

Addendum to the Business and Action Plan

1. Background

At a meeting on the 2nd April, the Board asked for an addendum to the Business Plan, highlighting any changes resulting from the Covid-19 lockdown and the closure of schools. This note describes how the Hub is responding to the crisis and outlines the way in which it has rearranged its priorities and reset the timetable for action for the rest of the calendar year and beyond.

It should be stressed that the principles that informed the business plan and were captured in the 6 key priorities remain unchanged. These were

- Engagement (To involve more children and young people in making and enjoying music)
- Quality (To raise standards and improve the quality of music making in the city and to maintain a high level of safeguarding)
- Performance (To provide more opportunities for performance to showcase talent and reach a wider audience)
- Support for providers (To develop a more widely understood package of support for schools and other providers in the city)
- Signposting and advocacy (To increase awareness of the Music Hub and its role in promoting music education in the city)
- Strategic vision and fundraising (To gather and use data more effectively to improve needs analysis, shape strategy and inform planning)

The Covid-19 lockdown, however, has forced a rethink about how the Hub will address these priorities, and, importantly, how it will need to operate differently once the immediate crisis is over. Because there is still so much uncertainty, it is not possible to agree clear actions, deadlines and targets as would normally be the case when constructing a plan. This is a time for seizing opportunities as they present themselves and being adaptable.

2. Immediate concerns

The emphasis for the period of the lockdown has been on preparing for the new financial year and maintaining the presence of the Hub as a partnership despite the cancellation of two key partnership events (the Choral Festival and Hubfest 2020). The key priorities are:

2.1. Business continuity.

- To review the resilience of the YMH income, and adjust the budget for the 2020/21 in the light of decisions about existing commitments and new lockdown related activity,
- To liaise with YAE in order to ensure that it remains financially viable and that ACE is kept informed about financial pressures and core activity,
- To monitor the position of freelance musicians and take action, insofar as that is possible, to ensure that they are supported and will be able to continue working once the lockdown is lifted.

2.2. Continuing activity.

The Hub is currently going on-line, which has required a significant investment in a new website and the creation of share.yorkmusichub.org.uk. Some of the action required has already been identified in the Action Plan attached to the Business Plan.

- To establish the website as an indispensable source of information about music in the city (launch originally planned for April 2020),

- To use social media and the mailing list to encourage use of share.yorkmusichub.org.uk,
- To turn the singing strategy into a clear plan of action, with its own location on the website (by July 2020),
- To produce a brochure outlining what the Hub can do for schools and create a dedicated space for schools on the website (by July 2020),
- To turn the Framework for CPD into a clear plan, with information available and up-dated in a dedicated space on the website (by July 2020),
- To up-date the section of the website providing information about the approved tutors (by July 2020),
- To provide feedback for all partners and stakeholders on the outcome of the 2019/20 data return.

3. Medium Term planning

Although it is by no means clear when schools will open again, the period of lockdown provides an opportunity to plan for a return to normal working in the medium term. Uncertainties include the status of the ACE data return for 2019/20, and the future of the ACE grant beyond the end of Q1 as well as the financial position that schools find themselves in. Nonetheless key activity for the Hub includes:

- To work with YAE to support the new WCET offer,
- To make an offer to the 10 'cold spot' primary schools that have not engaged with the Hub in 2019/20, including subsidy for and active use of Charanga,
- To engage partners in plans for 'Back Making Music' an Autumn concert series, designed to raise funds for the Hub and its partners,
- To use the Commissioning Fund strategically to support the virtual Music Hub and previously planned activity,
- To maintain momentum behind the fundraising drive.

4. Long term thinking

It is highly likely that, once the lockdown is lifted, the Hub will have to adjust to a world in which some of the old certainties have disappeared. Of particular concern is likely to be changes in the financial environment. Over the last 2 years, the Hub has raised significant sums of money through charitable giving (over £45K). Charities that provide grants are already being squeezed, corporate sponsorship is likely to be in very short supply even after the lockdown is ended, and the public may well have different priorities for charitable giving. It is equally difficult to estimate the effect on schools of changes in the Ofsted inspection regime and the decision to dispense with end of KS2 SATs in 2020, as well as the impact on budgets of the National Funding Formula.

Whilst It is clear that the Hub needs to be responsive, it should also be doing all it can to influence the direction that change takes. Action might include:

- Being innovative about fund raising, maintaining a strong on-line presence as a way of helping potential donors focus on the need to help young people emerge stronger from the emotional and mental health challenge of the Covid-19 epidemic,
- Working with other Arts Forms through the Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) to support well-being as an important priority for schools,
- Maintaining relationships with existing funders, with a particular emphasis on the impact of inequality and poverty,
- Using the ACE consultancy to re-examine the most effective way of operating in the new post Covid-19 world.

April 2020.