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## Report of the Director of City Development

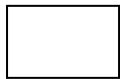
### Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure)

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Subject: **INDIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM ACADEMY YORKSHIRE 9-10 JUNE 2007  
EVALUATION**

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#### Electoral Wards Affected:



Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

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**Purpose:** This report reviews the IIFA weekend 9-10 June 2007 as it affected Leeds, makes an assessment of the immediate and longer term impact, and comments on the Leeds Mela (renamed Bollywood in the Park) which was brought forward from August to co-incide with the IIFA weekend.

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Indian International Film Academy (IIFA) awards “weekend” (the Bollywood Oscars) took place in Yorkshire over four days in June (Thursday 7 to Sunday 10). The highlight was the awards ceremony itself which took place at the Hallam FM Arena in Sheffield. The other major events were a film premier at Xscape, Castleford, a business event at the Royal Armouries, a celebrity cricket match at Headingley and a film programme at the National Media Museum, Bradford. The event was launched at a press conference at Leeds Town Hall, and the Town Hall hosted the media centre for the overall event with many international journalists present.
- 1.2 Yorkshire Forward led the bid for the IIFA awards weekend which was a Yorkshire bid, with activities in a number of locations across the region as indicated above. Previous hosts had either been cities or city-states, including Amsterdam, Dubai, Singapore and Johannesburg. The main events were organised by a company called Wizcraft who own the IIFA brand. Wizcraft had a team based in Leeds – co-located with Marketing Leeds.
- 1.3 In addition to the main events, Cities were encouraged to organise ‘fringe events’. There was no financial support for this, and the ability to attract additional sponsorship using the IIFA brand was limited by Wizcraft who needed sponsorship for the main events.

- 1.4 To co-ordinate matters across the region, Yorkshire Forward initially established a steering group including local authorities and Chaired by the Yorkshire Tourist Board (YTB). (YTB had been contracted by Yorkshire Forward to deliver all activities and requirements other than the main events). This steering group proved unwieldy and was replaced by a small group of key regional players.
- 1.5 The IIFA weekend was a success, with considerable favourable publicity regionally, nationally and internationally. Attached is a letter from Yorkshire Forward sent to partners across the region thanking them for their input to a successful weekend.

## **2. IIFA IN LEEDS**

- 2.1 The main events in Leeds organised by Wizcraft passed off smoothly. A last minute party for one of the Bollywood stars – Shilpa Shetty – which took place in the Victoria Quarter had the potential for Health and Safety and public order issues. However the work of city council staff, the police and other agencies ensured that there were no issues on the night.
- 2.2 As well as the major events in Leeds as indicated in 1.1 above, there was a Leeds ‘fringe festival’. This comprised largely of existing events which were re-badged to be associated with the IIFA events, but did include for example the show ‘Bollywood Jane’ at the West Yorkshire Playhouse. The traditional Leeds Mela was brought forward from its normal weekend to coincide with the IIFA weekend, and the organisers took the opportunity to rethink and develop the event into “Bollywood in the Park”.

### **Fringe Events in Leeds**

- 2.3 Fringe events took place in Leeds from 2<sup>nd</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June, with most events concentrated around the IIFA Weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> June. The Fringe took place in partnership with Oxfam, whose key shops in Leeds were Otley Road in Headingley and Duncan Street in the city centre. The shops featured window displays, clothes and fair trade jewellery all with an Asian theme. Leeds Metropolitan University also launched a partnership with IIFA which provided various opportunities for staff and students, including an awareness raising month, a filmmakers’ contest, two new academic chairs and a chance for 150 students to volunteer during the weekend.
- 2.4 Yorkshire Dance ran Bollywood dance courses in April, May and June taught by renowned professional dancer Zoobin Surty and West Yorkshire Playhouse presented Bollywood Jane from 2 to 30 June, a high quality artistic performance of a gritty story set in Bradford, interspersed with fantasy Bollywood dance scenes. The total audience figure was over 9,400 and the total Box Office income was £111,055.
- 2.5 Bollywood films were shown on the Big Screen in Millennium Square in the days leading up to the awards and people were directed to “Bollywood in the Park” for the weekend.
- 2.6 The IIFA Awards ceremony was broadcast live on a big screen in Roundhay Park on Saturday 9 June, to an audience of several thousand. “Bollywood in the Park” took place on Sunday 10 June and featured the “West is East” VIP exclusive fashion show, two stages with performances by British Asian talent and visits by Bollywood stars who signed autographs for fans, a wedding and lifestyle arena, multicultural cuisine and craft stalls. The event was very successful and attended by approximately 80,000 people in total; 25,000 on Saturday and 55,000 on Sunday.

