

## **Funding Agreement between Colchester Borough Council and the Mercury Theatre**

### **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, and support delivery of the Creative Colchester Strategy 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 The Mercury Theatre is one of three arts organisations strategically-funded by CBC in alignment with Arts Council England (ACE). In 2014 the Mercury was successful in their bid to ACE for continued National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) funding from April 2015 for three years. Therefore, the 2017-18 funding agreement with CBC will continue to focus on the Theatre's work towards the goals as set out in the bid, as well as the key areas of performance and delivery required by CBC. Along with Firstsite and the Colchester Arts Centre the Mercury has applied for renewed NPO status from April 2018, the outcome of which will be announced in June 2017.

### **2.0 Scope and Financial Arrangements**

- 2.1 Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 the Council will fund the Mercury Theatre to the amount of £221,850. 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 owner of the theatre buildings is deemed to be outside of this agreement. However, any tenant responsibilities that the Mercury Theatre holds are considered to be within this agreement.
- 2.4 On signing this Agreement, the Mercury Theatre 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 Theatre also agreed 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 Mercury Theatre 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 Mercury Theatre 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 Mercury Theatre 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 Mercury Theatre 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 when available.
- 4.2 As a minimum throughout the term of the agreement, the Mercury Theatre must submit quarterly budget reports if required and invite a Council representative to observe two Board meetings. The organisation will also participate in an annual review meeting, 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**

- 5.1 A review meeting will take place between Colchester Borough Council and Mercury Theatre at least once during the period of the agreement. The meetings shall be attended by the Portfolio Holder (PFH), relevant officer(s) of the Council and Executive staff of the Mercury Theatre.
- 5.2 The Portfolio Holder and Theatre 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 The Mercury Theatre 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 Mercury Theatre 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 Mercury Board.
- 7.4 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 Mercury Theatre
  - ii. A breach of the law by Mercury Theatre
  - iii. Petitioning the court for the appointment of an administrator
  - iv. Having a receiver appointed over all or any part of the Theatre's assets
  - v. Being the subject of a petition or resolution for the Mercury Theatre's 'winding up'
- 7.5 The Council should be consulted where any change or development in the direction of the organisation's affairs might affect this Agreement.

# Colchester Borough Council strategic funding for arts organisations 2017/18

## 8.0 Breach in agreement

- 8.1 In the event of either the Council or the Mercury Theatre notifying the other in writing of a breach in this agreement, the parties shall meet to discuss the alleged breach within 21 days.
- 8.2 Both the Council and the Mercury Theatre 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 the Mercury Theatre. 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 Overview

| Target  | Outputs/Report   |
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| Annual target to put on <b>400</b> performances with <b>115,000</b> people attending.                           | <b>423</b> performances and events achieving a capacity of <b>69%</b> (against the national average of <b>58%</b> ).<br><br>Actual audience attendance of <b>113,644</b>   |
| Collate and report audience feedback about the artistic programme with a minimum of <b>60%</b> approval rating. | Customer Satisfaction Surveys are carried out following <i>each Made in Colchester</i> Production. Customers currently rate the Mercury as <b>4.52*</b> out of <b>5*</b> . This feedback is reviewed daily.  |
| Collate and report press feedback about the artistic programme.   | All press reports from local, regional and national papers are collated. Copies are available on request.<br><br>There were <b>663</b> mentions of the Mercury in the press in 2017/18.<br><br>★★★★★ "A smart, sharp, scintillating production, guaranteed to help everyone look on the bright side"<br>- The Reviews Hub for Spamalot |

## Colchester Borough Council strategic funding for arts organisations 2017/18

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|  | <p>★★★★★ “Despite the subject matter, this beautiful production emphasises tenderness and healing. Perfect theatre.”<br/>- BritishTheatre.Com for The Events</p> <p>★★★★★ “A gorgeously atmospheric revival of Conor McPherson’s play”<br/>- The Stage for The Weir</p> <p>“Having reviewed the Mercury Theatre’s pantomime for the last 15 or so years, it’s a fairly huge statement when I say this is possibly the best I’ve ever seen.”<br/>- Daily Gazette for Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs</p> |
| At least <b>50%</b> local audience and <b>50%</b> audience supporting tourism economy.   | <p><b>52%</b> of our audience was local to Colchester (within Borough postcodes) and <b>48%</b> from beyond Colchester (the majority from Essex).<br/>* System not updated for current ward boundaries, Postcode sectors used instead.</p>  |
| Annual target of <b>900</b> community and education sessions with <b>20,000</b> participants.  | <b>34,422</b> (including Mercury Voices activity) people took part in our Learning and Participation Programme across <b>849</b> sessions.  |
| Continue SLA partnership between CBC, Arts Council England and the Mercury to ensure on-going revenue funding for core stage and community work is maintained. | <p>Revenue funding maintained for 2017/18. The Mercury retains membership of Arts Council England’s National Portfolio. Continued funding from ACE was confirmed during the year for the period 2018-2022.</p> <p>2017/18 was the first year of the withdrawal of Essex County Council’s annual funding.</p>  |

