

Funding Agreement between Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Arts Centre

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Colchester's vibrant cultural scene is one of the town's unique selling points, and something that Colchester Borough Council (CBC) is keen to support and sustain. Colchester Arts Centre, firstsite and the Mercury Theatre are central to this, providing the leadership, capacity, creativity and innovative programmes of delivery to make Colchester a great place to live, learn, work and visit.
- 1.2 The Council provides core revenue grants to these organisations, because they deliver on the Council's Strategic Plan, in particular they are fundamental to supporting delivery of the Creative Colchester Strategy and Action Plan which is a detailed delivery framework for promoting and enhancing the arts in the local economy. In line with the Creative Colchester strategy, the Council continues to work with regional partners to align policy and funding to help deliver key economic and social outcomes through investing in development of the arts.
- 1.3 As part of the Council's commitment to transparency, quality and performance management systems, the arts organisations that receive CBC funding must set out clear objectives and provide performance and sector data so that the service that is provided through partnership working can be measured, evaluated and improved. This document defines the performance targets and monitoring process, and confirms the funding amounts currently agreed.
- 1.4 Colchester Arts Centre is one of three arts organisations strategically-funded by CBC. In 2014 the Arts Centre was successful in their bid to the Arts Council for continued National Portfolio Organisation funding from April 2015 for three years. Therefore, the 2016-17 funding agreement with CBC will focus on the Arts Centre's work towards the goals as set out in its bid, as well as the key areas of performance and delivery required by CBC.

2.0 Scope and Financial Arrangements

- 2.1 Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 the Council will fund Colchester Arts Centre to the amount of £63,650. This funding was agreed by the Cabinet and full Council in line with the budget strategy to support the core operations of the organisation as set out in the business and operations plan and to meet the targets for performance set out in section 9 of this Agreement.
- 2.2 Upon signature of this Agreement, the Council will release the funding in quarterly instalments.
- 2.3 Any financial investment that the Council needs to make under its obligations as the lease holder of the building is deemed to be outside of this agreement.

However, any tenant responsibilities that Colchester Arts Centre Theatre holds are considered to be within this agreement.

- 2.4 On signing this Agreement, the Arts Centre recognises that it is in receipt of public funding and accepts responsibility for showing proof of eligibility, meeting the targets for performance, and collecting qualitative and quantitative performance data to provide evidence of the service standards. The Arts Centre also agrees to provide available sector data to assist with monitoring and performance assessment.
- 2.5 Where appropriate and possible within current resources, Colchester Borough Council will provide non-financial support to the Arts Centre where it seeks to develop additional services that contribute towards meeting the Council's strategic priorities. If these additional services are developed to a point that requires additional funding, the Arts Centre may request such funding formally, and the Council may issue a separate funding agreement if applicable. If this circumstance arises, the services will be deemed to fall outside of this agreement.

3.0 Eligibility and Criteria for Acceptance

- 3.1 In order to be eligible for funding the Arts Centre must supply evidence to demonstrate that it is:
 - a. Properly constituted
 - b. Financially viable
 - c. Able to manage its work effectively, monitor and manage risk, and seek necessary professional financial, legal and insurance advice
 - d. Operating with effective policies and procedures in equal opportunities, health and safety, equality and diversity, access, and protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
 - e. Delivering on the current strategic priorities of the Council.

4.0 Performance monitoring framework

- 4.1 The Arts Centre must submit an up to date Business Plan and operations information to CBC, including a budget to cover the same period as the funding agreement and a copy of the audited accounts from 2016-17.
- 4.2 As a minimum throughout the term of the agreement, the Arts Centre must submit quarterly budget reports and invite a Council representative to observe two Board meetings. The organisation will also participate in two bi-annual review meetings, as outlined below.
- 4.3 At the end of the agreement period, the organisation must provide audited accounts and submit performance data to evidence the organisation's turnover, audience and participation levels as well as contribution to the Council's strategic priorities.

5.0 Bi-annual review process

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- 5.1 A review meeting will take place between Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Arts Centre twice in the period of the agreement. The meetings shall be attended by the relevant officer(s) of the Council and Executive staff of the Arts Centre.
- 5.2 The Portfolio Holder and Arts Centre Management may be asked to sit before a Scrutiny Panel to monitor performance and achievements. As such, the bi-annual review process should be seen as an opportunity to ensure that the Portfolio Holder can evidence performance within their area of responsibility.

