



Scottish Arts Council

CFO name: 7:84 Theatre Company	Reference number (GMS): G200801060
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Lead officer's recommendation

There are continuing concerns about the likely quality of 7:84's touring work. This has been discussed as an area of grave concern with the company by Scottish Arts Council officers and was considered a severe enough issue for Scottish Arts Council to grant 7:84 only one year's core funding form 2005/06, when the pattern for all other Scottish Arts Council CFOs was two year funding. However there has been no evidence of a significant change for the better, or indeed that the company considers improvement is needed.

Additionally there is concern about the status of its projects' income in 2006/07 and 2007/08, which could mean that the planned programme is not financially viable. There is concern about the viability of its plans to undertake Outreach & Community Action (OCA) work and audience development with ethnic communities.

The OCA work has proven demand, a good reputation and it is noted that 7:84 has a commitment to widespread touring. It is also noted that 7:84 is well managed and has a committed Board, though there a few operational issues to be addressed.

However, given the ongoing quality problems and no evidence of any significant improvement this means that the company is not recommended for funding under any scenario. The nature of any arts activity carries an inherent risk as regards the eventual quality of the end product, which Scottish Arts Council recognises. However, 7:84's performance evaluations are 60% competent or poor for the last three years and this indicates that the quality is not the result of one-off artistic risk, but of continuous inability to deliver at an acceptable level of quality.

It has been agreed with Scottish Arts Council that the company will receive pro rata funding until May 2006. Any further "wind down" funding should be subject to further discussion with Scottish Arts Council officers. However, it should be noted that 7:84's Board has been aware that the company only had guaranteed funding until the end of 2005/06 and it should have taken appropriate measures to ensure it meets any legal requirements regarding its staff and ongoing contracts.

NB Scottish Arts Council does not have a specific commitment to supporting political theatre as such. It is also open to debate whether the company is the only or major proponent of political theatre in Scotland (as it asserts.)

Assessment: Low

Areas of concern: quality of touring work; financial viability of programme; OCA work and audience development with ethnic minorities; reserves policy; Board renewal

Development issues: see areas of concern	
Lead Officer: Print name: Jaine Lumsden	Date: 30 November 2005

Stage 2 Decision and authorisation			
CFO name: 7:84 Theatre Company		Reference number (GMS): G200801060	
Stage 2: Head of Department recommendation within the context of the sector ecosystem			
Category for support			Partial
<p>The officer's report highlights the relative low quality of work in relation to other funded organisations, as evidenced through evaluations. The levels of attendance are high in relation to some other companies. However, the level of investment from Scottish Arts Council is also high in relation to other companies, some of which perform in small rural communities. 7:84 has commitment to addressing excluded groups and its outreach work appears to be of quality. Given Council's commitment to supporting only work of quality it is difficult to recommend continued support. Unless Council were to privileged audience numbers above quality, there is not a strong case for 7:84 remaining a CFO. It therefore has only a partial match to Scottish Arts Council aims.</p> <p>The company would be eligible for seeking support for projects.</p> <p>Discussions with the company would be required in order to manage the period following core funding.</p>			
Decision authorised:			
Head of Department Print name: David Taylor		Date 1 December 2005	

Stage 3: Head of Department recommendation within the context of the Corporate Synthesised scenario			
CFO name: 7:84 Theatre Company		Reference number (GMS): G200801060	
Category for support			Flexible
<p>7:84 would naturally fall into the category of Audience Focussed. As shown in the officer's report the artistic achievement over recent years has not been high in comparison with other producing companies. It is recommended that the company is designated Flexible Funding, Projects. This would mean that the company could apply for one-off funding for specific projects. This is likely to result in significant changes in how the company operates.</p> <p>The company has been offered core funding until mid-August 2006. It is in an unusual situation in that it is not guaranteed core funding for the whole of 2006/07</p>			
<p>Recommendation authorised:</p> <p>Head of Department Print name: David Taylor</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date 14.02.06</p>			

Stage 4: Group Heads			
Recommendation and authorisation			
CFO name: 7:84 Theatre Co		Reference number (GMS): G200801060	
Category for support			Flexible
<p>Council's review process has concluded that flexible funding will help achieve a dynamic in the sector that allows the new artists and companies to have an opportunity to develop and present their work. A key criterion in this will always be artistic quality, not at the expense of the audience interest, but to serve the audience with the best and most challenging work. In this context we agree with the proposal for 7:84 to move onto flexible funding, but propose transitional funding which would extend the period of notice to align with the rest of the sector (End of March 07) and that allows the company to explore their options in these circumstances.</p>			
<p>Decision authorised:</p> <p>Group Head Print name: Jim Tough</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date 14.02.06</p>			

Stage 5: Creative Arts / Performing Arts Committee			
Recommendation and authorisation			
CFO name: 7:84 Theatre Co		Reference number (GMS): G200801060	
Category for support		Flexible	
<p>Agreed as per Manager/Group Heads recommendation with additional comments/conditions: Committee recommended that the period of notice remain at August 2006. The organisation has been under notice for the past 12 months and no plan for change has been produced.</p>			
Committee Chair Print name: Jennifer Waterton		Date 06 February 2006	

Stage 6: Council			
Decision			
CFO name: 7:84 Theatre Co		Reference number (GMS): G200801060	
Category for support			Flexible (project)
<p>Approved flexible (project) funding as per Managers/Group Heads and Committee recommendations</p>			
Chairman Print name: Richard Holloway		Date 28 February 2006	

End of Assessment