a strong workshop programme in schools across the region.
  - Theatre Alibi's Exeter school tour of 10 shows and their residency at Exeter Phoenix, a further six shows;
  - Like Music a partnership event initiated by the City Council with 4 music venues underwritten by and part of the Like Minds Conference

     a conference focused on creative and innovative networking for business and individuals with an emphasis on social media.

## 1.5 Finance

The City Council's overall budget for the 2010 festival was £13,000 and the total costs of delivering the festival came to £12,084 as summarised below:

Expenditure	£
Marketing	8,570
PR	2,000
Awards + production support	1,514
Total	12,084

### 2.0 EXETER OPEN STUDIOS

2.1 Exeter Open Studios 2010 took place in the Autumn Festival on 5 – 7 November. The event is now entirely managed by the artists themselves with a small grant of £1350 from the City Council and some officer support. 68 artists and group shows took part compared to 50 in 2009. The event which continues to attract over 4,000 visitors from across the region, previewed with a popular auction of postcard sized work donated by participating artists. The auction raised over £1500 towards the cost of the brochure. Overall sales by artists were slightly lower than in 2009, from £25,000 to just over £23,000, which probably reflects the general economic downturn.

### 3.0 ANIMATED EXETER 2011

- 3.1 **Attendance**: The overall audience figures for 2011 showed an increase 21,979 compared to 18,440 in 2010. This was due to an increase in schools activities from 13 in 2010 to 28 in 2011 and the events where attendance rose from 1,798 to 7,012, the figures for 2011 notably increased as a direct result of the *Isca Obscura* commissioned projection on Exeter Cathedral. Attendance at other workshop and film screenings was down.
- 3.2 **Events**: 17 events took place including the Careers Day, Essential weekend and the Isca Obscure commission. Numbers fell by over 50% at the Careers Day and Essential Weekend despite wide advertisement at schools and higher education institutions across the region. During the Essential Weekend it was clear that the events from a more commercial background, for example, *Ugglies*, an event for families based on a popular CBBC series or events featuring recognised animators such as Joanna Quinn sold out whereas other simply did not.
- 3.3 **Commission**: Funded by Arts Council Grants for the Arts the spectacular, high profile festival commission *Isca Obscura* on Exeter Cathedral provided the festival's high point. The event was covered by both BBC Spotlight and ITV West Country and attracted some 6,400 people. This event drew the largest audience ever recorded for a single event at the festival.
- 3.4 **Film Screenings**: 21 screenings took place during the festival attracting an audience of 777 compared to 1142 in 2010. The festival extended its partnership to include the Plough Arts Centre in Torrington sharing programme costs. The Polish Classics screening, also featured in Kinoteka, the Exeter Polish Film Festival programme, attracted the highest attendance of 99 in Exeter.

**Competition Films**: There was a total of 80 entries across this programme which included *Best of the West*, open to students from South West England and South Wales; *Screen Out Loud*, open to independent animation across the UK and *ExAnimation* open to under 18s in the South West.

- 3.5 **Workshops and Education**: The festival and its partners, Spacex and Thelma Hubert Gallery (Honiton) ran 12 open and family focussed workshops during the festival attracting 1224 participants. The festival delivered 28 workshops for schools throughout the year attended by 781 children. In particular, Young + Animated, a group of young animators aged 10 16 were awarded £30,000 through the First Light fund to work alongside industry professionals to produce a short animated film Memory Train which premiered at the 2011 festival.
- 3.6 **Marketing**: 20,000 brochures were delivered to venues across the region and some 2800 mailed to the festival's mailing list. The audience surveys showed that double the number of people get their information form the brochure rather than the website. Nevertheless the festival website attracted 140,000 hits and the regular e-mail newsletter campaign increased numbers by 150 over the festival period. The festival also launched Twitter and Facebook campaigns in 2010.