6.0 Acknowledgement of funding

- 6.1 Colchester Arts Centre will acknowledge its financial assistance from CBC in all marketing and communication materials in print, electronic, broadcast and other formats.
- 6.2 The organisation is asked to specify particular steps that it will take within the period of this Agreement to promote the support that it receives from the Council in Section 9.

7.0 General conditions

- 7.1 The funding provided under this agreement may not be assigned to any other person, association or company other than in the course of delivering the Business Plan and agreed performance targets.
- 7.2 This agreement does not constitute the Colchester Arts Centre as an agent of the Council or otherwise make the Council liable to any person who may take proceedings against the Theatre.
- 7.3 The Council reserves the right to nominate annually a councillor to be a director on the Colchester Arts Centre Board.
- 7.4 The Council should be consulted where any change or development in the direction of the organisation's affairs might affect this Agreement.
- 7.5 Funds will be repayable in full to the Council in the event of any of the following:
 - i. Misuse of payment received from the Council by Colchester Arts Centre
 - ii. A breach of the law by Colchester Arts Centre
 - iii. Petitioning the court for the appointment of an administrator
 - iv. Having a receiver appointed over all or any part of the Arts Centre's assets
 - v. Being the subject of a petition or resolution for the Arts Centre's 'winding up'

8.0 Breach in agreement

- 8.1 In the event of either the Council or Colchester Arts Centre's notifying the other in writing of a breach in this agreement, the parties shall meet to discuss the alleged breach within 21 days.

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- 8.2 Both the Council and the Colchester Arts Centre agree that they have an equal responsibility to reach a practical and reasonable solution to the breach, but if after 12 weeks a solution has not been agreed then the parties mutually agree to arbitration.

9.0 Specification of performance targets

- 9.1 The specification of performance targets is developed collaboratively between the Council and your organisation. The information provided here substantiates the Council's decision to invest public funds and helps to strengthen the partnership delivery model.
- 9.2 The information is set out in line with the Strategic Plan to help to convey to Members, officers and partners how the Council's financial support is an effective and efficient way to deliver services to meet local identified needs.

9.3 Performance/Programme Overview

Target	Outputs/Report
<p>Colchester Arts Centre will promote, present and nurture artistic talent. Through a combination of curatorial expertise, outstanding production values and straightforward commercial nous it will act as a home for artists, a breeding ground for artistic ambition and innovation, and a platform for local, national and international talent. In line with CBC's Strategic Plan, with its broad ranging and risk-taking performance programme Colchester Arts Centre will seek to inspire and nurture creativity in the local community, inspiring artists already on the path and encouraging others to embrace their creativity.</p> <p>Target: In 2016/17 we will present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four pieces of international work.• One major partnership project.• Ten jazz performances• Forty Folk gigs• Thirty Rock / Indie / Pop gigs• Forty Comedy Shows• Thirty shows specifically for children.• Six World Music performances.• Six Film screenings• Ten Experimental Music Performances	
Wonderful Wednesdays – New, challenging, experimental, innovative	.

<p>performance work, made accessible for a regular Colchester audience with a radical pay what you can afford admission structure that makes this work, perhaps more commonly seen as the preserve of the arts elite, truly open to anyone. Personally curated by our Director, and presented in a relaxed, inclusive atmosphere.</p> <p>Target: 30 performances in the funding period.</p>	
<p>A dedicated programme of Childrens' Shows and Workshops – programmed by a dedicated booker with specialist knowledge. All show tickets kept at a low, accessible, affordable price of £4.95.</p> <p>Target: 32 Shows and 10 workshops.</p>	