### 9.4 Community and Audience Development

| Target   | Outputs/Report   |
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| <b>£ 200,000</b> to be invested into work in the community.                                  | Total Investment: <b>£196,453</b> from Mercury core budget, with significant additional project funding from external sources. |
| Annual target – <b>900</b> community and education sessions with <b>20,000</b> participants. | Please refer to the above.   |

## Colchester Borough Council strategic funding for arts organisations 2017/18

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| Maintain rate of <b>7%</b> of tickets sold to disabled people and carers.                        | <b>6.7%</b> achieved.  |
| Maintain level of concessionary tickets at <b>35%</b> .  | <b>31%</b> of tickets sold in 2016/17 were concessions.  |
| Maintain level of accessible performances for disabled and deaf people – <b>18</b> performances. | <p><b>15</b> access performances achieved, including three relaxed performances and a dementia friendly performance.</p> <p>Further development of access provision to continue with additional funding support from D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust.</p> <p>During the year with support from Essex County Council Community Initiatives Fund, we were able to purchase our own Captioning Unit to enable hard of hearing and D/deaf audience members to access performances, workshops and events. The Unit replaces a previously shared Unit between The New Wolsey and Theatre Royal, Bury. The Unit is the only one based in Essex.</p> |
| Maintain methods of seeking audience and user feedback – target - monthly audience survey.       | An audience experience survey is conducted throughout the year following each of our Made in Colchester productions. Feedback is reviewed daily and actioned throughout the business.  |

### 9.5. Governance and Management

| Target  | Outputs/Report   |
|---|--|
| <p>Mercury Theatre Board of Directors to agree a new three year business plan for the period 2018/19 – 2021/22 to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity Plan</li> <li>• Artistic Programme</li> <li>Financial Projections</li> </ul> | <p>Three Year Business plan agreed with annual reviews each year to agree an Annual Action Plan.</p> <p>Next business plan (for the period 2018-2022) agreed by the Mercury's Board of Directors and Arts Council England during the period.</p> <p>Additional planning for the Decant Period – 2019/20 continues.</p> <p>The Board of Directors receive regular reports on artistic activity and review quarterly management accounts at the full</p> |

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|  | meeting and its quarterly Finance and General Purposes Committee.  |
| <p>Mercury Board to review and update all policy statements to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality and Diversity Strategy and action plan</li> <li>• Risk Management</li> <li>• Health and Safety</li> <li>• Sustainability and Environmental Strategy</li> </ul>   | <p>All policies have been reviewed annually with appropriate updates.</p> <p>Additional policies and procedures during the year have been introduced to ensure the safety and well-being of our staff including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employee Confidential Telephone Support Service</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Dignity at Work</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Mercury Board and senior staff to continue to progress the capital development of the Mercury Theatre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tender and procurement processes</li> <li>• Details plans and costings to RIBA Stage D</li> <li>• Financial and fundraising strategy</li> </ul> <p>(subject to additional funding being secured).</p> | <p>Our Large Capital Programme continues to progress positively. Stage 2 funding of <b>£3,527,000</b> has been confirmed from Arts Council England in addition to a further <b>£1 million</b> from SELEP during the period.</p> <p>A further <b>£610,000</b> was confirmed or pledged from individual donations, Trusts and Foundations and the corporate sector during the year.</p> <p>Confirmed funding at the end of the period of <b>£7.610,000 million</b> against a target of <b>£8.9 million</b>.</p> <p>Further funding bids to the value of <b>£2.4 million</b> have been submitted during the period for decisions early in 2018/19. The project continues to be managed by Colchester Borough Homes on behalf of Colchester Borough Council and the Mercury and will meet all necessary RIBA Stages, tendering and procurement processes.</p> <p>A Joint Working Group continues to meet on a monthly basis between CBC, CBH and ECC.</p> <p>The Mercury's Board of Directors has established a Capital Sub Committee to support the Large Capital Scheme with a further internal Capital Operations Group made up of Senior Management and Heads of Department to manage the associated work streams.</p> |

