

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
17 JANUARY 2008

EXETER NORTHCOTT THEATRE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the campaign to address the Arts Council South West's decision to withdraw funding from the Northcott Theatre.

2.0 INFORMATION

- 2.1 Arts Council South West advised the University and subsequently the City Council in mid December that it intended to withdraw all funding from 1 April 2009. The Arts Council funding amounts to some £547,000 per annum which is set alongside the existing City Council grant of £85,231 per annum and Devon County Council funding of £45,000 per annum. In terms of the Theatre's overall funding, the loss of the Arts Council South West core funding is thus fatal for the continued operation of the Northcott in Exeter.

- 2.2 A campaign is being mounted to reverse this decision with close co-operation between the University, City Council and County Council which is intended to underline the impact of this decision which has been taken with minimal warning. The particular added dimension to the current situation is that the Arts Council were fully engaged with the University in the £2 million refurbishment of the Northcott and that reassurances have been given about their commitment to ongoing funding which was fundamental to the City Council's own decision to assist the Northcott refurbishment. Members will recall that Executive on 23 January 2007 agreed a £200,000 loan to the Northcott, which was additional to the grant of £550,000 which was approved by Executive on 21 July 2005. In total, grant aid of £1.3m has come from the three key local public stakeholders (University, Exeter City Council and Devon County Council) on the clear understanding that the Northcott had a viable, long-term future.

- 2.3 The campaign to change this decision is now underway and Members will be given a verbal update at the meeting of the actions being undertaken and any further actions which are required.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note this report and respond to any verbal advice provided at the meeting.

JOHN RIGBY
DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT

RICHARD BALL
HEAD OF ECONOMY & TOURISM

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None