9.4 Community and Audience Development

Target	Outputs/Report
<p>Community Events – we commit to program a number of events focusing on the talents of the local community including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two “Made In Colchester” Art Fairs featuring work from local artists • Colchester’s Got Talent • Sixth Form College Battle of the Bands • Variety Night 2017 in aid of Mayor’s Charities 	
<p>Increase known audience attendance from 41, 774 (2015 /16) to 42,000</p>	
<p>Increase online audience figures by 5% by the end of the funding agreement. This to include the Colchester Arts Centre website and our social media platforms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase website Unique Browsers from 115,443 to 121,215 • Increase number of website page impressions from 700,419 to 735,439 • Increase number of website visits from 266,849 to 280,191 • Increase Facebook fans from 6970 to 7318 • Increase Twitter followers from 9766 to 10254 	

<p>Reinvigorated SMS text list – this has proven to be a hugely effective marketing tool in the past, highly targeted but traditionally rather costly. Improved technology and affordability now make this form of direct marketing more cost effective and worthy of further exploration.</p>	
<p>The Audience Finder & The Audience Agency – We will continue to work with The Audience Agency to share information and develop strategies across regional and Colchester clusters, across the following strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and understanding the demographic profile of participating organisations' audiences. • Understanding the overall patterns of cultural attendance in Colchester and the crossover between venues and organisations. • Building a picture of Colchester's demographic landscape; with a focus on how different demographic groups engage with the arts. • Understanding audiences' behaviour and their different motivations to engage. • Identifying and understanding the place making and cultural tourism impacts of participating organisations. • Audience loyalty and levels of deeper engagement through friends and membership schemes. 	
<p>Membership Scheme: Relaunch with new pricing structure and more targeted offer. The scheme has been successful in the past with a good take-up despite minimal or no publicity. With previously struggling areas of the programme now flourishing as a result of changes made to presentation and price structure, the time is right to change the emphasis of the scheme to encourage increased take-up across all areas.</p>	

9.5. Governance and Management

Target	Outputs/Report
Arts Centre Board: Organise a Board retreat.	

9.6. Diversity

Target	Outputs/Report
Accessible Shows – we will program specific performances made accessible to people with disabilities, beyond our regular venue accessibility offer. Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six relaxed performances • An audio described performance • Six BSL interpreted performances. 	
Increase Diversity of Artistic Programme – encouraging diversity to permeate all levels of the organisation, not just within the staff. Target: work with 6 artists with disabilities during the term of the funding agreement.	
Staff Training – to be ongoing and not merely introductory. Target: Disability Awareness Training for all staff at all levels of the organisation on an annual basis. Offer to be made available to all volunteers.	
Mystery Shoppers – to forge a relationship with local disability groups to evaluate our accessibility provisions. Target: Mystery Shoppers to attend 10 events in the funding period, to include a spread across all art forms.	

9.7. Young People

Target	Outputs/Report
Improve Ticket price concessions to students in full time education: Target: Difference in price is generally £1 or similar. Expand this to a minimum £2 discount across all events by the end of the funding period.	
Schools Rock Prom / On For ... – These are dedicated events for young local bands, giving emerging talent the experience of performing in a fully professional venue. Target:	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One Rock Prom. • One On For 2017 Local Band showcase. • Offer support slots to visiting national and international bands to those appearing at the On showcase. 	
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9.8. Older People

Target	Outputs/Report
Concessions to over 60s / those in receipt of state pension: Target: Difference in price is generally £1 or similar. Expand this to a minimum £2 discount across all events by the end of the funding period.	
Programming – We aim to programme events of particular interest to older people. Target: Minimum 5 in the funding period.	

9.9. Job Creation, sector skills development and contribution to the local economy

Target	Outputs/Report
Chamber of Commerce – We have joined in order to forge closer links with local business through sponsorship opportunities and or possible partnerships. Target: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update commercial sponsorship brochure. • CAC Representative to attend 4 networking events per year. 	
Volunteers – Volunteering, whilst hugely aiding the operation of the arts centre, also provides a valuable opportunity for work experience and skills development. Target: Increase volunteer numbers by 10% by the end of the funding period.	

9.10. Environmental and Economic Sustainability

Target	Outputs/Report
Farmers Markets – in partnership with En Form we will hold 11 monthly	

Farmers Markets during the funding period, offering a wide range of locally sourced produce.	
Julie's Bicycle – we will continue our work with this organisation to establish measurement data for use in setting SMART targets.	
Green Team – meeting monthly to improve green credentials across the organisation.	
Waste Management – regular review of best practice: we commit to constant monitoring of cost effectiveness and green credentials.	