## Colchester Borough Council strategic funding for arts organisations 2017/18

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|  | The agreed Fundraising Strategy continues to be implemented to secure the required partnership funding. |
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9.6. Diversity

| Target   | Outputs/Report   |
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| <p>Continue to encourage more diverse audiences and participants engage with the Mercury across all equality groups.</p> <p>Target: <b>3%</b> of audiences</p>   | <p><b>2.9%</b> of our audience self identified as being from a minority ethnic group in 2017/18</p> <p><b>6.7%</b> of our audience was disabled, deaf or hard of hearing.</p> <p><b>58.76%</b> of our audience were women.</p> <p>No data is available around sexuality, religion, marital status etc.</p>   |
| <p>Continue to ensure the Mercury recruits and attracts a diverse workforce.</p> <p>Target:</p> <p><b>70%</b> female<br/> <b>5%</b> disabled<br/> <b>2%</b> minority ethnic<br/> <b>5%</b> lesbian and gay</p>                     | <p>The Mercury continues to ensure all of its recruitment methods target local diverse communities.</p> <p>Staffing statistics include –</p> <p><b>88</b> staff employed across full time, part time and casual</p> <p><b>97</b> actors and creatives.</p> <p>Across both groups:</p> <p><b>66%</b> female<br/> <b>12.5%</b> disabled<br/> <b>4.5%</b> minority ethnic<br/> <b>20%</b> lesbian/gay</p> |
| <p>Annual review all equality action plans and policies.</p>   | <p>The Mercury's Equality Action Plan continues to be implemented across all aspects of the organisation's work.</p> <p>The Plan is reviewed annually by the Board of Directors.</p>   |
| <p>Continue to attract those from lower income and modest income households, proactively engaging with those from disadvantaged backgrounds and deprived areas of Colchester.</p> <p>Target: <b>10%</b> of users and audiences</p> | <p>Attendance from 2017/18 priority areas – St. Anne's Ward, St Andrew's. Greenstead, Berechurch, Shrub End (CO4 0, CO4 3, CO2 9) was <b>7,928</b> which is <b>7%</b> of the total audience.</p> <p>The above target relates to ticketed events only. An additional <b>3,410</b> engaged in community and education events.</p>  |

9.7. Young People

## Colchester Borough Council strategic funding for arts organisations 2017/18

| Target   | Outputs/Report   |
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| Maintain rate of <b>10%</b> all tickets sold as concessions are for young people.  | <b>9.8%</b> achieved.  |
| Deliver <b>900</b> community and education sessions attracting <b>20,000</b> participants.   | Please refer to the above comments.  |
| Target <b>100</b> sessions/performance in Schools.   | <b>259</b> sessions and performances in schools in 2017/18.  |
| <p>Maintain Teachers Forums for Primary and Secondary Schools.</p> <p>Target: <b>40</b> members schools</p>  | <p>The Teachers Network now has <b>73</b> active members. We create online video tutorials for teachers which have had <b>379</b> views so far.</p> <p>We have delivered <b>4 CPD</b> opportunities for teachers with a total attendance of <b>42</b> teachers including Resilience Training for staff and Mercury Voices History of the Mercury Theatre focus group.</p> <p>A further 3 twilight CPD sessions were programmed but had to be cancelled due to low uptake from school staff</p> <p>The Head of Creative Learning and Talent represents the Mercury Theatre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a cultural lead on Colchester's <b>Local Cultural Education Partnership</b> maintaining key relationships with ROH Bridge, Essex MeH other cultural organisations and schools</li> <li>• As an Essex Skills and Employability Board <b>Enterprise Adviser</b> for St Helena School, offering up to <b>8 hours a month</b> of consultancy time to the Senior Leadership Team</li> <li>• At University College Colchester's Employability Board</li> <li>• As a representative of cultural organisations on the University of Essex's Cultural Outreach Steering Group</li> <li>• At Creative Colchester Projects Board Meetings</li> </ul> |
| Continue to create opportunities for access to the arts particularly for children and young people. This includes community involvement in Mercury | <p>Opportunities created for people of all ages:</p> <p><b>5 – 11 years</b></p>  |

