

## Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel minutes extract from 13 February 2014

- Present: Councillor Counter (Chair)  
Councillors Greenslade, Hastrick, Joynes and Rackett
- Also present: Councillor D Scudder (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Strategy and Client Services)  
Mr Tim Brinkman, HQ Theatres
- Officers: Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services  
Partnerships and Performance Section Head  
Client Manager (Waste and Recycling)  
Commissioning Manager  
Contract Monitoring Officer  
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK)  
Member Development and Civic Officer

### 23. **CONTRACT WITH HQ THEATRES**

The Panel received a presentation of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services and the Commissioning Manager.

The presentation provided the Panel with details of the history of the Colosseum, how the programmes were delivered, key performance indicators, a summary of performances between September 2011 and December 2013, community use and an overview of the finances. In addition, details were provided about the vision for the future and the areas for development.

Councillor Joynes referred to the youth production and she asked whether this event would continue in future years. Mr Tim Brinkman, HQ Theatres, responded that this was a Colosseum initiative and a range of youth based events would be planned.

Councillor Rackett asked about opportunities for local bands to perform as support acts. Mr Brinkman advised that he felt this was an excellent idea as it gave bands public exposure as well as experience of working in a venue and the opportunity to attract the attention of industry professionals. It was something the Colosseum could do more of and he would get to know who could source local bands.

Following a suggestion from Councillor Joynes about competitions for young local bands, Mr Brinkman informed the Panel that the Colosseum had a strong relationship with West Herts College. He also felt it was important to give acts exposure to agents.

The Chair asked about work undertaken with schools. Mr Brinkman advised that schools used the venue for performances and students' training opportunities. The Colosseum also hosted students' placements.

Councillor Hastrick noted that there needed to be a balance between commercial and community activities and asked for more details about how this worked at the Colosseum. The Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services advised that the balance needed to ensure that the Colosseum was sustainable as it was currently dependent on the management fee. There was an expectation that community was important and it also helped to drive wider audience engagement. Officers worked with HQ Theatres to achieve the right balance. The economic situation meant that the Council could not heavily subsidise the venue and local organisations had also been encouraged to adopt a business-like approach.

Councillor Greenslade asked about the afternoon programme and the Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services replied that it was important to focus on ensuring the programming was right. Mr Brinkman added that it was his intention to ensure that the venue was used as much as possible.

Councillor Rackett asked for more detail about the profit-sharing agreement. The Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services confirmed that the contract has not yet triggered the profit share agreement and it had not been anticipated to be achievable during the first four years of the contract. An economic review was planned for August 2015. The Council was mindful that a profit share was not something which could be easily achieved. The aim was to lower the subsidy longer term.

The Chair noted that as far as performance indicators were concerned, the Colosseum was different to other services as residents could choose whether to attend.

The Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services confirmed that the presentation would be circulated with the minutes.

**ACTION - Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services**

**RESOLVED –**

That the presentation and the Panel's comments be noted.