



Report of the Chief Libraries, Arts and Heritage Officer

Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure)

Date: 11 February 2008

Subject: **Current Governance Arrangements for the Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties**

Electoral Wards Affected:

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To share with Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure) the work commissioned by Executive Board on the governance of three venues The Grand Theatre, City Varieties and Hyde Park Picture House all of which are led and managed by Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House Ltd.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At its meeting in January 2008, when considering the Overview and Scrutiny Committee minutes (17 October 2007) and the specific suggestion that the Board may wish to investigate the governance arrangements for the Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties, the Board resolved:

'That a briefing note on the current governance arrangements for the Leeds Grand Theatre and City Varieties be prepared and circulated to Members of the Board.'

- 2.2 This report and appendices seeks to provide Members with a range of information and subsequently address the Scrutiny Board's request.

3.0 Report Issues

- 3.1 Executive Board commissioned an in-depth study of the governance arrangements of Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House Ltd to ensure it would be fit for purpose following the major refurbishment and development works planned for two of its venues, The Grand Theatre and City Varieties. The study also responded to concerns raised by the Charities Commission to work close to its guidance, and raised the Arts Council a major funder.

- 3.2 A range of specialists across the Council were drawn together and external advice was also sought.
- 3.3 The attached report 'Future Governance of Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House Ltd', presented to the Executive Board on 20 September 2006, details the investigation and study outcomes. It shows a wide range of options were investigated including the separate governance of each site.
- 3.4 At its meeting on 20 September 2006, Executive Board resolved:
- (a) That the establishment of a transitional Board of five City Councillors and four independent members all appointed using a skills matrix and nomination form be approved.*
 - (b) That approval be given to the proposals that:*
 - (i) The independent members will be attracted through external advertisement.*
 - (ii) Three senior Council officers representing legal, financial and cultural policy will advise the transitional board.*
 - (iii) The Chair to be an Executive Board member.*

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 That Scrutiny Board (Culture and Leisure) accept the Executive Board decision that, for a variety of reasons, the Grand Theatre and Opera House Board Ltd is the appropriate vehicle to lead and manage the three venues and that the Board is strengthened by Independent members to help it have more independence in decision making.
- 4.2 That the focus of the Grand Theatre and Opera House Board Ltd should not be diverted from the effective deliver of the major projects and the full recommendations of the Executive Board be followed.