9.11. What are your particular plans to promote the support that the Council provides during the period of the agreement?

We acknowledge CBC funding support in our quarterly Events Guide, distributed across the Borough and direct mailed to approximately 13,000 mailing list subscribers.

Funding acknowledgement on website and through social media via re-tweets, facebook re-posts etc.

9.12. Please outline the way in which your organisation meets local, regional and national strategies.

Local

We contribute to CBC's Strategic Plan 2015-18 across the four watchwords:

Vibrant

Colchester Arts Centre enhances the retail mix of the town by hosting Farmers Markets, Art Fairs and other independent trade events, and the leisure mix through the dynamic eclecticism of our events programme. It contributes to a sense of community through its involvement in "grassroots" projects (Annual Variety Night, The Warm & Toasty Club, hosting the long-standing independent Colchester Folk Club...), contributing to the artistic community of the town through collaborations with other venues (space hire, collaborative projects, provision of rehearsal space) and helping to empower people with disabilities through its strong emphasis on accessibility that permeates all levels of the organisation.

Prosperous

Colchester Arts Centre supports its employees through professional development programmes and on spec training when required. The venue has been the starting point for many high-achieving professionals who have gone on to work on projects such as the Latitude Festival, international tour bookers United Talent Agency and Live Nation, and progress to senior positions at other nationally recognised arts institutions. Colchester Arts Centre plays a full part in providing work experience for under 18s, and has participated in various apprenticeship programmes. Its volunteer scheme gives many the chance to cut their teeth in an arts environment, and some have gone on to gain regular employment as a result of their time with us.

Thriving

Promoting Colchester's history and heritage through our Heritage Open Days. The venue recognises it is fortunate to be housed in such a historic building that is of considerable interest to many visitors, including those from overseas and they are welcome to view the space whenever circumstances will allow. We have recently commissioned a local historian to produce a document detailing the history of the building, for distribution to interested visitors free of charge. Providing young people opportunities to make the best of their potential, via the provision of participatory events like the Schools Rock Prom, On For... Local Bands showcase, and in the earlier years through our Kids Workshops and Arts Award qualification sessions. The arts centre cares about its environs with regular litter picks and the recent cultivation of new gardens in the entrance area. A specialised Green Team now meets monthly to discuss methods of improving environmental sensibilities within the organisation and reducing our carbon footprint.

Welcoming

For Colchester Arts Centre, accessibility runs through the organisation and is an agenda item at every staff and board meeting. The venue has a can-do attitude to accommodate all requests. The performance programme aims to be accessible and inclusive. We are listening to the views of our customers with disabilities through our audience surveys, informal feedback on the night and observations from volunteers. Equal Opportunities is enshrined at the core of the organisation.

Regional

We are a leading and indeed founder member of the South East Disability Action Group.

National

We respond to the targets as laid out within the Arts Council's "Great Art & Culture For Everyone" Ten Year Strategic Framework. We are working and delivering on three of the five stated goals:

Everyone has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries

Building on our already strong audience, broadening our reach, penetrating areas of low engagement and extending and enhancing our appeal and cultural offer to communities.

Excellence is thriving and celebrated in the arts, museums and libraries

Delivering a cohesive and dynamic arts provision across a multitude of platforms, interventions and scenarios.

Every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts, museums and libraries

Developing a rich programme of events for those in the 3 to 16 yrs age range. Partnership working with educational and schools networks. Targeted projects for deaf and disabled children. Partnership working Bridge and Essex Music Hub. A Summer Festival with Arts Award Accreditation. Engagement with Schools Artsmark Award. Commissioning of new work.

11.0 Acceptance

- 11.1 Upon signing this agreement, the organisation agrees to the terms and conditions of funding and use reasonable endeavours to meet the performance targets and monitoring framework that have been outlined above.

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On behalf of Colchester Arts Centre

Signed (Director)

Name (please print)

On behalf of Colchester Arts Centre

Signed (Chair of the Board)

Name (please print)

On behalf of Colchester Borough Council

Signed (Portfolio Holder)

Name (please print)

On behalf of Colchester Borough Council

Signed (Officer)

Name (please print)