**PR**: Watershed PR delivered an effective media campaign as follows:

TV 2 x regional pieces: BBC Spotlight and ITV West Country

PA Video Syndicated to over 35 online news resources

Radio 1 x national and 9 x regional interviews

Print 6 x national, 16 x regional 2 x animation trade reviews

Online 22 online pieces

3.7 **Evaluation**: Information was gathered throughout the festival from audience survey sheets, comments books and festival volunteers undertaking questionnaires, broadly the evaluation highlighted the following points: Majority attendance was in family groups
Majority age group is under 18 followed by 36 – 46
Majority travelled under 10 miles followed by 11- 20 miles
Majority additional spend (after ticket) was under £15

## 3.8 **Finance**:

Expenditure
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Artistic expenditure	34,500
Organisational development	600
Marketing/Audience Development	15,590
Staffing	35,350
Overheads	22,651
TOTAL	108,691

#### Income

Arts Council	38,446
Exeter City Council	20,000
South West Screen	5,000
Devon County Council	2,500
First Light	30,000
Sponsorship	2601
Ticket income	10,459
Carried Forward from 2010	1,427
TOTAL	110,433
Surplus Balance	1,742

## 3.9 **Festival Funding 2012 and beyond**.

The festival has secured City Council funding for the festival in 2012. An application for £38,615, on the advice of the Arts Council, has been made to cover the costs of a large scale commission and exhibition programme and the outcome will be know on 18 October. The Festival has secured £6,300 from the British Film Institute's Transitional fund. The festival is working to a Plan A if the Arts Council funding is secured and a Plan B without the commission and subsidised exhibition programme.

Looking beyond 2012 the festival's application to the Arts Council new revenue fund, the National Portfolio Fund 2012-2015, was not successful on the grounds that as a newly independent organisation, Animated Exeter did not meet all the criteria sufficiently. A key area of concern was the governance, and the Arts Council have recommended that the festival apply for some organisational development funding both to strengthen the Board but also to develop a three year business plan.

### 4.0 VIBRAPHONIC 2011

- 2011 was the festival's fourth year of running at arms length form the City Council. The reduction in funding from the City Council from £14,000 in 2010 to £7,000 in 2011 has led to the number of events in the core programme being scaled down from 25 in 2010 to 18 in 2011. The core programme took place at Exeter Phoenix with the exception of two concerts, one at Exeter Northcott and one at the University's Lemon Grove. However despite the economic climate, attendances held up with over 4500 ticket sales. The popular Jack to Phono event featured 31 different events across the following music venues in the city: The Amber Rooms, Angel, Cavern, Klass A, Mama Stones, Old Firehouse and Timepiece. The festival presented a strong workshop programme that included a live jazz improvisation session with Pete Canter and the extremely popular daylong Analogue to Digital event which attracted 1000 young people.
- 4.2 The contribution of the City Council is limited to the grant of £7000. Individual promoters take the risk on expenditure and ticket sales of their own concerts. The city council funding contributed towards the cost of marketing and brochure production, and overheads:

# **Expenditure**

Marketing (10,000 brochures,	2,700
adshels, banners, advertising) Overheads (co-ordinators, accounts, phone, bank charges	3,985
Programme Support	450
TOTAL	7,135
Income	
City Council	7,000
Sponsorship	200
TOTAL	7,200
Balance (surplus)	(65)

4.3 With a further reduction in funding in 2012 from £7000 to £2000 it is unlikely

that Vibraphonic remains sustainable in its current from both in this financial year and in the future, unless additional funding is obtained through sponsorship or other funders.

## 5.0 EXETER RESPECT

- 5.1 Respect in the Park a two free day festival held in early June in Belmont park. Respect 2011 was the first event in the Summer in the City programme of events. The festival is run by a voluntary board made up of interested people from the local community and aims to ensure the board is representative of Exeter's diverse community. There are no paid staff; however the festival is timed to allow a large number of volunteers from the University of Exeter's Event Management course to participate.
- The festival continues to expand, and the successful application to the Arts Councils' Grants for the Arts added the Community Dance stage run by Dance in Devon to the existing three music stages, children's play area, crafts, food, community information stalls and bar. Over 20,500 people passed through the park over the weekend and the event was well run and there were no incidents.
- 5.3 Arts officers attend the board's planning meetings in an advisory capacity and are instrumental in ensuring that liaison between relevant Council departments is smooth and that the event production is run under best practice and adheres to all health and safety regulations.

