

Cheltenham Borough Council

Social and Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 23rd July, 2008

Cheltenham Festivals

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

1. Executive Summary and recommendations

- 1.1 Cheltenham Festivals (CF) is an important strategic partner for this Council. As such, it benefits from long-term support, including an annual revenue grant as well as other subsidies in the form of services provided by the Council.

CF was also awarded £500,000 over a three-year period from April 2007 to March 2010 in order *“to assist CF in becoming fully independent, ensuring CF’s continued viable future, and developing more community and outreach work. Assistance with relocation and set-up costs, to protect and enhance Cheltenham’s cultural provision, and to assist a pump-priming development plan for the Town Hall”*.

- 1.2 In recognition of the scale of this funding support, the Council put in place arrangements to ensure that the grant was used on approved projects and in accordance with plans in the approved CF business plan. The specific agreed vehicle for this monitoring was a six-monthly review by Social and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The first review took place at the meeting of 15th October, 2007, which, members will recall, turned out to be a rather challenging meeting, for reasons unconnected with the work of CF.

The second review meeting should have taken place in March/April, but was deferred at the request of the Chairman. Clashes between committee dates and festival events have made an earlier review impossible, so, somewhat later than intended, the meeting of 23rd July allows members to review the use of £250,000 funding allocated to CF between April 2007 and March 2008.

- 1.3 Donna Renney, Chief Executive of CF, will be making a presentation to the Committee and her report is appended to this covering page.
- 1.4 Members will need to satisfy themselves that the original aims of the funding are being adequately addressed. Questions should probe to what extent the funding has:
- Assisted CF to become fully independent
 - Been used to help deliver a viable future for CF at the end of the three-year funding agreement
 - Supported the development of more community and outreach work

- Assisted with relocation and set-up costs
- Protected and enhanced Cheltenham's cultural provision
- Assisted in pump-priming Town Hall development plan.

Background Papers

None.

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Accountability

Councillor John Rawson, Cabinet Member Finance
and Culture.