

# Gala Theatre

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### 9 March 2020

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Strategic Manager Culture

# Gala is....

A purpose-built venue in the heart of Durham, housing:

- A modern, 500 capacity theatre space
- Two cinema screens (134 and 82 capacity)
- A flexible Studio space hosting live events, meetings, and private functions
- A busy café space, which is also an evening theatre bar
- A small visual arts gallery space

# Challenges

- Audience engagement and expectation for venue and programme
- Increase revenue generation across performance and secondary spend in competitive marketplace
- Increasing local competition for cinema offer

Last 12 Months:



# Staffing:

New Strategic Manager - in Post Spring 2019

New Gala programmer - in post Autumn 2019

# Gala Theatre: Technology

- New EPOS installed - better stock management and cost of sales monitoring
- Pre show emails as standard to pre-sell
- Post show surveys to collate data and promote other performances
- App to be released spring 2020 for pre sales and in venue bar/catering purchases

# Gala Theatre: Audiences

- We are gathering better quality audience data, to inform our future plans.
- Through post-show surveys we are gathering audience feedback on the Programme, the Facility, and the Customer Experience
- We are using this to inform ways to - retain loyalty, reduced lapsed attenders, and increase frequency of attendance

# Gala Theatre: Performance

- We are being more proactive in establishing and developing relationships with promoters, artists and theatre companies.
- We are keeping the programme vibrant and developing audiences, by avoiding reliance on the same shows returning year after year.
- Introducing more drama work into the programme, to support and develop audiences for Gala Productions.
- Taking more risks in the programme, which will broaden our programme, our audiences and our reputation

# Gala Theatre: Performance

- Gala are in discussions about *Pitman Painters*, which is to be revived in a major touring production. This is high cost, but potentially high return. It will help us better define what we are, build drama audiences, and drive audiences for Gala Productions.
- 2019 was the most successful pantomime season since the venue opened with 33,541 tickets sold and income of £342,979 compared to £312,387 in 2018.

# Gala Theatre: Cinema

- Odeon opened in June 2019. For the six months from July - December, Gala saw 32,150 cinema attendances, down from 40,076 for the same period last year (20% drop).
- Reduction in Gala ticket prices has helped retain a reduced audience but has impacted considerably on overall cinema revenue position
- New Everyman cinema opening will have additional negative impact

# Gala: Comparison

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/2020 (est to Q4)
• Live events	347	458	357 (456)
• Cinema screenings	2,093	1,985	1,506 (1955)
• Tickets sold	186,183	187,721	138,398 (186,530)

# Outturn Comparison: Theatre

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 (predicted)
	£	£	£
Income	1,305,270	1,214,329	1,248,964
Expenditure	1,207,541	1,274,647	1,275,788
Net cost	(97,729)	60,318	26,824

# Outturn Comparison: Cinema

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20 (predicted)
	£	£	£
Income	385,125	404,342	276,426
Expenditure	303,543	301,631	143,453
Net cost of	(81,582)	(102,711)	(132,973)

# Budget Overview:

## Cinema:

Static staff costs of £90,000 irrespective of reduced income

Need to provide cheaper tickets to compete therefore considerably reduced yield per screening

Under target budget by over £200k

Further implications of Everyman cinema opening 2021

# Budget Overview:

## Theatre:

Good management of expenditure in 19/20

Income for year showing improvement, 2020 anticipated to show stronger improvement with programme changes

Social media marketing at site has commenced in 2020 to help promote ticket sales (28% customers aware of programme via social media compared to 2% through newspapers/magazines)

With digital improvements, programme changes, audience development and analysis, staff restructure and at venue social media marketing, expect to see a further increase in revenue in 2020/21 of minimum 5%.

# Moving Forward

- New Gala programmer to review current programme provision
- Present new content to build new audiences including standing audiences for comedy and music (900+ attendance potential compared to 500 seated)
- Undertaken detailed audience review and define audience development plan for venue
- Embed venue delivered social media marketing activity
- Refresh café bar and front of house to promote linger time and increase secondary spend
- Develop pre-sales function and app to promote both ticket sales and secondary spend
- Review marketing strategy and process for Gala
- Maintain watching brief for cinema provision and review quarterly

Questions?