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| <p>Company productions and an ongoing commitment to our overall community activities.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-7's and 8-10's Mercury Youth Theatres</li> <li>• Garrison and Shrub End Youth Theatre</li> <li>• Hazelmere Infants and Juniors Afterschool Drama Club</li> <li>• Greenstead Literacy project</li> </ul> <p><b>11 – 18 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11-13's, 14-16's and 16-18's Youth Theatres</li> <li>• Garrison and Shrub End Youth Theatre</li> <li>• Kingswode Hoe School, Market Field School and Doucecroft School SEND Afterschool Drama Clubs</li> <li>• hACKT digital summer school</li> <li>• Take Flight SEND Summer School</li> <li>• Garrison Summer School</li> <li>• Work Experience Week</li> <li>• 'Lord of the Flies' Youth Theatre Production</li> <li>• 'Pantomime' Junior Chorus</li> </ul> <p><b>16 – 25 years</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16-18's Mercury Youth Theatres</li> <li>• '5 Soldiers' Curtain Raiser</li> <li>• Silver and Gold Arts Award qualification courses</li> <li>• Vocational Internships</li> <li>• Youth Assistant roles</li> <li>• Work Experience</li> <li>• Early Career Training Programme</li> </ul> <p><b>18+</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act V Drama for Over 50's</li> <li>• Talent Development Programme – including Early Career Development Programme and Associate Artists Scheme</li> <li>• Community Chorus</li> <li>• Mercury Voices Archiving Volunteer Programme</li> <li>• Mercury Voices Exhibitions and talks</li> <li>• Senior Matinees pre show talks</li> </ul> <p>Additional workshops have taken place in partnership with organisations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Marquee at Colchester Food and Drink Festival – working with</li> </ul> |
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|  | <p>Colchester Chinese Society, Nepalese Society, Arts La Olam, AFiUK and Refugee Action(<b>2058 visitors over 2 days</b>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nepalese Society Elders Bollywood Film Screenings and Creative English Course</li> <li>• Colchester and Tendring's Womens Refuge</li> <li>• Action for Children</li> <li>• Autism Anglia</li> <li>• Balcerne Gardens Care Home</li> <li>• Army Welfare Services</li> <li>• Colchester Garrison</li> <li>• Essex Music Education Hub</li> </ul> <p>Local community involvement in <i>Made in Colchester</i> productions continues. This year community chorus' were used in 3 productions: <i>The Events</i> 30 people, <i>Pantomime</i> 18 young people and <i>Pieces of String</i> 3 people</p> |
| Maintain level of <b>145</b> young people enrolled in youth drama classes. | <p><b>177</b> young people enrolled in youth drama classes.</p> <p>We have expanded our Youth Theatre offer to <b>9</b> regular groups including a Youth Theatre group for young people with Autism Spectrum Conditions and <b>2</b> subsidised Youth Theatre groups for the Garrison and Shrub End Ward in partnership with the Army Welfare Services.</p> <p>All Youth Theatre Groups continue to be based at The Mercury and take place Sunday – Wednesday each week.</p>  |

### 9.8. Older People

| Target  | Outputs/Report  |
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| <p>Continue to deliver specific projects and activities for older people to include: Senior Matinees</p> <p>Regular classes and workshops<br/>Target: <b>30</b> workshops per year<br/><b>9</b> senior matinees</p> | <p><b>1273</b> older people participated in <b>37</b> Act V sessions over the year.</p> <p>Senior Matinees remain popular – there were <b>4</b> in the year 2017/18 achieving <b>689</b> people in total.</p> <p>At the end of the period ACT V has been transferred to the Headgate Theatre with a small grant as due to the capital project</p> |

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|  | it will not be possible to accommodate the group over the next two years. |
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## 9.9. Job Creation, sector skills development and contribution to the local economy

| Target   | Outputs/Report  |
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| Deliver <b>20</b> work experience placements during the year.  | <b>3</b> long term (16 week) work experience placements for young people with Autism.<br><b>23</b> school student work experience placements (1 week)<br><b>7</b> student internships ranging from 16 weeks to 12 months<br><b>4</b> Wardrobe Work Experience placements<br><b>1</b> Scenic Workshop Work Experience placements.<br><br><b>Total: 38</b>  |
| Deliver <b>3</b> apprenticeships across all areas of the Mercury.  | <p>Due to the national changes in apprenticeship funding and qualifications, we were unable to offer apprenticeships this financial year.</p> <p>We continue to work in partnership with Colchester Institute and Creative and Cultural Skills to create opportunities in the future.</p> <p>Hosted <b>7</b> paid internships supported by the University of Essex sponsored by Santander.</p>  |
| Continue to deliver Technical Theatre Vocational Degree in partnership with Colchester Institute.  | The new Technical Theatre Degree Course commenced in September 2017 with <b>12</b> students enrolled.   |
| Provide evidence and support for new and emerging regional talent and companies.<br><br>Target: <b>6</b> new local companies and artists<br><b>60</b> participants | <p>During 2017/18 we continued our Talent Development Programmes.</p> <p>Activities included:</p> <p><b><u>Early Career Training Programme</u></b></p> <p>Overall applications <b>48</b><br/>         Number of group members: <b>21</b><br/>         Number of sessions: <b>35</b><br/>         Attendees at Stand Up: <b>150</b><br/>         Sharing Attendees: <b>50</b></p> <p><b><u>Early Career Advanced Programme</u></b></p> <p>Number of Group Members: <b>26</b></p> |