- 2.7 A guide to the events taking place in Leeds during the IIFA weekend was distributed widely, with approximately 48,000 brochures being circulated around the city to restaurants, shops, take-aways, bars, hotels, cafes, sandwich shops and hairdressers. The brochures were well received, with a lot of positive interest being expressed in the IIFA weekend.
- 2.8 In addition a complementary visitor brochure 'summer in the city' was produced in time for the IIFA event and including details of all up-coming events and was made widely available for visitors and guests. This brochure was aimed at encouraging visitors to the IIFA weekend to return to Leeds, and also at visitors and potential visitors who were not necessarily interest in the IIFA weekend, but whose awareness of Leeds had been raised by the IIFA event.
- 2.9 The press and media centre for the whole weekend was based at the Town Hall and the opportunity was taken to ensure all journalists had promotional material about Leeds and "goody bags" which included *leedsliveitloveit* bags and pens, Leeds fact sheets, information on city development, business tourism news, tourist brochures, maps and general information about the City. In the lead up to the IIFA weekend, enquiries have been received from a number journalists including from Star TV, Zee TV and The Times of India. Further contacts are expected as a result of our targeting of journalists at the press/media centre.

### **3. IMPACT ON LEEDS**

- 3.1 International and local press coverage of the event generally, and the coverage of and in Leeds was positive. This will undoubtedly have benefited Leeds international profile. It was also a positive profile of an important part of the Leeds community, and will hopefully therefore have contributed to community cohesion. Indeed one of the benefits of hosting the IIFA weekend claimed by the organisers is the bringing together of communities and cultures across many continents.
- 3.2 However, it is extremely difficult to accurately assess the impact of the IIFA awards on the City – either the immediate impact or the longer term benefits as regard tourism, business or as a film location. Yorkshire Forward has commissioned an evaluation and this is underway. The final report is expected later in the autumn, but is unlikely to include details of specific benefits to individual places. We must therefore rely on anecdotal evidence. Feedback has been obtained from hotels and restaurants, and from our experience at our Tourist Information Centre, Gateway Yorkshire.
- 3.3 Gateway Yorkshire was one of only five ticket agents for the main awards ceremony and sold the majority of its allocation. Only some of the cheaper seats remained unsold. During the weekend itself, visitor numbers to Gateway were up compared to the same weekend the previous year, and many were visiting because of the IIFA weekend.
- 3.4 The Leeds hotels had a mixed experience. Not surprisingly the DeVere Hotel, Outlon where the stars were staying saw a significant increase in business, and a few others were full or almost full. However other hotels did not see an increase in bookings, and restaurants, bars and shops have not reported any noticeable increase in revenues.
- 3.5 Despite this there was a general opinion from business that the IIFA weekend had helped raise the profile of Leeds and Yorkshire, and that this should have longer term benefits.

### 3.6 Community involvement/impact

As well as 'Bollywood in the Park' mentioned above, the focus on Indian Films enabled key local communities to feel engaged by the event. "Bollywood in the Park" drew a mixed audience together leading to greater understanding and better cohesion. Some of the stars did make appearances in neighbourhoods and the City and this gave a local focus and 'human interest'. Many people in our communities were excited that Yorkshire was hosting the IIFA Awards and welcome the chance to see the stars.

## 4. COSTS

4.1 Yorkshire Forward is understood to have paid £2.5m to bring the IIFA Awards to Yorkshire. In addition there will have been other costs incurred, mainly concerning marketing and promotion, co-ordination and project management. The cost to the Council of the IIFA weekend related to the hosting of the media centre and press conference at the Town Hall, the screening of the awards at Roundhay Park, promotion and marketing material and some additional cleansing, and amounted in total to £88,1000.

This included:

- IIFA weekend fringe events brochure
- Use of Town Hall
- Security
- Health and Safety
- Technical Equipment
- Screening of Awards Ceremony
- Additional cleansing

## 5. ORGANISATION AND COORDINATE

5.1 Within Leeds a task group was established to co-ordinate and oversee activity, with input from the Leeds Initiative and Marketing Leeds. This enabled a co-ordinated approach across departments/services and ensured a consistent and coherent approach.

5.2 However, overall organisation the IIFA event was confusing and 'last minute' and this meant uncertainty about what was happening, where and when, and that the opportunities for Leeds, the IIFA weekend could not be maximised by the Council and its partners.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The IIFA event was a success for both Leeds and the region. It raised the profile of the City, it focussed positively on a section of our community which is often underrepresented and it brought benefits to business.

6.2 Many of the benefits should be longer term – increased investment from South Asia, and an other parts of the world where 'Bollywood' films are popular, an increase in tourism, interest from journalists, and more films shot in the region. These benefits will not come automatically and officers will continue to work with regional agencies –

particularly Yorkshire Forward, Yorkshire Tourist Board, and Screen Yorkshire to help maximise the benefits for Leeds.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

- 7.1 Members are asked to note this report and make comments and recommendations as appropriate.