1. Apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest.

3. Performance report on the theatre


5. Any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent.

6. Contractual Arrangements.

Enclosed

The public and press are likely to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of this item in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972, on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information of the description shown in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

Joe Hubbard,
Chief Executive

19 September 2011.
For further information about this Agenda please contact:

Carol Mundy on 01933 231521 cmundy@wellingborough.gov.uk

If you wish to address the Committee on an agenda item you can register by:

- downloading the form at www.wellingborough.gov.uk/speakers_form and returning to Carol Mundy as detailed above; or
- completing the appropriate form which is available at reception desks; or
- Contacting Carol Mundy as detailed above.

Membership:
Councillor Bell (Chairman), Councillor Graves (Vice Chairman), Councillors Carr, Dholakia, Hawkes, M Patel and Scarborough (7).
1 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report seeks to demonstrate, through the provision of arts and cultural facilities at The Castle, how the following Council objectives have been met:
   a) Improving the life chances of young people;
   b) Delivering efficient and responsive services.

1.2 The report will look at the performance statistics for The Castle for the period 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011.

2 Executive Summary

2.1 This report discusses the performance indicators for The Castle and includes statistics from 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011, comparing these against target figures. It also looks at some of the initiatives and projects that have taken place over this period and at future plans by The Castle to encourage further use of the various facilities and to develop the programme of activities.

3 Appendices

There are no appendices to this report.

4 Proposed Action

The Committee RESOLVES:

4.1 to note this report.

5 Background

5.1 The Castle (Wellingborough) Ltd has now been running The Castle as a Company Limited by Guarantee, under Contract with the Borough Council, since January 1995. The current operating contract was agreed in 2002, and ran through to March 2007. Since that date the contract has undergone a review and tendering process and is due to be extended for a further 2 year period.

5.2 As part of the Council’s regular monitoring of the contract, a wide range of attendance, participation and financial figures are measured. This report
looks in more depth at the figures for the first quarter of 2011/12, under section 6 below, and the various factors that have influenced them are discussed.

6 Discussion

6.1 Current Performance Indicators include targets for performances, income, capacity, subsidy and participation.

6.2 The 2011/12 targets have been seasonally adjusted per quarter to represent a more accurate reflection of The Castle’s business.

6.2.1 Performances
This performance indicator totals the number of performance events that are staged in the Main House and Studio Theatre spaces each year. It includes live work (both professional and community hires) and the presentation of films.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2011/12 annual target</th>
<th>2011/12 1st Quarter Actual</th>
<th>Against 1st Quarter 10/11 target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Target performances (productions) per year</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comment:** The number of performances in the first quarter showed a slight increase over the previous year, and there was an increase in the proportion of films shown, as opposed to live work, from 20% to 33%, in accordance with the strategy that is being piloting.

6.2.2 Subsidy & Income
This set of indicators comprises 4 inter-related targets driven by the number of tickets sold. Therefore, an underlying target is that by maximising the number of tickets sold, the Borough Council subsidy per seat sold, (for performances only) and tickets sold (including workshops and classes) is reduced.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Against 1st Quarter 10/11 target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Minimum number of seats sold pa</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>11,232</td>
<td>12,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Minimum income per seat sold pa</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>7.31</td>
<td>8.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Max Borough Council subsidy per seat sold (performances only)</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>7.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Max Borough Council subsidy per seat/ticket sold (performances, workshops and classes)</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>5.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comment: One reason for the reduction in audiences was the decision on financial grounds to replace the full scale Community Production, with a week long Children and Families Festival, which incorporated a week long project culminating in a short Community Production on the theme of “Home”. The latter, although successful in its own right, worked with 50 participants rather than 100, and played one performance at the end of one week of rehearsals, rather than a run of 5 performances after 6 weeks of rehearsals.

The other change in the programming for the season was the increase in the proportion of film which brings in a lower ticket revenue per seat sold, and plays to lower audiences in general. These two factors had a knock on effect on all performance indicators above, and the pilot of the film strategy showed up particularly in the capacity figure, below.

6.2.3 Capacity
The capacity of the Main House is generally 503 seats, with 427 for a film set up (150 for an art house film) In the Studio it is 84 seats. The number of seats sold as a percentage of capacity gives another view on the success or otherwise of The Castle’s programming.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref.</th>
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<th>2011/12 annual target</th>
<th>2011/12 1st Quarter Actual</th>
<th>Against 1st Quarter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10/11 target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Percentage of house capacity</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comment: The capacity figure was lower than in the same quarter of the previous year, reflecting the higher proportion of films shown, which tend to play to audiences of around 100 people, much smaller than the audiences for live work, and the pilot of showing half week runs, which allow the showing of more recent films. Despite a leaflet drop of 10,000 to central Wellingborough properties - which did result in an increase of the audience from postcodes NN8 4 and NN8 5 - the audience for film grew by just 10% for the season, over the previous year. The half week runs, even though the films shown were more recent, appeared to have the effect of splitting the audience, rather than bringing in a new audience. However it is too early to say definitively that the pilot has not succeeded, and we have agreed to continue for at least two more seasons. In September there was evidence that the Saturday “film and a curry” evening for Bridesmaids attracted a new audience.

