



Submission from Birmingham Arts Partnership

5th January 2012

Dear Sir

Birmingham City Council Business Plan and Budget 2013+ Consultation

1. Birmingham Arts Partnership (BAP) represents all the major arts companies and venues across the central area of Birmingham.
2. We agree, in broad terms, with the principles of the approach to the budget.
3. As an informal representative body of arts organisations, it is not appropriate to comment on the level of Council Tax.
4. We endorse the commitment by the Development and Culture department to: "Support a rich and diverse cultural scene for residents and visitors." BAP members are clearly well positioned to make a significant contribution to this policy priority. We wholeheartedly support the aim to: "[Use] the city's cultural scene to encourage investment, create jobs and promote the city – whilst recognising their importance to quality of life." We also believe cultural institutions can make a wider contribution to increasing inward investment into the city and "shouting up" for Birmingham at home and abroad.
5. Clearly, BAP believes that any proposals to reduce investment in the arts will have a real, negative and lasting impact on cultural provision. Through our Sustainability Plan, we have already made around £4 million in efficiency savings in addition to reductions in grant funding already in place. We are continuing to create programmes to generate further savings and to develop new revenue streams. We have separately reported on our Sustainability Plan to the Council and will be submitting a final report before April.
6. We recognise the Council will have to radically review its role in the city from 2014. We will be pleased to contribute to this review as it develops, including how arts organisations should work with the Council building on the outcomes of last year's Arts Summit. We recognise that the current system of grants and contracts for arts organisations will need to change and that innovative forms of funding for culture will need to be identified. BAP is already exploring new ideas which want to discuss with the Council in the forthcoming months.
7. We appreciate the financial challenges faced by Birmingham City Council are significant. We also believe that culture has a major contribution to make to the policy priorities of the Authority, including jobs, growth and fairness. Meanwhile, Birmingham makes a major contribution to culture at national and international levels. Reductions in funding would therefore have an impact on investment attractiveness, the visitor economy and the reputation of the city. We will work in partnership with the Council to maintain and develop the city's cultural scene.

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