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|  | <p>Number of sessions: <b>20</b></p> <p><b><u>Associate Artists 2017-18</u></b></p> <p>Total Applications: <b>30</b><br/> Number of Artists: <b>6</b><br/> Additional Collaborators: <b>12</b><br/> Sharing Attendees: <b>20</b></p> <p><b><u>Mercury Playwriting Prize 2017</u></b></p> <p>Total Entrants: <b>151</b><br/> Readers: <b>12</b><br/> Actors: <b>17</b><br/> Directors: <b>4</b><br/> Audience Total: <b>100</b></p> <p><b><u>Essex Theatre Artists Network</u></b></p> <p>Total Members: <b>636</b></p>  |
| Target and engage with 20 volunteers during the year.  | <p><b>6</b> regular volunteers and <b>28</b> one-off volunteers for projects such as our Mercury Voices Archive project that launched during the year funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.</p>  |
| <p>Assist CBC with other initiatives including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Night-time economy</li> <li>• Local employment and skills</li> <li>• Development of creative and cultural industries</li> <li>• Marketing of Colchester as a visitor destination</li> </ul> | <p>The Mercury continues to work in partnership with CBC as follows –</p> <p><b>Night-time Economy</b><br/> The Mercury are active members of local trade associations such as the CIC – <i>Colchester Presents</i> (our Executive Director is a Board Member).</p> <p>The Mercury's Executive Director sits on the board of <i>Colchester Presents</i> and is a member of the working group to support <i>Purple Flag</i>.</p> <p>The Mercury had a visible presence in the Christmas Lights Switch on.</p> <p><b>Local Employment and Skills</b><br/> The Mercury continues to work in partnership with a variety of organisations to improve local employment and skills such as –</p> <p>Hosting Essex Chamber of Commerce bi-monthly breakfast briefings and twilight events for local businesses.</p> |

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|  | <p>Regular presence at local business and employment events and fairs.</p> <p>Strong partnerships exist with local Job Centre, Colchester Institute and Essex University.</p> <p><b>Development of Creative and Cultural industries</b></p> <p>The Mercury is an active member of the Creative Colchester Initiative with representation at Board level (the Mercury's Chair is the Chair of the organisation) and the Project Working Group.</p> <p><b>Marketing of Colchester as a Visitor Destination</b></p> <p>The Mercury continues to engage in dialogue with senior officers from CBC about how to promote Colchester as a destination.</p> <p>The Mercury continues to offer ticketing services for key events (such as the annual Fireworks in Castle Park, Summer Screens and Charter Hall). This data will be used to support further campaigns and initiatives to support tourism and the visitor economy for the town.</p> <p>During the year, the Mercury continued to offer support and advice to develop Charter Hall as a venue. This included aspects such as ticketing, Health and Safety, technical skills and equipment and programming. This relationship will be developed further in 2018/19.</p> <p>Through its overall marketing strategies, the Mercury continues to promote Colchester as a destination and through the use of the <i>Made in Colchester</i> brand on tour throughout the UK.</p> <p>The Mercury's Executive Director continues to be a Board Member of <i>Visit Essex</i> and the <i>Haven Gateway Partnership</i>.</p> |
| Continue to participate in and support | The Mercury will continue to offer as   |