Participation
The main target here is to maximise the numbers of workshops and classes, and their participants. In addition, targets relate to participation onstage through hiring, participation of young people under the age of 16 years, and general attendance for meetings, events and conferences.
### Ref. | Description | 2011/12 annual target | 2011/12 1st Quarter Actual | Against 1st Quarter 10/11 | Target
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
C7 | Number of participants: a) involved in artistic participatory activities run at or by The Castle | 13,000 | 3,617 | 4,865 | 3,510
C8 | b) involved in amateur and schools performances | 5,000 | 1,918 | 719 | 750
C9 | c) under the age of 16 yrs, including audiences | 40,000 | 9,745 | 9,026 | 10,000
C10 | Number of participants in general activities (meetings, conferences, Waendel Walk etc) | 12,000 | 6,260 | 7,374 | 6,720

**Comment:** The reduction in numbers attending weekly classes during the quarter fell due to the timing of the Easter holidays, while the numbers participating in amateur and schools performances was boosted by the timing of the Gang Show. The Waendel Walk always has a great bearing on the final two indicators, and working with the estimated figures, we have assumed that both the total numbers taking part, and of those, the proportions of under 16’s, were 500 down on the previous year.

6.2.4 **Artistic & Community Programme.**

The summer season always features less professional work than the Spring and the Autumn, but this year, highlights of the professional work programmed were: Reform Theatre, *Ha Ha Holmes, Images of Dance*, a Louise Roche play titled “*Big Pants and Botox*”, Oddsocks returning with *Macbeth*, and popular music from the Charleston Chasers, the Searchers, and Smackie. Children’s theatre included Blunderbus and Proteus theatre companies, and Big Howard and Little Howard played in the Main House. The usual programme of modern and traditional jazz, and independent music played in the Studio. Local schools, groups and societies used the theatre for a total of 32 days, approximately one third of the output.

**A Children and Families Festival** was delivered during half term in June, and featured a series of theatre related workshops, “drop in and join in” craft sessions and performances from Proteus Theatre Company and the CBBC character, Little Howard, in addition to the film *Winnie the Pooh*. Over the week, 689 tickets were sold for the performances, and 25% of the customers were new to The Castle. The event was delivered as part of National Family week and also featured a scaled down version of a Community Production. As outlined above, financial considerations ruled out a full scale Community Production this year, but 50 participants worked on a week-long rehearsal schedule, with the three members of the creative team, to perform a one hour piece with the theme of “*Home*”.

In addition to weekly classes, three major participation projects ran during the season, and underline the emphasis on quality, and depth of engagement
with participants, that is offered by The Castle team when they run a project.

1. **DAPA.** (Disability and Participatory Arts Festival) By now this week long festival for disabled and non disabled children and young people is well known and respected. This year 13 students with special needs from Northgate and Wren Spinney schools attended the residency, 82 students attended open workshops, and a performance platform featured 7 groups and a total of 140 participants playing to an audience of 218.

2. **Project Runway.** Funded by The Mighty Creatives, 15 creative and media diploma students from Abbeyfield School formed a company, and each took on a production role, working to re-invent the fashion show catwalk as a presentation of iconic theatre and film moments brought to life through dance, theatre film and sound. The Castle was able to facilitate the bringing together of industry professionals (including our own staff) and the students, and gave them the opportunity to work in a cultural setting.

3. **The Living Theatre project.** Also funded by the Mighty Creatives, this worked with 20 year 8 students from Manor School (Raunds) who produced a new piece of work, inspired by the uniqueness of each student, blended with the current state of the world. Again there was the opportunity for the students to work with professional artists in a cultural setting.

### Future Initiatives

6.3 The highlights of the autumn professional programme include two nights of Cirque du Ciel, which has just played to excellent audience feedback. Quality commercial work continues with *Rhythm of the Dance*, Peppa Pig, *Carmen* from Co Opera Co, and Moscow Ballet with *Sleeping Beauty*. Comedians programmed are Rory Bremner, Ed Byrne, Charley Boorman, Joe Pasquale, and Mark Watson. Drama productions include the return of Reform Theatre, New Perspectives, and Mappa Mundi, with *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Auditions for young people to appear in *Peter Pan* were held on Sept 10th, and two teams each of Lost Boys and dancers, were successful. There will be valuable PR spin off from the local involvement, the 16 successful Lost Boys were from 16 different schools. Sales to schools are continuing in line with previous years, but September is a crucial month for confirmations, and at present it is too early to forecast the overall uptake.

