

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Councillor Darren Cooper Leader of Sandwell Council Sandwell Council Freeth Street Oldbury B69 3DE

LONDON SW1A 0AA

28 August 2013

Dear Darren

THE PUBLIC, WEST BROMWICH

As you know, I have undertaken a consultation into the future of The Public with tenants and community groups since Sandwell Council announced it was reviewing the future of the building. I gave you a flavour of the results when we spoke recently but now enclose the full responses for your consideration.

As you will see, there certainly seems to be demand for at least a proportion of the building, perhaps the ground floor, to be retained for community use. I know this is an idea that you are already considering, and I certainly think there would be benefit in taking this forward.

While responses are not included from Multistory and University of the Third Age, I have also had discussions with their representatives. Their comments and concerns mirror those identified in the survey results from other tenants and community groups.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Tom Watson

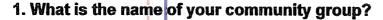
Member of Parliament for West Bromwich East

Survey Responses: Community Groups

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COMMUNITY GROUPS

Name





2. How many members are there of your community group?

ON OUR DATABASE IN TOTAL WITH OUR ZUMBA GROUP AND BURLESQUE AND CABARET PLUS CHILDRENS CLASSES WE HAVE OVER FIFTEEN HUNDRED PLUS MEMBERS WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THESE CLASSES OVER A THREE YEAR PERIOD.

3. What is the frequency of your meetings?

WE HOLD A WEEKLY ZUMBA CLASS EVERY THURSDAY EVENING AND DURING SCHOOL SUMMER HOLIDAYS, WE CONDUCT CHILDREN'S DANCE WORKSHOPS AND EVERY QUARTLY WE HOLD ONE DAY WORKSHOPS IN BURLESQUE AND CABARET.

4. What is the purpose of your group?

THE PURPOSE OF CUR GROUP IS TO HELP PEOPLE KEEP FIT AND ACTIVE AND TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHY LIFE STYLE THROUGH DANCE AND FITNESS FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN, BUILD CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM AND MAKE NEW FRIENDS.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

THIS INFORMATION CAN BE OBTAINED THROUGH IN THE ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT AS OUR FEES VARY ACCORDING TO WHAT EVENT WE ARE CONDUCTING AT ANY ONE TIME.

6. How long has your organisation been located at The Public, or used the building for its meetings?

WE HAVE BEEN WITH THE PUBLIC SINCE JUNE 2010.

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your group?

THE BENEFITS OF OUR GROUP USING THE PUBLIC BUILDING IS THAT ON A WEEKLY BASIS WE HAVE HAD ANYTHING FROM 130 TO 30 PARTICIPANTS ATTEND CLASSES SINCE OUR GROUP STARTED AT THIS VENUE OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS. THE SPACE IS VERY IMPORTANT AND THE BUILDING HAS LARGE ROOMS AS OUR ACTIVITY REQUIRES A LARGE AREA AND SUITABLE FLOORING WHICH IS WHY WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN MAINTAINING OUR BUSINESS THERE.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

THE NEW SQUARE IS NO DOUBT BRINGING IN NEW BUSINESS TO THE PUBLIC AND THE CAFE AREA COULD BE UTILIZED MORE FOR EARLY MORNING BREAKFAST, LUNCHES AND AFTERNOON TEAS. THIS IS A CLEAR AND AN OBVIOUS WAY TO GENREATE MORE INCOME. MORE ACTIVITIES FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC ALL DAY LONG SESSIONS FOR EVERY AGE GROUP. IN PARTICULAR BABY AND TODDLER GROUPS, A GOOD IDEA WOULD BE TO CREATE A SPACE FOR A CHILDRENS PLAY AREA LIKE A BALL PIT SPACE WHICH WILL ULTILISE THE CAFE AREA AGAIN WHICH COULD BE INCLUDED IN THE COSTINGS I.E TOAST, A CUP OF TEA / COFFEE ETC FOR THE PARENTS WHILST THEIR CHILDREN ARE PLAYING. CYBER SPACE AREA COULD WORK WELL WITH THE YOUNG ESPECIALLY STUDENTS. CHILDRENS TAILOR MADE BIRTHDAY PARTIES CAN BE INTRODUCED, CHILDRENS / UNDER 16'S DISCOS, YOUTH CLUBS ETC. (ACTIVITIES ARE SO MUCH NEEDED FOR THE YOUTH OF TODAY WHY CANT THE BUILDING BE UTILISED IN THIS WAY FOR THEM) FINALLY, OUR COMPANY WOULD BE HAPPY TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC AS WE OFFER SO MUCH MORE IN THE DANCE AND FITNESS WORLD WORKING FROM THE AGES OF 4 YEARS UP TO 90 AND BEYOND FOR ALL ABLE AND UNABLED INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

I AM HOPING THE FUTURE OF THE PUBLIC WILL REMAIN THE USAGE FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC TO ATTEND ALL THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACTIVITIES AND BE ALLOWED TO ENJOY THE BUILDING FOR WHAT IT IS AND MORE IMPORTANTLY FOR WHAT IT COULD BECOME FOR THE GENERATION OF TODAY AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME.

10. Any other comments.

OUR COMPANY HAS BEEN A LOYAL AND SUPPORTIVE CUSTOMER TO THE PUBLIC FOR OVER THREE YEARS AND WILL STAND BY THE PUBLIC EVERY STEP OF THE WAY AND WILL ALWAYS DO OUR UTMOST TO CONTINUE WHATEVER IT TAKES TO KEEP THIS SPECTACULAR VENUE OPEN AND TRADING INDEPENDANTLY. NOW IS THE TIME TO ALLOW THE GENERAL

PUBLIC TO SPEAK UP AND SAY WHAT SHOULD BE HAPPENING IN THE VENUE AND NOT WHAT THE GOVERNMENT THINK THE GENREAL PUBLIC WANT AND NEED.

Date: 5 August 2013 18:43:25 BST
To: "WATSON, Tom" < tom.watson.mp@parliament.uk > Subject: Re: MP Survey: the future of The Public

Dear Mr Watson MP,

First I would look like to apologise for my late reply to this email, unfortunately during

I work for the largest providers of National Citizen Service (NCS) through our summer programme; will see approximately 180 local young people from Sandwell undertake a 3 part summer programme.

the summer programme my time is very limited and this is the first opportunity I have

incorporating different physical and social action challenges.

I have been very fortunate for the last two summers to use The Public as a base for summer programme. The Public has been a fantastic venue for us. the racilities available and customer service is exceptional. Since June 2012 we have used The Public as the main base for our summer programme approximately using The Public for 36 days over a 3 month period. We mainly use The Public for the third part of NCS powered by During this week we ask our young people of Sandwell to survey the local community to design their own campaign which they action in September. The young people also have the opportunity to connect with other local charities and organisations. The Public sets the tone for this week perfectly being a creative and community space, inspiring many of our young people to be more active in their own community. Furthermore The Public provides fantastic facilities for the delivery of the week, from its meeting rooms to its Theatre where we host our AlLof this further enhances our young people's experience of NCS powered by

During February 2013 we also hosted in which local young people who previously completed had the opportunity to learn new skills based around different cultures. The space that The Public provides was perfect for the event and allowed us to run different workshops based around African dance, drumming, street dance, street art and more inclusive activities like creative writing and learning sign language.

