



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th OCTOBER 2021

RCT THEATRES: 2021 CHRISTMAS OFFER SCREENINGS

REPORT OF DIRECTOR – PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH CLLR. RHYS LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES, WELL-BEING & CULTURAL SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Given that Wales is now at Alert Level 0 enabling theatres to fully reopen, the purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for screening RCT Theatres' 2021 digital Christmas offer of 'Aladdin' at the Coliseum and Park and Dare Theatres free of charge.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the proposal to screen RCT Theatres' digital Christmas offer of 'Aladdin' at the Coliseum and Park and Dare Theatres in December 2021 as a cinema experience with tickets available free of charge.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Welsh Government guidance states that as of 7th August 2021, Wales moved to Alert Level 0, whereby there are no legal limits on the number of people who can meet, including in public places or at events.
- 3.2 In April 2021, Cabinet approved the provision of a digital Christmas offer of 'Aladdin' in December 2021 and for the production to be made available free of charge via the RCT Theatres YouTube Channel.
- 3.3 In order for RCT Theatres to provide a festive family experience that is close to our regular festive offer, approval is being sought to screen 'Aladdin' over a series of dates in December 2021 at each of our theatres with tickets available free of charge to ensure equitable access to the Christmas offer for residents and children who may be digitally excluded.

4. BACKGROUND

RCT Theatres' 2021 Christmas Offer

- 4.1 Given the uncertainty in relation to Covid restrictions, Cabinet approved the provision of a Christmas digital offer of 'Aladdin' in December 2021 and the postponement of RCT Theatres' 'Dick Whittington' pantomime until December 2022 at an April 2021 meeting.
- 4.2 As an Arts Council of Wales Portfolio client in receipt of revenue funding, £45,000 was allocated from this budget and a further £30,000 secured from the Council via Cabinet.
- 4.3 The report to Cabinet in April 2021 noted that if the pandemic restrictions in Wales eased, there was the potential to screen the production at the theatres as a cinema experience, in addition to the free online offer being made available.

5. 2021 CHRISTMAS OFFER SCREENING

Theatres

- 5.1 The theatres will reopen for cinema screenings in late October/early November 2021, in line with Regulation 16 of the Health Protection (Coronavirus Restrictions) (No. 5) (Wales) Regulations 2020 for premises open to the public or where work takes place, subject to a robust Covid Risk Assessment.
- 5.2 Further to that risk assessment, RCT Theatres have outlined a reopening plan that enables our historic theatres to reopen cautiously and slowly with an initial capacity that enables systems to be trialled, staff to be further trained and customers to gain confidence by returning in a safe manner.
- 5.3 It is proposed to open our theatres with a maximum of 200 customers by December 2021, with seating in the stalls auditorium only. Alongside the phased approach to opening, we will implement a number of control measures to protect our staff, our customers, our performers and people taking part in organised arts activities within the theatres. These control measures will be regularly reviewed and amended to match Welsh Government, Council guidance and industry best practice.

Aladdin Screening

- 5.4 RCT Theatres' traditional pantomime productions are around 2.5 hours in length (including a 20 minute interval). The film of 'Aladdin' will be approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes in length (with no interval).

- 5.5 Once again, RCT Theatres will ensure that the production is fully accessible with captions and BSL.
- 5.6 Our programme of Aladdin will include at least 11 screenings at each theatre, with an offer of both non-socially distanced and socially distanced screenings, providing our communities with an option dependant on their individual preferences.
- 5.7 Tickets for screenings will need to be booked via the theatres in the usual ways but no charge will be levied. The free tickets can be transferred or returned if, for whatever reason, ticket holders cannot attend. The cinema style screenings and the online offer will be promoted in the RCT Theatres Programme of Events.
- 5.8 Offering a free theatre screening alongside the online offer of Aladdin will ensure the magical family Christmas pantomime reaches a wide audience including any digitally excluded residents. It also supports our programme of work to fully re-open our theatres over coming months and encourage our loyal and new customers to return.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening Assessment indicates a full assessment is not needed.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 No consultation exercise has been required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 With a budget of £75,000 secured through £45,000 Arts Council of Wales revenue funding (due to our status as an Arts Portfolio Client) and a further £30,000 from the Council, there is no requirement to recover costs for the production of 'Aladdin'.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 The proposal contributes to the Council's corporate priorities:
- People – such as developing cultural experiences for positive health and wellbeing and; providing cultural experiences for our residents;

- Places – such as providing opportunities to engage with and participate in the arts and creative industries within our communities, town centres and parks and; developing themed bespoke projects;
- Prosperity - such as supporting and developing freelancers; being innovative in our Christmas offer and; fulfilling the sectors potential to culturally serve its community.

10.2 The proposal contributes to the seven national wellbeing goals, particularly:

- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language;
- A prosperous Wales;
- A healthier Wales;
- A Wales of cohesive communities.

10.3 The proposal is consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term –revenue investment seeks to achieve a long-term and sustainable arts and creative industries infrastructure with the Borough;
- Prevention – engagement and participation opportunities offering early intervention and prevention support;
- Integrated – contributing to a range of local, regional and national strategic priorities by adopting an integrated and coherent approach;
- Collaboration - through working across Council services and public, private and third sector agencies, locally, regionally and nationally;
- Involvement – through consultation, feedback, advisory groups and professional networks.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 This paper outlines a proposal to screen RCT Theatres' digital Christmas offer of 'Aladdin' at the Coliseum and Park and Dare Theatres in December 2021 with tickets offered free of charge.

11.2 This proposal builds on the existing Cabinet decision that 'Aladdin' be made available free of charge via the RCT Theatres' YouTube channel.

11.3 This proposal is in line with the Council's traditional Christmas offerings and will add value to what will be an accessible, magical experience that is festively family-friendly within our wonderful RCT Theatres.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR. RHYS LEWIS**

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Background Papers

None

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