A new initiative for the autumn will be *Early Years Music* making sessions, for under 5’s and their parents. These are designed with parental participation at the heart, and the singing and music making can continue at home. The project was commissioned by the Northamptonshire Youth Music Programme, funded by Youth Music, and is delivered by The Castle in partnership with Wellingborough Library, at both locations.

### Summary

6.4 A good start to the year for participatory work, however the flexing of programming towards film from live work confirmed the concerns expressed at the time, that a move to film would have initial adverse effects on audience numbers, ticket revenue, and spin off sales especially bar takes. Despite this, the financial results after Q1 showed an adverse of just £1.48k against budget before professional expenses.
7 Legal Powers

8 Financial and Value For Money Implications
8.1 A sum to cover the management fees has been included within the estimates for 2011/12.

8.2 The Castle Ltd experienced some cash flow difficulties during previous years owing, principally, to the effects of the economic downturn. The management of these issues was the subject of a series of reports to the Resources Committee.

9 Risk Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of risk</th>
<th>Consequences if realised</th>
<th>Likelihood of occurrence</th>
<th>Control measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and management not provided as per contract specification</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory service to the public</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Development of robust and appropriate monitoring systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate development of programme</td>
<td>Public dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Development of evidence-based programme responding to needs of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakdown of relationship between Borough Council and contractor</td>
<td>Contract not delivered in line with Borough Council objectives</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Regular progress meetings and discussions between the 2 parties. High level of communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions made about the future of the castle based upon insufficient knowledge</td>
<td>Poor decision making</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Frequent briefings with Members and Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to plan for the future</td>
<td>Possible legal challenge to organisational sustainability</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Castle Advisory Panel to work with The Castle Board to agree action plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 Implications for Resources
Day to day monitoring of the contract has been absorbed into the work of the Community Support Service, reporting to The Castle Committee.
11 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities
Arts and cultural facilities provide a safe and controlled environment in which the community can undertake healthy and social activities. Arts programmes can also assist in providing diversionary activities and reduced anti-social behaviour.

12 Implications for Equalities
The Castle has policies in place to ensure equality of opportunity, ensuring that activities and employment opportunities at their sites are accessible to the whole community.

13 Author and Contact Officer
Gail Arnott, Executive Director, The Castle
Gill Chapman, Principal Manager, Community Support.

14 Consultees
Terry Wright, Corporate Director; Chris Pittman, Head of Community;
Tracey Cave, Management Accountant.

15 Background Papers
Monthly Performance Indicators and other correspondence held on Community Support files.
1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to appraise Members of the independent review of the procurement process that has been commissioned.

2 Executive Summary

The report sets out the terms of reference of the review currently being carried out on the procurement process in respect of the management of the theatre.

3 Appendices

None.

4 Proposed Action:

The Committee is invited to RESOLVE to note the report.

5 Discussion

5.1 The Committee will be aware that the recent procurement exercise in respect of the management of the Castle Theatre became very protracted. The current situation is that the Council resolved at its meeting in July to extend the current contract with The Castle (Wellingborough) Ltd pending an outcome to negotiations.

5.2 Members expressed concerns about the duration and cost of the procurement exercise and requested that an independent review be carried out. This would examine the process and make any recommendations that may be appropriate.

5.3 Since an independent review was judged appropriate, an external investigator has been commissioned to carry out the process. This will entail examination of relevant records and interviewing key officers and consultants involved in the process.

5.4 The remit of the review will be to ascertain the facts and to establish whether there are lessons to be learned in respect of the following:-
   i) compliance with EU procurement processes and best practice.
   ii) conduct of negotiations and other communication with prospective
contactors.

iii) selection and commissioning of external advisers.
iv) independence and impartiality of advice.
v) involvement by advisers, including legal advisers (NB assessment of the quality of legal advice is not within the scope of the review).
vi) documentation of processes.

5.5 At the date of preparation of this report, the remit of the review had been established and an investigator appointed. Work had yet to commence. The Committee will be provided with a verbal update on the current situation on the night.

6 Legal Powers

The Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to make arrangements for the conduct and review of its affairs.

7 Financial and Value For Money Implications

The cost of the review can be met from existing budgets.

8 Risk Analysis

There are no risks arising from this report. The review may, depending on its findings, reduce risks in future procurement exercises.

9 Implications for Resources

None arising from this report.

10 Implications for Stronger and Safer Communities

None arising from this report.

11 Implications for Equalities

None arising from this report

12 Author and Contact Officer

Richard Micklewright, Director of Resources

13 Consultees

Joe Hubbard, Chief Executive
Chris Pittman, Monitoring Officer
Terry Wright, Director of Services

14 Background Papers