Finally we also used The Public for our training days in June over the weekend of the 7th-9th of June, we used The Madeline Carroll Suite to train over 100 staff. The technical support and facilities again were superb, allowing us to deliver a high quality training weekend.

In terms of a venue, personally, I find that The Public has been a great facility to use. I feel that The Public has a great atmosphere and offers something different for the local people of West Bromwich and the Sandwell area. The Public could be better

utilised by more corporate events and somehow work together with the college as a social enterprise. However I strongly believe in The Public remaining as a centre that can be used by the local community. Over the last few weeks I have had the pleasure seeing how much more The Public is being used by the local public through the opening of the new square. Since the square opened in July The Public has been busier and there has been a great atmosphere both inside and just outside the centre, which would be such a shame to lose if it was shut down. The Public offers the opportunity for communities to connect whether it be through going to the cafe, walking around the exhibitions or using The Public as a base, like In my opinion it would be a real loss to the area of West Bromwich if The Public were to close down as I feel that The Public really could be a hub of community activity if given a little more time.

I hope I have been able to answer your questions sufficiently, the views expressed above are my own personal experiences and not on behalf of lowever. If there are any questions about any of the information above please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I would, however like to also take this opportunity to invite you to our Campaign Weekend on the 21st and 22nd of September 2013 which will be at The Public. As I have previously mentioned we use The Public for our young people to design a campaign based around or inspired by their local community. During the 21st and 22nd the young people will be going live with their campaign ideas and canvassing them to the local community. It would be fantastic if a member of the local council could be a part of this day to witness social action being completed by local young people. The commitment would be for an hour between 3-4pm at The Public, whereby you could meet the young people and hear their ideas and findings from the campaigns they have created. If you would like visit our teams on either/or 21st and 22nd September please do not hesitate to get in touch.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Many Thanks

TEA DANCING

Dear Mr Watson.

Thank you for your communication in respect of the Public West Bromwich. I submit the answers to your queries as below.

- 1. The Public Tea Dance.
- 2. Average attendar ce 120 people.
- 3. Fortnightly on a Wednesday afternoon.
- 4. To provide a tea dance in a pleasant environment where people can meet old friends, make new ones, and take exercise through dancing or just relax and listen to the music.
- 5. The Public does not charge us for use of the room because we give our services free and use our own equipment and CDs. The Public charges admission to the dance and makes money on the sale of refreshments.
- 6. Four years in September.
- 7. a. The Public Tea Dance has become a well known event in the West Midlands.
- b. The building provides a modern clean venue with an excellent dance floor and is warm in winter.
- c. There is easy access by bus and Metro, as dancers not only come from West Bromwich but from places like Wolverhampton, Halesowen and Sutton Coldfield.
- d. The room we use can accommodate a large number of people. The most dancers we have had so far at one dance is 180.
- e. Refreshments are readily available.
- f. People coming to the dance at The Public spend money is West Bromwich.
- g. People are drawn to other events taking place in The Public.
- 8. a. The admission fee to the dance could be increased slightly.

- b. Perhaps a Post Office franchise or a parcel collection/deposit could be incorporated in the building. The current Post Office is too far up the High Street.
 - c. Would a bank fund a Cash Point in the building?
- 9. Since the opening of the New Square the Public has come into its own. It is not only an Arts Centre but also a community centre for all ages and ethnicities. It is an integral part of the New Square and could become the hub of West Bromwich.
- 10. If The Public becomes a sixth form college it will only be open in term time. It will be closed for a year while it is converted into classrooms at great expense. The closure could be detrimental to the New Square. Students will hang around outside the building and this can be quite intimidating. As we know there have already been disturbances at the new college.

We trust that you will use your good offices to keep the Public open for the sake of the West Bromwich community.

If you require any further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely



Telephone!

ARTS ON

1. What is the name of your community group?

Arts On.

2. How many members are there of your community group?

We average about 30 people each week.

3. What is the frequency of your meetings?

We meet on Thursday and Fridays each week at The Public.

4. What is the purpose of your group?

Arts On is a community arts group for people who are struggling with mental or physical health problems. The aim is to use art as a psychotherapeutic intervention with client populations who may not be able to engage in more verbally orientated psychotherapies. We use art to enhance the quality of life for people with long-term conditions and as an aid to recovery from episodes of ill-health or following injury. We facilitate the development of personal creative skills, which can be utilized in every day life.

Arts On uses creativity as a communication tool, which has proven successful in raising self-esteem, reducing isolation, providing a distraction to every day and acute stress as well as encouraging social involvement and developing new skills.

We aim to engage the local community in arts and craft activities, to educate the wider community in the arts, and to build a lifelong audience for the arts.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

There is no charge to group members as funding is provided by the Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group but the room is hired from The Public and paid for by the CCG.

6. How long has your organisation been located at The Public, or used the building for its meetings?

I have facilitated the Arts On group since April 2012 but it was established and run at The Public for several years before this.

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your group?

The group is for 'artists' and is run by an artist. The benefits of 'The Public', is that the building is specifically for the arts, meaning that when people come to the building they are there to work as artists. There is no stigma attached to the building for those with mental health problems and they are able to work side by side with other artists in the building. The close proximity to exhibition managers etc. also means that opportunities occur which otherwise would not, resulting in several exhibitions over the past year for members of the group.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the evel of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

I believe that this is a ready being addressed by senior members of staff and it would seem that just as The Public is 'finding it's way' independently, it is being threatened by closure. I do think that if The Public specialized in the sales of more professional arts publications and materials it could create a 'niche', which is not served anywhere else locally.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

I believe that The Public has had a hard struggle to get the support of the local community but has now started to engage very successfully and is building up a very good arts engagement programme. It would be a real shame if it closed now – just as people are starting to engage, the council now want to take it away.

10. Any other comments.





2. How many members are there of your community group?

No members we hold regular shows which sell up to 200 tickets. These shows are made up of a local audience coming to see performers from across the midlands in a venue that promotes ocal art and culture.

3. What is the frequency of your meetings? Quarterly

4. What is the purpose of your group?

To showcase local burlesque and cabaret talent from around the midlands in a venue which prides itself on being home for local creative talent across the fields.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

The public keep all the bar takings from our show and a 30% cut of the ticket sales.

6. How long has your organisation been located at The Public, or used the building for its meetings?

Over 18months. We were really hoping that once the new square development was completed and the public was at the heart of the new town that this would encourage more people to use the venue and as this in turn will encourage more rolling revenue for the venue. I truly feel that the initial trouble the venue faced now has a serious opportunity to be over. We just need to be sensible and give it more time.

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your group?