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| the ongoing development of the Colchester Comedy Festival. | much support as possible including programming and marketing. |
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#### 9.10. Environmental and Economic Sustainability

| Target   | Outputs/Report   |
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| Develop and agree a Sustainability and Environmental Policy and Action Plan.   | Completed.<br><br>In addition to support the new building a comprehensive BREEAM Assessment has been commissioned to support improved sustainability and the environmental impact of the new facilities both during construction and on completion.  |
| Collate and publish targets to reduce carbon footprint and provide evidence of improvement at regular intervals.   | Completed.   |
| Monitor the usage of green energy.   | Completed. Statistics are collated quarterly and reported internally and to Arts Council England (through our membership of the Julie's Bicycle Scheme).   |
| Strengthen and grow partnership working through joint bids, cross programming and shared activity, including developing a big data approach to audience development across partners. | Achieved. Commitment to the Audience Agency's Audience Finder big data project.<br><br>During the year The Mercury continued to pilot a data scheme to engage audiences and peers in the sector to define artistic quality.<br><br>Discussions have continued with CBC and the other NPO's in Colchester about the development of a shared box office for the town.<br><br>Successful joint funding bids have been achieved once again with community groups including Stage Write and the Colchester Chinese Community.<br><br>The Mercury offered support and guidance for a further 5 Grants for the Arts Funding Bids to Arts Council England for local artists and companies. All of which were successful. A record amount of inward investment. |



**9.11. What are the Mercury's particular plans to promote the support that the Council provides during the period of the agreement?**

Each year, the Mercury focuses on developing partnerships for the benefit of the community and local economy, for example assisting the Chinese and Nepalese Communities in their annual cultural celebrations, working with Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge and providing space and support for the Essex Gang Show, Colchester Operatic Society and other school and community groups.

The Theatre continues to develop co-productions to enable **Made in Colchester** shows to tour nationally and where appropriate internationally raising the profile of Colchester. In 2017/18, the Mercury's production of *The Weir* toured extensively with English Touring Theatre, *Spamalot* toured the UK with Selladoor Worldwide Ltd and also played internationally in Dubai and Korea. *Turn of the Screw* toured the UK with Dermot McLaughlin Productions.

The Mercury continues to attend regional and national conferences and events to present and share best practise to those within the arts and creative industries and others acknowledging the support of the Council.

Acknowledgement of the Council's support in **23,000** brochures distributed twice a year. In addition, electronically we distribute a monthly e-newsletter to **43,400** people with more than **321,929** unique visitors to our website in 2017/18. In addition, there was continued steady growth on Facebook and an increase in Twitter followers.

The Mercury invites civic guests to press/gala evenings each year as a chance to say thank you for the support given and to promote the stage and community work that the funding partnership makes possible. The event includes acknowledgment of the Council's support.

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

**Local**

The Mercury Theatre continues to work proactively with the Council (including Colchester and Ipswich Museums), Firstsite and Colchester Arts Centre to ensure a collective and united vision for Arts, Culture & Heritage promotion and accessibility across Colchester aimed at maximising potential and seeking out opportunities for a more collaborative and sustainable approach. This has included in engaging with the other arts and cultural organisation about joint working models, the benefits of a joint box office and shared data and the joint commissioning of services.

The Mercury Theatre actively contributes to 'The Creative Colchester Strategy' by supporting emerging local talent and providing work experience, supporting cultural tourism initiatives, and working with a range of community service providers such as charities, health providers and voluntary groups to engage and develop communities.

The Mercury is an active member of the Creative Colchester Board (Chair of Mercury Board of Directors Chairs the group) and the Creative Colchester Project Group (Head of Creative Learning and Talent).

The Mercury is an active member of Colchester Presents CIC and contributes to the Christmas Lights Switch On Event and other community events throughout the borough.

The Mercury's Executive Director is a member of the Purple Flag Working Group.

Further partnership agreements are in place with Colchester Institute and Essex University around joint funding bids, skills development and other place-making initiatives.

### National

The Mercury Theatre has promoted its collaborative working with other arts providers and Colchester & Ipswich Museums to strategic funders such as Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery Fund. This has demonstrated a strategic partnership approach to the development of arts and heritage in Colchester which will raise the profile and status of the town as a cultural centre and generate greater efficiencies and value for money.

### 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.

|                              |      |         |
|------------------------------|------|---------|
| On behalf of Mercury Theatre | Date | 15/5/18 |
|------------------------------|------|---------|

Signed (Executive Director)



Name (please print) Steve Mannix

STEVE MANNIX

|                              |      |         |
|------------------------------|------|---------|
| On behalf of Mercury Theatre | Date | 15/5/18 |
|------------------------------|------|---------|

Signed (Chair of the Board)



Name (please print)

KATHLEEN HAMILTON

|   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| On behalf of Colchester Borough Council | Date |  |
|---|------|--|

Signed (Portfolio Holder)

Name (please print)

## Colchester Borough Council strategic funding for arts organisations 2017/18

|   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| On behalf of Colchester Borough Council | Date |  |
|---|------|--|

Signed (Officer) \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_