



**Winchester**  
City Council

**COUNCIL MEETING – 19 April 2006**

**Question under Council Procedure Rule 14**

**QUESTION 2**

From: Councillor Pearce

To: The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport

“In the light of the recent council discussions on the Theatre Royal and whether the grant the City Council gives the theatre is beneficial to all could the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and Sport please assure me that residents and schools from all of the Winchester District gain benefit from the support given to the theatre by the City Council?”

Reply

“The Portfolio Holder has regular liaison meetings with the Chief Executive and Chairman of the theatre’s board to ensure exactly this point. Winchester City Council has a service level agreement with the theatre to ensure that benefits are spread as widely as possible across the District. The latest annual report issued by the theatre provides some helpful statistics as follows:

- 7,934 young people attending workshops run by the theatre
- 5,576 school and college attenders at 70 performances
- 219 workshops specifically for schools
- 117 different educational institutions and community organisations worked with, including Whiteley Leisure Centre, Winchester Young Carers, Winnall Rock School, Stanmore Community Learning Partnership, Whiteley Primary School, Highcliffe Primary School, The Osbourne School for young people with disabilities and special needs
- 23 performances included young people from the theatre or from other local school or youth organisations
- £5 tickets are offered for almost all performances, in order to ensure access for people on low incomes
- broad artistic seeks of good quality to appeal to a range of tastes
- 125 different activities offered during school holidays, including a programme at Whiteley Leisure Centre

Participation by residents of the Winchester District inevitably varies according to the nature and location of the projects being run at any one time. However, as a general guide, the approximate proportion of Winchester residents benefiting from these activities is about two thirds of the total numbers stated above. There are waiting

lists for many of the workshops and the theatre is keen to expand its programme to accommodate a growing demand from local people.

Progress against the service level agreement is monitored by the Local Economy Scrutiny Panel on a quarterly basis, particularly in relation to outreach to young people and access for socially excluded groups.

As part of an additional agreement since April 2005, the theatre has also managed Winchester Rural Youth Theatre and rural dance groups in Denmead, Waltham Chase, Meonstoke and South Wonston and Swanmore with approximately 70 members between them. Children participating in these groups have been able to take part in national Young Shakespeare events, have access to training by theatre professionals and perform on the theatre's stage.

In terms of physical access, the theatre's auditorium is completely accessible for people with disabilities including a hearing loop and signed performances are regularly programmed.

There are also social and economic benefits to many who live and work locally. The theatre both enhances the wider district as a place to live, visit and work in in terms of its cultural value, but also generates additional spend in local shops and businesses of over £7 per person (as evaluated by national economic impact modeling)."