It's local. It's unique. It is a hub for creatives be they designers and artists from across the region and we fit in perfectly promoting our brand of creatives from across the midlands. This is important for us as I could have chosen any pub or theatre for the show but I didn't want that. I wanted the public as in both appearance and reputation it is a beacon for creatives and just needs more time to grow now it is in the right place.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

Marketing and publicity of the events already established there are a key beginning. These should generate higher income and continue to grow and flourish. It is important to try and really fill the event calendar be they corporate events or private like mine. It is not only a day venue but an evening one and it is not being utilised to its full potential in this respect.

The summer holiday camps are another revenue stream which is not being driven to its fullest.

The gallery is free in but perhaps using part of the top floor as a pay in exhibit is another way of driving money through the doors.

Launch this week of a revamped children's menu is a start but between that and Christmas there is really not much impetus on drawing people to eat in the venue and use the facilities it has available.

More interaction with the council at events like the bank holiday show in August and the mela last month to boost the profile of the venue and what it is they provide through their event calendar and social offerings.

We cannot afford to lose this venue. It is too important to the community and it has too much potential.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

It has to be left as it is to develop. Perhaps with a renewed management structure who can run it to its fullest potential and get the most out of it. It has to be left as it is now the town has shifted to be given the best chance to grow and make money. It is not he right time to change it now. Perhaps a strict structure of reviews over a period of the next 3 years with a view of selling it then if it has not significantly reduced the amount of funding it requires.

10. Any other comments.

This venue has been our home for 18months.

The staff have helped our show grow and we have developed. This relationship is mutual and I will do whatever I can to help the venue as it helped us.

This venue is simply to important to the communist and it really does have the potential to grow.

1. What is the name of your community group?



2. How many members are there of your community group?

We are a staff team of nine providing infrastructure support to the Third and Not-for-Profit Sector

3. What is the frequency of your meetings?

I hold monthly meetings at the Public, as well as yearly conferences. I also support a number of Not-for-profits based within the Public.

4. What is the purpose of your group?

To provide support to the Third and Not-for-Profit Sector, building capacity, providing training courses and being an independent voice of the sector

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

We pay to use the conference facilities when booked, we currently have a conference booked for November which may not now go ahead, the value to the public for this event is a little over £3000

6. How long has your organisation been located at The Public, or used the building for its meetings?

Since it opened really

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your group?

It's central location, the fact it has a small cafe which is ideal for small meetings, and then fact that this is the only good conference facility within West Brom that can hold 100+ delegates

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

- Promote its conference facilities
- Put together clear pricing structure to enable it to rent out event space
- Secure a parking arrangement with local providers to enable subsidised parking
- Promote the availability of 'incubator' or business start up space

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

The building (and the Arts Trust) needs to come up with a more robust business model that will enable them to taper their subsidy down over the next 2-3 years.

10. Any other comments.

Whilst the Public may be a controversial space in many respects, it is still a valuable resource to the locality, in particular the not-for-profit sector. It does provide a superb central meeting and conference space, and would be a real loss to the area should it close.

Kind regards





1. What is the name of your community group?



2. How many members are there of your community group?

Roughly 30. Well over the half the company are school age Children from Sandwell.

3. What is the frequency of your meetings?

We use the theatre for our performances twice a year and use it fairly regularly for rehearsals

4. What is the purpose of your group?

We put on pantomimes and variety shows. If it has a purpose it is to give us, as members, a chance to express ourselves creatively and to entertain people. We also operate an open door policy for joining. We don't turn anyone away so people who can't do a thing when they arrive can find themselves in a lead role as they go on through their time in the company.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

We hire the Public it costs us in the region of £900+ for the two full days we hire it. In comparison to the cost of other facilities in the borough and surrounding area this is a small fee.

6. How long has your organisation been located at The Public, or used the building for its meetings?

About two years since we were priced out of using any school facilities in this borough or in Dudley

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your group?

It is relatively cheap. The technical spec of the theatre is excellent and they provide people to operate the sound and lights etc. They sell tickets for us an provide publicity so we reach an audience we never would have before. Without the Public

we have no future, at least not performing in Sandwell. That sounds dramatic but its true.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

I don't know about this. One thought may be the council could locate more services there and save themselves rent on other buildings they are using.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

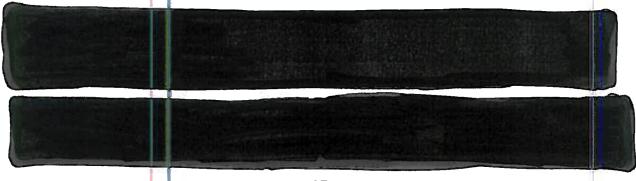
Sandwell is a great borough but is steeped in poverty. The Public is a cultural oasis in the centre of this area. I think that they may do well to try and find more projects that grip the imagination of the Sandwell public unlike some of the slightly high brow exhibitions they have staged thus far.

10. Any other comments.

I actually wrote to you a few weeks ago about the situation with The Public. I'll reproduce the letter below.

I am writing to you in connection to The Public in West Bromwich. I understand that you are looking for the views of people and groups who use it. I represent We are a small theatre group of about 25. Well over half this company are made of under 16 year olds living in Sandwell. Until two and a half years ago we used to perform at Leasowes School in Halesowen. Then quite unexpectedly they put up their prices from £600 for a week's hire to £2300. This completely priced us out of their market (and a few other companies besides us). We then approached St. Michaels in Blackheath. They weren't quite as expensive but the difference was negligible. To survive in those venues we would have to put up our prices. Something we don't want to do as we want to make our performances accesible. None of us are interested in profit.

In desperation, as the company was under serious threat of going under, I approached The Pub ic assuming they would over charge also. I was pleasantly surprised to find they were both affordable and accommodating. That was the start of the relationship and four shows later it is going strog still. Put simply without The Public I am not sure our company can survive. I am not sure what more I can say than that.





Many thanks for taking a consultation.

Survey Responses: Tenants

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TENANTS Email Address



1. What is the name of your business or organisation?



2. How many people do you employ?

1 full time, 4 part time and numerous freelancers throughout the year

3. What is your client base?

We work with a number of different communities across the Black Country, last year we worked with many different types of people, linking to BME groups, Deaf and Disabled groups, as well as working with schools, youth centres, small arts centres and faith based groups.

4. What is the purpose of your business?

We work with local communities to give them access to professional performing arts in their community spaces. The groups and community based promoters are responsible for making all the choices and decisions of which companies or artists they might want to see performing in their communities and they are also responsible for attracting the audiences.

We also create new productions with other professional companies which draw on the stories and experiences of the many communities in the Black Country.

In addition works very closely with LA officers in all four local authorities to ensure we can support local agendas and support initiatives that draw down additional resources and cultural activity for the Black Country.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

We pay for one office space which costs us £2693. SMBC also provide us with another office space which they pat for as support in kind which costs them £3807

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

3 years, since August 2010

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

The Public provides important infrastructure for much of our work in Sandwell and are a natural partner for us when developing exciting and innovative work for people within the borough. We have been developing work with The Public since we moved in, here are some of the projects we have panned over the next three years.

