

Cabinet 13.09.22 Appendix 2 - Rent Support Assessment Process, The Playhouse Cheltenham

Date of rent support assessment:	09/06/2022
Carried out by:	Richard Gibson, Helen Down
Name of Applicant:	The Playhouse Cheltenham
Is the applicant a legally constituted, not-for-profit voluntary and community sector organisation?	Yes – charitable incorporated organisation (1196217)
Name /address of property	47-53 Bath Road, Cheltenham, GL53 7HG
Current rent	£1 plus grant of £5699 per annum

Rent Support outcomes	Submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
<p>Cheltenham's environmental quality and heritage is protected, maintained and enhanced.</p> <p>This could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting bio-diversity • Responding to climate change • Promoting sustainable living • Protecting and enhancing parks, gardens and open spaces • Protecting and enhancing the built environment 	<p>The Playhouse has received planning permission from CBC for a £4-million improvement scheme for the Playhouse (funding applications currently submitted to Heritage Lottery) which would enable them to make far greater use of the building as a real, thriving arts centre in the heart of the community – which has been identified as a much-needed resource for Cheltenham – while also becoming a heritage destination in its own right.</p> <p>The sensitive reconfiguration of much of the building that the project entails provides the ideal chance to install new infrastructure at the same time – for example, LED lighting throughout the complex including the stage, new heating systems in different areas rather than one centralised boiler, the possible use of solar panels on the expansive roof – so that the organisation can play its part in CBC's commitment to be a carbon neutral borough by 2030, as well as making it more cost effective and therefore easier to protect for future generations.</p> <p>The permanent revealing of many of the mostly hidden heritage features as part of the project – from the remains of</p>	<p>Promoting bio-diversity Responding to climate change Promoting sustainable living Protecting and enhancing parks, gardens and open spaces Protecting and enhancing the built environment</p> <p><u>The recommended rent support for this element is 20%.</u></p>

Rent Support outcomes	Submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
	<p>the Real Cheltenham Salts Manufactory, to the Victorian swimming and plunge pools, and the medical baths of the Edwardian era – will further enhance and protect the building, allowing people to learn far more about its importance as one of the earliest surviving spa buildings. It is one of the two most-visited venues in town each year during Heritage Open Days and the refurbishment will allow the popular guided tours to become more frequent.</p> <p>The Playhouse recognises that investment is needed and has demonstrated real desire and commitment to responding to the climate crisis by bringing forward plans to reduce their carbon emissions and be an exemplar for sustainability, as well as preserving one of Cheltenham’s best loved heritage buildings.</p>	
<p>Sustain and grow Cheltenham’s economic and cultural vitality. This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people into employment • Helping businesses to get established • Supporting cultural activity • Providing advice and information • Supporting tourist activities 	<p>The Playhouse has provided very good evidence of their contribution to Cheltenham’s economic and cultural vitality, with ambitions to create an arts centre and heritage destination which will also provide employment. It will also enable them to expand the cultural activities on offer to both residents and visitors to the town. The organisation is part of the Cheltenham Culture Board and provides a venue for other festivals such as Cheltenham Film Society, Cheltenham Poetry Festival which it also provides box office facilities for, plus the Music, Jazz and Literature Festivals.</p>	<p>Helping people into employment Helping businesses to get established Supporting cultural activity Providing advice and information Supporting tourist activities</p> <p><u>The recommended rent support for this element is 20%.</u></p>
<p>People live in strong and safe communities. This could include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling local residents to meet together and socialise • Engaging residents in positive social networks • Enabling local residents to contribute their time and efforts into community activity • Enabling local residents to feel safer in their communities 	<p>The submission provides strong evidence of the role of the Playhouse in supporting safe and strong communities, with programmes, classes and acting, singing and dance activities for all, including children and young people and isolated older people, as well as offering opportunities to volunteer and gain skills through certificated training. There are also informal and relaxed activities on offer, providing opportunities for social interaction and making new friends.</p> <p>The submission shows a high level of take up and involvement in activities on a weekly basis.</p>	<p>Enabling local residents to meet together and socialise Engaging residents in positive social networks Enabling local residents to contribute their time and efforts into community activity Enabling local residents to feel safer in their communities A place for young people to meet and feel safe</p> <p><u>The recommended rent support for this element is 20%.</u></p>

Rent Support outcomes	Submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A place for young people to meet and feel safe 		
<p>We will work to strengthen the emotional and physical wellbeing of all Cheltenham residents</p> <p>This could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling local people to be active Helping local people make healthy lifestyle choices Reducing the harm caused by alcohol Improving mental health Improving health & wellbeing into older age 	<p>The current activities on offer and being reinstated since the pandemic, along with the ambition to become an arts centre and community hub demonstrate that the Playhouse plays an important role in supporting the emotional and physical wellbeing of residents.</p> <p>Established after World War 2, in recognition of the need to provide a venue for local people to take part in drama, music, and other art forms, for their emotional and physical well-being following the restrictions and deprivations of war, the Playhouse gradually taken over almost the entire premises, improved the facilities and widened the range of activities on offer. The importance of ensuring the provision of events that help improve mental health, promote more active lifestyles, combat loneliness and social isolation, and bring older and younger people together, are as important now, as we emerge from the pandemic as they were in 1945.</p> <p>In addition to drama and musical theatre classes offered by Theatre Studio, the Playhouse was also pre-pandemic (and is working to become again) home for many amateur theatre groups to rehearse regularly, as well as a range of groups including adult singing, ballet, comedy workshops, parent and toddler groups, knitting, Irish dancing, yoga, pilates and open mic music nights, all of which help with mental and physical health and are aimed at various age groups, including a teen yoga class aimed at helping them cope positively during the sometimes difficult transition between teenage to adulthood.</p> <p>The Theatre Connect programme while currently focused on well-being and social engagement in the over-60s is being reviewed to try and offer similar benefits and activities to other sectors of the community – for example, single parents or the younger unemployed.</p> <p>Family shows are hosted every Christmas, with 33% of tickets being donated to local charities to give to families who could not</p>	<p>Enabling local people to be active Helping local people make healthy lifestyle choices Reducing the harm caused by alcohol Improving mental health Improving health & wellbeing into older age -</p> <p><u>The recommended rent support for this element is 20%.</u></p>

Rent Support outcomes	Submission	Proposed score against the sub-elements (up to a maximum of 20% per outcome)
	<p>otherwise afford to attend.</p> <p>The refurbishment will allow more activities to run side by side, making the venue a true community hub.</p>	
Summary and recommended rent support grant	<p>The Playhouse has demonstrated strong evidence of its important role in all of the themes assessed against, as well as commitment and desire to become an arts centre and community hub which will further increase its scope. Our recommendation is for a rent support grant of the full 80%.</p>	

Financial considerations	Panel assessment
<p>Will the grant award support the financial viability of the operation of the building?</p>	<p>Yes. The market value rent is £30,800 per annum and the organisation to date has paid £1 per annum, with a grant of £5699.</p> <p>With an 80% rent support grant, the organisation would pay £6160 per annum, or with a 90% rent support grant £3080 per annum, in addition to the ending of the grant of £5699. The 35 year lease arrangement will be subject to 5 yearly reviews.</p>
<p>Has the organisation got reasonable longer-term plans to sustain activities being delivered from the building beyond the term of the grant?</p>	<p>The organisation has planning permission and applications for funding in progress to reconfigure the building to become a thriving arts centre and community hub, which will increase opportunities for revenue as well as social and environmental benefits.</p>