### 6.0 SUMMER IN THE CITY

- 6.1. **Background**: The Summer Events Programme report was agreed at Scrutiny Committee, Economy in June 2011. As a result of significant budget reductions in the arts and festivals budget for 2011/12 the proposal was to produce an interim programme of events in 2011 to replace the former Summer Festival.
- The programme was to include a large scale free event, Midsummer Party on the Quay, as well as to work in partnership using the officer expertise to help a certain number of events produced by local promoters, and young up and coming independent theatre and events producers. The support consisted of small amounts of funding, fundraising support, production advice and marketing. The overall budget was £65,000, while officers advised and helped run box offices leading up to and during events, the individual promoters took the risk on ticketed events.
- Programme: The programme included nine events in total featuring Exeter Respect (see Item 5); Midsummer Party on the Quay featuring a performance of Wishful by London's foremost celebratory arts company, Emergency Exit Arts; Rougemont Sessions, four music events in Rougemont Park programmed by Exeter Phoenix and two other independent city based promoters; War Veterans Exhibition by local artist John McDermott in Exeter Castle; Exeter Armed Forces Day Parade and military bands concert on Cathedral Green; Burn the Curtain theatre's promenade production of the Adventure of Uncle Lubin, a family show specially adapted and created by local director Joe Hancock (this toured the region and also performed in London); Miracle Theatre's touring production of The Death of Sherlock Holmes (Cornwall's foremost touring company);

Exeter's Classical Music Event at Exeter Castle, a free event and a day of classical music from young composers and performers; and Exeter Fringe Festival over 40 fringe theatre events in venues across the city, which was supported by City Council funding of the Fringe Brochure and also Production Management.

6.4 **Attendance**: All the events were asked to complete evaluation forms so that attendance could be monitored as follows:

Event	No of days/performances	Overall Attendance
Exeter Respect	2	20,500
Rougemont	4	520
Sessions*		
Midsummer Party on	1	2,000
the Quay*		
Armed Forces	1	2,500
Parade/concert		
War Veterans	10	1,400
Exhibition		
The Adventures of	5 (one cancelled)	108
Uncle Lubin	3 schools workshops	120
Death of Sherlock	3	460
Holmes		
Classical Music	1	657
		700 live webcast
Fringe	40	2,000
TOTAL	70	30,965

<sup>\*</sup> indicates where adverse weather affected attendance

Marketing: The event was a core part of the Summer in the City leaflet and produced in conjunction with City Tourism officers. 150,000 were printed and distributed across the region through tourism and arts networks. Some 19,000 brochures were mailed to former festival as well as tourism address lists. A further 5000 leaflets just including the programme of events was produced and distributed city wide, backed up by an adshel and banner campaign in key locations, Exeter Quayside, the bus station and Castle Street. Individual events also carried out their own marketing and publicity.

**PR**: Watershed PR were contracted to provide PR/Media support for the entire event programme focussed around key objectives:

- Summer in the City is a diverse, exciting new season of arts events promoting regional, emerging talent and making the arts accessible and affordable.
- Summer in the City has replaced Exeter Summer Festival in 2011.
- Exeter is a regional centre for the arts and a desirable cultural destination. Traditional media techniques were run alongside a Facebook page, specifically created for Summer in the City.

### Press coverage summary:

- 22 pieces of regional press coverage
- 7 regional radio interviews
- 1 radio promotion
- 1 regional TV feature

## Plus over 48,000 hits on Facebook

6.6. **Finance:** The programme came in on budget and attracted additional leverage of £33,673 from successful Arts Council Grants for the Arts applications, three made by partner organisations with the support of the Arts and Events team and one made directly by the Arts team for the production of Wishful at Party on the Quay.

# Summer in the City Budget Breakdown

	Expenditure (£)	£ leverage from Arts Council Grants for the Arts (GFA)
Overall Programme		• •
Marketing	12,130	
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Rougemont Sessions x 3	3,595	
Sub Total	72,387	
Less GFA for Party on the	9,110	
Quay		
TOTAL	63,277	33,673
Balance	(1,723)	

6.7 Summer in the City can be considered successful as a one off event both in attracting leverage funding, event promotion and also attendance. The City Council support to independent producers was appreciated and has led to new projects on behalf of Burn The Curtain theatre and Ondrej Pochyly, the producer of the Classical Music Event. A new partnership has been formed between the Bike Shed Theatre, Exeter Phoenix, Exeter Northcott, Cygnet Theatre and the City Council to develop a Fringe Theatre Festival for 2012.