Alchemy South Asian Festival - May 2015 — this is a strategic partnership with The South Bank in London which if successful would see The Public hosting world class artists from both the UK and India. Alchemy is one of the South Bank's key festivals which showcases the work of South Asian artists from around the world. The Southbank is looking to tour this festival to three key partners across the country—is one of them. The Public (and the surrounding outdoor spaces) will be a major venue as part of the wider pan Black Country festival in which a broad range South Asian performance work would be programmed. The Public will play a key role not just with its diverse spaces, but also with its technical facilities and staff able to support this week long programme.

Creative People & Places — 3 year programme from Autumn 2013 - Black Country Together a consortium of Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton Councils for Voluntary Services are leading on this £2 million project which has been awarded for the Black Country. This is an exciting opportunity for two Sandwell based arts organisations who are based in The Public, will be leading on the development of the artistic projects with The Public already signed up as a key strategic partner. As already indicated by Arts Council it will be crucial that we work with the existing arts infrastructure to ensure the full potential of the project. In Sandwell, The Public will be a key strategic partner in terms of existing infrastructure.

Young Promoters scheme is a brilliant way of engaging with young people, supporting them in the development of skills and building confidence to select and promote professional events. A vital part of this work is making them understand how their work connects with the wider cultural industries and how the skills and confidence they develop can be used to make things happen here in Sandwell. We have been developing a programme with Sandwell Young Promoters to work with The Public as their venue. This gives them the opportunity to programme for a professional venue and to work alongside professional staff. With the continued struggle against low aspiration in the borough we see relationships like this as vital in making young people understand that they can develop the necessary skills to live and work in the cultural industries in Sandwell with The Public as a vital example.

Sonia Sabri Site Specific Production for The Public – October 2014 – we are currently in discussions with Sonia Sabri Company one of the country's leading Kathak Dance companies to develop a brand new production for 2014 responding to the unique spaces within the Public.

Previous projects such as **The Art of Story** would not be possible without The Public. This saw the famous children's author Allan Ahlberg who grew up in Oldbury, visiting and inspiring the children of two local schools who then worked with the public.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

- Look to exploit the increased footfall that the opening of the shopping centre has created. This could be done through use of the café, making a charge for some of the additional activities that could happen in the foyer or looking to charging for certain exhibitions (as Birmingham Art Gallery does with some Gas Hall exhibitions)
- Explore the potential to work more closely with tenants of the building using them to contribute to the activity of the building. For example: community promoters programming performing arts activity in the building and as part of their ongoing training being responsible for running the events themselves providing front of house etc thus reducing staff costs
- Looking to resources within the building to generate additional income, one example might be using the equipped studio space and engaging apprentices in the building as part of their training to produce promotional film etc for a range of clients.
- Continue to make the venue an attractive offer for conferences the
 current higher car parking charges might be an issue but perhaps there
 could be a special deal for conference attendees of a reduced flat rate.
 The Lighthouse Media Centre in Wolverhampton have a discount
 parking vouchers available on a local car park for people attending
 conferences and other large events

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

As early tenants of The Public we have witnessed a massive transformation from what was a very troubled start to what is now a lively and dynamic centre appealing to a diverse range of people from both the local community and further afield. It feels unique as a place that balances the demand of being a genuine community space and a centre for world class art.

As an organisation that works across the Black Country part of our role is to work strategically with senior LA officers. A major focus of this work is the issue of struggling town centres. With them we are looking at ways in which a

cultural offer can be used to enhance a declining retail offer. LA's are looking for ways to keep their town centres vibrant places until there is an economic upturn, and are looking to the arts to support them in this endeavour.

The Public was developed as part of the overall regeneration of West Bromwich and now more than ever it has a vital role to play. Would like to continue to play a role in supporting the future of the building, as we have benefited enormously from being housed here.

The Public feels like it has now been embraced by the local community, it sits — as was always intended - at the heart of the new development in West Bromwich. It is hard not to sympathise with Sandwell MBC in its current plight. It is struggling to find the resources to support its core services and cuts must be made somewhere. However, to simply cut this building at a time when it is central to the regeneration of the town centre seems short sighted. At the very least other ways need to be explored as to how the councils liability can be reduced and the building stabilised, so it can continue to play its important role in the development of West Bromwich.

10. Any other comments.

This whole process and the way it has come about, has already had an impact on the future of the building. If the merger with the college does not go ahead, then what future does it have? Perhaps the worst case scenario in all this, would be a derelict building with no tenant and no clear future at the heart of this new development for West Bromwich.

would be happy to meet in person to discuss any of the above in more detail.



Date: 15 August 2013 15:26:22 BST

To: "WATSON, Tom" < tom.watson.mp@parliament.uk>

Subject: RE: The Public

Dear Mr Watson

Many thanks for your email and for your interest in the future of The Public. This response might arrive too late to be of use in which case please ignore.

I have already set out my views on this matter in a response letter to Mr Jim Wells of Sandwell MBC concerning their kind offer of finding us alternative premises in the borough. To quote from the relevant section of the letter:

As a company we made the decision some eighteen months ago to move to Sandwell specifically because of The Public. As a digital media agency and innovation practice we saw the building and its aim to be a regional centre of excellence for digital art as the ideal location from which to operate and grow.

Our time here has confirmed that the decision to locate here was a good one. It has given us a home amongst other creative businesses and individuals and has raised our profile such that we are now being commissioned to work on innovative projects which are having an impact at the local, regional and national level.

As you know our creative design course series commissioned by SMBC and SAFL is beginning to have a real impact on Sandwell residents and we are making plans for this to continue and expand in the new academic year. The role of The Public as the hub as part of a 'hub and spoke' delivery model was and is critical to our future plans on this front. Losing The Public will have serious implications these plans.

In addition we have been in discussions with the management team concerning funding opportunities for digital and related projects and again, these would not come to fruition.

In summary, in our own small way we're trying to raise the bar here in the borough and applaud the Council's past decision to bring The Public into being. Despite the negative comments over the years it is now winning support and, in my opinion, is on the threshold of fulfilling its ambitions.

Being constructively critical I believe that the building and the facilities therein are significant assets which should realise a much greater return on

investment. I would be more than willing to contribute to the exploration of new business models if the opportunity was to arise

In summary, we like The Public, it has been of direct benefit to our business and our future (in terms of both jobs and wealth creation) would suffer if it were to close. Your point about council officers working closely with businesses located at The Public to help determine its future is a useful observation.

I hope the above is of use as part of your consultation.

Best regards



TM

The Public New Street West Bromwich West Midlands B70 7PG 1. What is the name of your business or organisation?

2. How many people do you employ?

6

3. What is your client base?

Medium to large scale corporations, we have a wide range of prestigious clients in the UK, Europe and the Middle East including

4. What is the purpose of your business?

To provide Business Continuity Solutions. We are Distributors for an American organisation, called SIOS corporation. We sell licences, support, perform training and consultancy for their Business Continuity software solution.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

£640 per month.

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

3 years in August

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

We enjoy working in the building, it is good for our staff. Our customers come and visit us and we find it an unusual and prestigious venue. We have customer training sessions here, and we hire out the training rooms. We like the facilities such as the cafe and catering are useful for our staff and our customers. We benefit greatly from being here as the venue is unusual (

nobody forgets where we are once they have been here), it is a quality building, and we find the staff here very helpful. Being an IT company, we have a requirement for a high speed IT links, and we find that the networking facilities of the Public suit our needs.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

We feel that the conferencing is always busy and the main way that the Public generates its revenue. My understanding was that The Public is not only about what revenue is generated but also about how it brings the local and wider community to the West Bromwich area. Working here every day, we see many groups of school children, and the building and its facilities are always busy. In this way, the public, who were the original audience and reason for the building are benefitting from the building.

If the emphasis is now going to be about generating maximum revenue, then the staff here should at least be given the chance to find alternative ways of generating revenue and changing their modus operandi, rather than it just be sprung on them. It is easy to criticise such facilities on the basis that they do not generate enough revenue, this is missing the bigger picture. Arts facilities are very limited in this area, and their benefits under stated

London etc. To this day, they remember these visits, and it has contributed to their overall education a great deal.

In terms of generating extra revenue, we would be prepared to pay extra rent if it meant that we keep our offices,

There must be other ways to generate funds from the extra footfall that will come past us to go to the New Square.

I think if all of us who work here and love the building put our heads together, we would be able to brainstorm many ideas for revenue generation,

I also think a lot more donations could be received from those who visit here, if the financial problems were publicised, and more opportunities given for people to donate.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

My thoughts are that I was not sure about the building when we moved here, but I have come to love the building, I now understand its reason for being here, and I feel that West Bromwich is a much richer place for it. It is a part of the community, it is a friendly environment to work, and I do not know of another building like it anywhere in the world.

10. Any other comments.

It would be a tragedy if this building were passed over to Sandwell College they have just had a huge new building, and I cannot see the reason or justification for giving up such a wonderful venue to the college.

I also do not think that the New Square would have happened were it not for The Public being here,



1. What is the name of your business or organisation?



2. How many people do you employ?

As a company approx. 200 people, although only two are permanently based at The Public. We employ local freelance technicians and specialists as required. We also use the building to meet up with our site based project electricians and non-office based sales staff.

3. What is your client base?

Local authorities, theatres, schools and universities, event companies and exhibition suppliers.

4. What is the purpose of your business?

Sales, hire and installation of technical equipment for entertainment, sports and places of worship.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

£380 per month plus occasional room hires.

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

Almost two years

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

Location and arts based environment. Suitable place to meet with clients. Near to where we were previously located before closing our warehouse in Smethwick.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

1

They may have already tried all of these!

More corporate room hires, conferences etc. Better use of café facilities. Increase ties with other arts centres or theatre groups with possible increase use of the performance space.

E.

Maybe increase ties with local community centres. e.g. Lodge Road, Gayton Road, Charlemon, etc.

Campaign for more commercial sponsorship.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

The council needs to admit that the people of the area are at last beginning to accept and use the building after a very hostile beginning. It is different to Walsall or the Ikon gallery, more like MAC in Canon Hill, Birmingham but without the affluent catchment area. I would have thought that the building would require extensive internal modifications to make the space viable as a college, the noise transmission is our major drawback within the office space.

10. Any other comments.

We are talking about widening the cultural and artistic viewpoint for local people and their children within a rather poor area of the West Midlands. I doubt if any arts centre of this type could be self-financing.

And Sandwell Council will get the blame for what is a result of government cuts to local authorities.





2. How many people do you employ?

Just myself,

3. What is your client base?

SME and corporate clients across numerous vertical sectors requiring IT and Digital Media personnel. Due to possessing more than fifteen years recruitment experience within the IT/Digital Media sector, I have developed a client base in Yorkshire, the North West, Cambridge/Norwich encompassing end-user clients, software houses, design agencies, IT services companies, outsourcing companies etc.

4. What is the purpose of your business?

IT and Digital Media recruitment consultancy

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

Monthly rental of £186+VAT = £223.20 Telephone charges of circa £90.00 each quarter

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

We relocated to The Public on 26/04/2013, having spent more than four and a half years at **Birmingham Science Park Aston** (formerly Aston Science Park). A week or so having moved into The Public we heard about the announcement that The Public was to be converted into a sixth form college.

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

From a business perspective, The Public is unique in the respect that it provides innovative **Lily Pad offices** on the fourth floor. The offices are not

fully enclosed, and serve more like an open-plan co-working space ie the offices are partitioned, yet the dividing walls are only so high enough that you can still see your fellow tenant. Having been in an office environment, which is fully enclosed, the benefits of the LilyPad offices are considerable. It's more inclusive, friendly, and for a person like myself, working on their own for the main, less of a lonely business. There is no other office space in the West Midlands like this. There are co-working spaces, which pretty much means a large space with lots of desks; and people can either hot-desk, or pay extra for a dedicated desk (eg Innovation Birmingham (http://www.innovationbham.com/) or Moseley Exchange (http://moseleyexchange.com/)). The Public is actually ahead of the curve as far as it's office space offering is concerned, as it's a hybrid between a fully enclosed space and a co-working space.

The primary reason for relocating to The Public is purely down to convenience, and the need to minimise my commute(and therefore my carbon footprint), and ultimately work/life balance reasons. The location is ideal, and or so, as opposed to over forty minutes previously. The nature of my business is such that I can base myself anywhere as the work only really requires a dedicated phone line and internet connection. However, having reviewed all the other office space in Sandwell prior to moving to The Public, if The Public was converted into a college, I would most definitely relocate my operations back to Birmingham, and into the Innovation Birmingham campus as there is no other comparable office space available locally.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

Very simply, let The Public continue along it's current path. Help it, support it, nuture it. The Public has great potential for those who have the eyes to see.

The numbers of people visiting The Public are increasing substantially; and with the opening of the New Square development and Tesco, numbers will definitely be bolstered. It is also to the credit of the management of The Public, that they have made it a bit of a hub for comedy acts, and is making a name for itself as a venue on the comedy circuit. Where else would you get to see talent such as Al Murray – The Pub Landlord? Previously, you would have had to go to either Wolverhampton or Birmingham to view such talent.

It doesn't help that with the announcement that talks are taking place regarding the future of The Public, there are not more events/exhibitions etc being signed up. The uncertainty of the future of the building is, I expect, having a dramatic effect.

In terms of other means of revenue generation how about

- more hackathons,
- learn coding sessions,

- meetups for technology professionals (programmers, designers, hackers etc).
- events such as Launch48.com (develop an app and launch a business in 48 hours),
- a venue for Young Rewired State (https://youngrewiredstate.org/)
- even something like TEDx talks (<u>http://tedxbrum.org/</u>)
- Allow unsigned bands to perform (operate a profit share at the box office)
- Target more tribute bands to play The Public maybe even have a mini-festiva over a weekend
- More asian arts performances (classical dances such as bharatanaty am, or indian classical music, bhangra music/bands, Bollywood song singers etc)
- Friday night disco for 16-18year olds, with each Friday targeting a certain genre of music (rock/R'n'B/pop/bollywood/bhangra), and therefore catering to all different musical tastes. At the moment there is nothing in town for 16-18year olds in terms of a disco.

The Public is a good venue, with good transportation links, as well as ample car parking available; whereas other venues in Birmingham or Wolverhampton normally have expensive car parking, and are city centre based.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

As a recruiter of personnel into the IT and digital media sector.

I believe that The Public is integral to the regeneration of West
Bromwich - it's an all encompassing facility that caters to all segments of the
population in West Bromwich and the surrounding area. The Public is all
about the arts and creativity and expanding our paradigms as to what is
possible. It's precisely this that we need. As more and more jobs are
outsourced, and as more and more jobs are lost through greater
computerisation or mechanisation, we need innovation.

Innovation is derived through creative thought.

On the face of it, an arty farty display won't mean anything to the majority of people - but it may well trigger something in somebody. Who knows? The next James Dyson or Mark Zucherburg may even be from West Bromwich!

What I particularly love about The Public is that every age group is catered for, and nobody is excluded. From Tea Dances, Zumba classes, through to events for children.

After all, if The Public is no more, what else is there to do in West Bromwich?

10. Any other comments.

The issue is that Sandwell Council treat The Public as though it were the black sheep of the family. They were responsible for it's difficult birth but have now finally disowned it. The reality is that the council's plans were flawed from the outset; and there were many other avenues that the money could have been spent on at that time.

Nevertheless, The Public is here. It just appears that it was way ahead of it's time. With the opening of the New Square development and Tesco, coupled with the sterling work undertaken by Linda Saunders, The Public should come into its own light. It's time is now. It's perfectly positioned to become the heart of the town – a fully inclusive space for all segments of the community to meet, interact, cooperate and learn. As it picks up traction, I'm sure that the council subsidy will dimish rapidly.

What about the college?



1. What is the name of your business or organisation?



2. How many people do you employ?

Zero employees, most work is sub-contracted

- 3. What is your client base?
- 4. What is the purpose of your business?

Photography, portraits, environmental portraits, event photography, commercial photography

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

Approx. £70p/m

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

18 months

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

Higher Profile for the business
Being located at an arts centre as an artist
Inspires creativity
Accessible photography spaces
Meeting room availability
Central location between Birmingham and Walsall

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

The Public is an important building for the community, its an arts space for all, its inviting and we coming, unlike some of the museums and galleries in Birmingham which only attract a certain type of audience, for some, going into places in Birmingham can be daunting and uninviting. The Public has the perception that it is for all ethnicities and social classes of people. You can go there for a quick coffee or spend a lot more time there if you wish. You see a lot of children there, its important to expose children to arts from a young age and make them aware that arts is for all people, despite ethnicity, social class, skill level etc. and that art is fun too. Its a space for the public by the public, i.e. (local exhibitions etc.). It is a very important local space that needs protecting for the sake of the local community and local artists, who have nowhere else to express themselves other than Birmingham, we need to keep this local space because, i know when i first exhibited there, it gave me the motivation to carry on and not give up.

10. Any other comments. n/a



Dear Mr Watson,

Thank you for get ing in touch and for the work you are undertaking in this matter. Apologies also for my delay in replying. We are approaching a volunteer staff change over and our students go back to college and new one take their places.

I run 2 companies here in The Public. is a social enterprise which undertakes training, seminars & conferences as well as back to work community projects and volunteer work placement programmes. Also charity, a music charity run by volunteers, which brings the community together with pro-players to play popular music to local communities.

Both companies provide valuable experience to unemployed people. It works, the alone has helped over 25 people back into paid employment in the last 18 months. Our employability networking programme gets 43% of hard to reach people back into employment (compared to 10% at the work programme). This building has played a part in this success, attracting volunteers and providing a low cost office solution.

But I don't want this building to be a £30,000 drain on the community. In reality this building is only fit for the purpose it was intended. With Tesco built close by, and a sever rise in the water table, no extra weight should be added to the framework of the building. Any substantial construction internally could see its total demise.

The council does have a duty of care to tax payers both past and present. For those in the past -to acknowledge there will always be a cost to having an arts gallery, and for those in the present - to keep costs as low as possible going forward. The Public will never make money, a heating bill of £200,000 a year for example. But this is what the powers that be accepted when they commissioned the project years ago. I believe that working with the council the building management team can significantly reduce the subsidy.

Thank you again for your time and effort with this







2. How many people do you employ?

Currently I am a sple trader but I hope to take on at least one apprentice within this quarter

3. What is your client base?

SME companies with the Black Country and Birmingham

4. What is the purpose of your business?

Specialist B2B Cold Calling & Telemarketing

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

£70+Vat +bills per month

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

8 months

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

It is affordable. Many commercial premises are considerably more expensive. This has enabled me to prosper in a difficult economic environment. Also, being in a shared office location it inspires me to interact with my colleagues and create a buzz that is not possible in a solo environment. This breeds success and helps everyone lift their game. It's one of the intangibles that's very tough to put a value on but I can tell you from experience my success has improved markedly since locating to the Public.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

Increase the rental cost by a smallish percentage. Increase the number of incubator units.

If Sandwell Council made a public decision to back The Public, that would help no end in reducing negative publicity and uncertainty around its future. Jam sessions, free music nights, and people in New Square with fancy costumes and flyers would help a lot.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

The Public, as it s ands is the focal point to the new development of West Bromwich town centre and New Square. It has a massive potential to be THE Entry space to the entire development - a sixth form college would likely have the opposite effect. Imagine the impact of hoodie-wearing students stood around outside smoking in the winter. It would turn people away. Currently it is a safe, welcoming place for all and sundry in a town that needs exactly that environment.

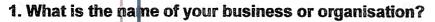
10. Any other comments.

I always make a point of inviting my clients to see my work space. One even took an office desk there. Without exception they have all been really impressed and en oyed the venue, and many have returned with friends and relatives. One of my clients made a very telling comment: "If this was anywhere but West Brom, people would be loving it and it would be heaving!"

I genuinely believe that The Public has a huge cultural role to play in West Bromwich and is one of the most positive spaces in the whole Black Country. I am a big fan and if I have to relocate my business because it closes, a whole raft of negative effects come from that. My overheads increase drastically, therefore I won't be employing anyone for a much longer period. I won't remain in Sandwell for obvious reasons, and so Sandwell loses the future benefit of my business, which is growing steadily in the face of the recession.

I appreciate that Sandwell Council feel this is a drain on their resources - but it's not just about the numbers, and it has the potential to bring in far more revenue than it costs with a little help here and there.







2. How many people do you employ?

Between 1 & 3 FTE depending on the level of activity and up 36 interns over the course of a year drawn from Business Schools in the region (currently Aston, Coventry, Staffordshire, Warwick & Wolverhampton) as well as Universities from outside the region.

3. What is your client base?

We provide access and information to a database of 55,000 companies and institutions located in the West Midlands and wider economy.

4. What is the purpose of your business?

Economic research & analysis.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

Rental space - £3 360 per annum

Venue Hire – 2013/14 forecast up to £15,000 per annum

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

14 months

7. What are the tenefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

It enables to provide research facilities for Business School graduates and post-graduates in Sandwell and the Black Country. Additionally, with its convention-style facilities it allows to attract international and national economic commentators to speak on, as well as identify, issues pertinent to Sandwell and the Black Country's future growth prospects. This has already included the Markit Economics, FDI magazine and the Policy Exchange and

leading economists. The aims to develop a reputation as a key commentator on regional economics, and The Public provides essential components that are integral t our success,

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

In commercial terms, there are obvious solutions, most notably greater utilisation of the facilities and its potential development as a key convention-style centre in the Black Country and West Midlands. Perhaps consideration should be given to what type of corporate structure would enhance The Public's capacity to attract additional sources of revenues, both public and private.

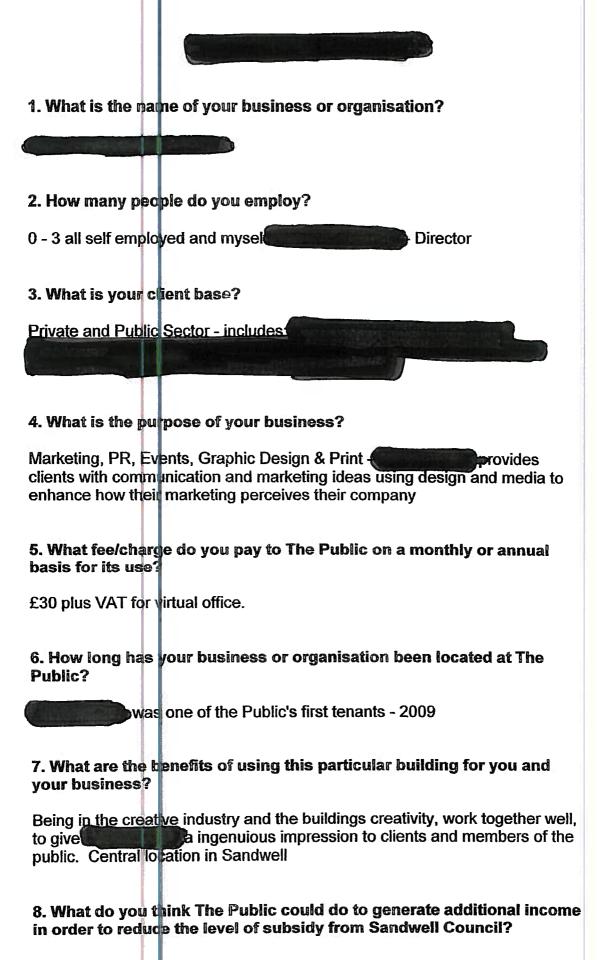
In economic-terms, the capacity of The Public (as an iconic West Bromwich landmark building with an international reputation), to generate interest from potential inward and foreign direct investors, should not be discounted. In particular, this could help transform the image of West Bromwich and Sandwell to be recognised as a dynamic component with the wider national economy and increasingly competitive within the global economy. Some 40% of medium-sized enterprises in the Black Country are foreign-owned and The Public can and should play a key role in sustaining their interest in the local economy. Without the facilities The Public offers, inward investment promotion and business retention events would probably have to take place in Birmingham – which would undermine any positive image trying to be presented.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

The Public can compared to other iconic buildings in the UK, that can help develop a positive image of a City, Town or locality and act as a flagship to generate future interest, both as a place to do business and live. Within the Black Country there does not seem to be another equivalent building that could be developed as a cultural magnet to articulate the real positive aspects the Black Country has to offer.

10. Any other comments

Part of the rationale for our move to The Public, and despite offers to locate elsewhere, was to be able to undertake research in a key manufacturing area and demonstrate the real potential for the economy to rebalance toward the productive and logistics sectors. In conjunction with the Business Schools and Markit Economics, we is developing data series that will highlight the strengths of Sand well and the Black Country, if we were located elsewhere in the region our emphasis and focus would probably shift.



More high profile events, concerts, music, creative industry/educational courses, exhibition evenings,

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

10. Any other comments

"A gallery for the future", celebrating the art industry in Sandwell. Why remove a borough museum (and the only one at that)! When other towns have at least 1 or even 2 in each borough



1. What is the name of your business or organisation?



2. How many people do you employ?

There are no paid employees as such, we volunteer our services to the organisation.

3. What is your client base?

The beneficiaries of our services include international communities as well as the local communities within Sandwell.

4. What is the purpose of your business?

We are an organisation set up with the aim to support the Sikh communities although not exclusively in helping to advance arts, health, and economic wellbeing whilst addressing inequality issues.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

We pay £36 a month to The Public.

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

We have been located for almost 2 years.

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

It is conveniently located i.e., public transport, popular place, we can access our clientele fairly easily. We use the café area for meetings.

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

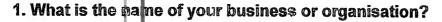
- The Public can access grants and loans. It can ask corporates i.e. (big
 4), banks and LEPS for financial assistance, investment and support.
- It can nego iate annual fee paying contracts with schools in and around Sandwell and offer some of its key services to these institutions.
- It can expand its kitchen menu to include a greater variety of foods including ethnic dishes.
- It can offer crèche services for shoppers or cinema goers.
- It can open a day nursery (0-3 yrs. olds; that is, depending on whether there is not e in close proximity) as part of its income generation strategy for local work force, nursery gross income can amount to minimum of £250, 000 per year, depending on number of children. (We can help with business planning).
- The Public can open its venue for celebratory events, i.e., Birthday parties, children's parties and annual festivals for all ethnic groups, without exception.
- The Public can access the South Asian market i.e., private wedding parties and other events.
- The Public can help the voluntary sector access public grants and in return rent out the space for public /project use.
- The Public can forge greater links with the international societies by inviting students from abroad through cultural exchanges at a cost per student.
- The Public can be a centre of excellence for lifelong learning by offering accredited learning programmes in creative writing, teacher training, media and arts.
- The Public can hold 11+, GCSE and A-Level tuition support.
- The Public can cater for the burgeoning East European, Caribbean and Latin American markets by inviting popular artists from these continental regions to perform at the venue.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

We see The Public in the next 10 years to a be a home for enterprise creativity as well as learning. The resources at the Public are used to advance cultural and educational experiences of the young and old alike. We feel that the Public should hire premises to local education institutions including the local college thereby enriching the experiences of people of Sandwell whilst generating viable income.

10. Any other comments.

Sandwell is the 12th most disadvantaged borough in the country, The Public is a ray of hope for its people, the venue is uplifting and some wonderful events take place there; that is, a meeting place for both informal and formal meetings. The young and old alike use the Public, i.e., Sandwell Youth Musical group meet regularly. The people of Sandwell deserve this place.





2. How many people do you employ?

There are 3 directors of the company with staff / actors employed on an ad hoc basis for productions / events

3. What is your client base?

The general public and businesses in Sandwell and the wider West Midlands. Significant emphasis on provision for young people.

4. What is the purpose of your business?

As a Theatre company and CIC, To put on drama performances; conduct children's drama workshops; perform new writing and provide bespoke role-play scripts for the commercial sector.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

£36.00 per month £30 plus VAT (Virtual Desk only) Can hire on a daily basis at a daily rate if needed at a further cost.

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

Since 19/9/2011

7. What are the benefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

- The Public engages with local artists to facilitate projects eg. for the school holi lay my company provides A Play in a Week,' at the Public's the atre, where young people have the chance to devise and perform their own play. (partly financed by local area board grant).
- The Public has its own theatre for performances. Theatre technicians are on hand. There is room for auditions and rehearsals and some storage.

- Being based in such an iconic building gives interest and a good impression to both potential clients and potential staff. Access by the general public of this Public building is of high value.
- I have been able to convert my business to a Community Interest Company using the Fublic as a registered office.
- The Public is in walking distance of where I live and its central location makes easy access by public transport. It is a good place to hold informal meetings and room-hire fee are reasonable for more formal meetings.
- As actors and writers we don't often have the opportunity to work so close to home, often travelling to London for contracts, so it's a welcome of ange to be able to generate work on our doorstep.
- As an arts trusiness ∺ makes sense to be located in a creative/arts building.
- Before being a tenant at The Public I looked at council owned offices and spaces. Most of them were unsuitable, cold and expensive and on housing or industrial estates out of the town centre.
- There are several arts organisations under one roof encouraging them to work in partnership with each other.
- There is no alternative building that will provide a central location and space and facilities for all the arts organisations based in Sandwell to utilise.

8. What do you think The Dublic could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

- The Hublic needs to stay open daily for longer.
- The entertainment programming needs to be solidly booked up so that it builds a reputation as a touring arts venue.
- The cor ferencing facilities should become the first port of call by local chamber of commerce members and other local business community and local government when thinking about conference space.
- More outreach work in the other five towns, so that staff can explain
 to local pusinesses and local schools what is available at The
 Public
- The electronic exhibition needs to be maintained at night and not during the daytime to save it having to close midweek during the week.
- Better signposts in the town from bus and tram stations.
- More child-centred exhibitions so that schools should be able to attend as a day trip.
- More a ts/craft adult education classes in the building
- Regular 'classes, e.g. drama classes, dance, choral singing, music lessons e.g., guitar, like at The Midlands Arts Centre in Birming ham.
- Need to run more outreach arts classes/ projects in other 5 towns of Sandwell so that everyone has ownership.

- Resident comparies/community groups should all have one big open gay to highlight/celebrate what goes on in the building.
- Host regular fares and festivais, Craft fares, food fares, bear festivais folk/Jazz festivals, etc.
- Do a large arts council funded annual community show with outreach throughout Sandwell/performance to involve more members of the community (like Birmingham Opera Company does), for audience development. This will encourage hard to group to engage with The Public as an organisation.
- Look for more corporate sponsorship get local business to pledge some money.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public

- As the footfall from New Square increase the revenue generated by the Public ergo it should require fewer subsidies by the council year on year. Perhaps there needs to be a financial stagey to ensure this.
- More community engagement and a more outreach work.
- More acts booked and a growing reputation throughout the midlands as a good tour ng venue – possible business endorsing/sponsoring of acts/tours.
- Some locally run in-house community productions.
- More use of the building with regular activities throughout the year.
- Longer opening hours as visitor numbers increase.

10. Any other comments.

- Have you consulted the retailers in the town, especially New Square occupants as to whether they would prefer a college or an arts centre next to their business premises?
- Are you sure you will have to keep up the current level of subsidy if there is a !ang-term strategy increase revenue within the building.
- If Sandwell College students need a purpose built Arts College, then Sandwell College should build one in one of the other Sandwell towns who have lost college campus' as everything being centralised in West Bromwich causes resentment and a feeling of inequality of opportunity.
- The Public employs local artists so is something for potential arts students to aspire to work in. Taking away a building of this calibre to change its purpose is short-sighted and negates the need for future employment for artists within the borough.
- For a building called 'The Public,' it seems ironic that by turning it into a college with young adults only it will exclude the (general) public from access the building.
- The Public like the new Art Gallery in Walsall encourages people from outside the borough and gives people a reason to stay longer in West Bromwich. A shopping centre alone is not enough to give the town centre a unique selling point.



1. What is the name of your business or organisation?



2. How many people do you employ?

0 but I have 60 members and 5 trainees and 2 associates.

3. What is your client base?

African Caribbean and Asian Women professionals and their families living in and around Sandwell

4. What is the purpose of your business?

To build confidence and repair self esteem, to provide coaching, mentoring and training. To to provide a support during life and carter transitions.

5. What fee/charge do you pay to The Public on a monthly or annual basis for its use?

£36 per month

6. How long has your business or organisation been located at The Public?

Since April 2012

7. What are the kenefits of using this particular building for you and your business?

Central location, very modern building, flexibility

8. What do you think The Public could do to generate additional income in order to reduce the level of subsidy from Sandwell Council?

Tenants could pay more perhaps a 20 percent increase provide units to small businesses to run social enterprise.

9. Please outline your thoughts on the future of The Public.

Saddened to lose the arts centre it brought choices for people in Sandwell a hub for our social, community and business interests

10. Any other comments.

I need to recoup the cost of changing literature, website and setting up new telephone numbers postal address

- 1. My company is called the but works exclusively with CIPROS International Ltd http://www.ciprosinternational.com/
- 2. The company operates in the EMEA region and uses The Public as an office for sales operations so staff numbers vary from time to time.
- 4. Cyber, ICT & Physical Security.
- 5. It varies depending what services we use provided by The Public. Desk rent £70 per month plus cost of phones, facilities etc.
- 6. Two months.
- 7. Close to my home, I live in the Sandwell area & great for transport links motorways, rail & airport.
- 8. From a commercial standpoint its great for start up companies. I know the building has been developed for "artistic" purposes but these facilities are great for business seminars, business networking events and should be marketed as such.
- 9. The future of The Public is in its own hands in my opinion. It should be aggressively marketed as a great venue to do business from and make full use the recently developed shopping centre with its restaurants and facilities. I feel it should be operated in a more commercial fashion as a opposed to a local government establishment. Please feel free to contact me on this topic. I feel it has a solid future going forward if sold correctly.
- 10. Keep it open for both established and new business enterprise start ups it provides a great facility!

I hope this helps your cause, should you want to contact me please feel free to phone me on the property of th