**PROJECT DEBRIEF TEMPLATE**

Use this form to capture what went well, what could have gone better and what is useful for other teams to know for future projects. Not all areas will be relevant, so leave blank where appropriate.

**Complete it as soon as you can**, as we all forget quickly when we move on to the next project. Make sure to get input from **everyone who was involved**. You can use it as a prompt sheet in a project team debrief or circulate it by email, but ensure there is eventually only **one form** that captures everything.

Fill in as much detail as possible, even if something has already been resolved or didn’t cause major problems this time. **If in doubt, write it down.**

**Highlight anything that you think would be useful for future projects.**

|  | **What went well?**  *Why, and can we apply this elsewhere?* | **What could have gone better?**  *How can we improve this? What could we do differently? What assumptions did we make that were wrong? What areas need more support?* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **ARTISTIC PROGRAMME** |  |  |
| Artists & commissioning | * Good number and range of artists. * To Hull & Back and Bond as headliners: local links, fantastic experience. * Programme had strong Hull links. * Revolutionary Makers – great community. | * Artists booked later than desired. * Originally wanted more ambitious headliners – needed much more notice. Long periods of concern that we would not get quality headliners. * Nearly lost To Hull & Back despite contract; not foreseeable, dealt with it. * Originally wanted a Saturday headliner; in reality not having one did not detract. |
| Programme & scheduling | * Balance of light-hearted with intense. (cf WOW Bradford) * Constant changes in main space – felt like always something going on. * Felt very relevant – the Hull angle, which could have felt over-egged, delivered. * Quality of panel discussions; crowd felt engaged. Aimed for 12, but ended up with 18 – variety and scale. * Quality of every item in the programme. * Range (over 70 events) and depth. * Responded to Think-Ins – reflected programming. * London recognised the WOW Hull festival. * Relevance to and using hook of International Women’s Day. * Viceroy’s House looked & sounded great in City Hall. Good sign that everybody stayed for Q&A. NB Screen was lowered from end of Saturday, which is better for sightlines, but does need to be higher to walk under and see choir etc. * Trailblazers gave local relevance – audience felt part of a special, collective moment. NB Couldn’t be repeated as was. * Didn’t miss a big-ticket Saturday headliner, and it would have been too much to manage. * By Sunday, audience felt comfortable with how it worked, more in the rhythm. * Heads Up was a way of bringing great content in. | * Ferens not suited to panels – better for performance. Giving panels pride of place in main space brought interesting things to people’s attention. * Didn’t always allow enough journey and handover time, leaving some events not as well attended. Consider geography of the building and allowing people to adjust to different subjects, styles etc from item to item. * Didn’t allow enough breathing space for project staff in City Hall. * Disappointed in lack of support from WOW at SBC – social media focus entirely on London (NB not Finland either), no physical presence. Didn’t cause issues in terms of crossover of talent (only Gemma Cairney). Consider pros & cons of alternative weekend. * Depth and breadth results in complexity – eg demands on staff liaising with multiple external partners, consistency of crediting… Could improve by being clearer up-front about the festival approach as our standard MO with all partners. * Friday: Rehearsals overran. Last-minute addition of Bond as a headliner caused issues. * Allow more time at City Hall – pay for the extra time to load in the night before and allow more time on the day. Though note the significance of the costs at HC&L venues. * Roles & responsibilities around BFI programme unclear. * Lack of clarity (internally) around WOW satellite activity and terminology. We hardly used the term in public, but need to be uniform internally, particularly when working with partners. * School satellite: issues with Women’s Hour. Might be better to separate them out in future. * Several smaller Think-Ins plus big one was good. * Confusion between Young People’s Panel and Young People’s Parliament. |
| AV content | * Very strong AV content. All looked good, especially with good quality screen. * AV content complemented the weekend events/ activities where used and reinforced the WOW brand. * Live camera worked well. | * Digital team don’t produce in-house as standard, so need booked time and clear brief: is it wayfinding, partner recognition, engagement during transitions, new video content, existing imagery…? * Producing digital content needs much longer lead time and for deadlines to be met. * Project must provision a ‘content wrangler’. * NB One of our tenders includes AV content production. |
| Learning & Participation | * St Mary’s College was a great location – spaces were fantastic, good staff provision (inc student volunteers), very supportive, good technical support. * Was intended to engage those who otherwise wouldn’t. * Workshop went well, as did attending live broadcast, and having three peers interviewed live… * Fuzzfeed was a great addition. | * St Mary’s: need to be escorted, so take radios next time and/or negotiate with school re DBS checks for Hull 2017 staff. WiFi access was problematic. * Fewer schools in attendance than expected (likely due to late confirmation of a clear offer), and delayed by gas explosion on Beverley Road. * Communication with schools should have been earlier, and would be good to have work done with attendees in advance, rather than them arrive cold. * Confusion over seating the audience: St Mary’s devised a plan for public & schools, but no staff to implement. Volunteers were unable to support this. * Audience members arrived early (directed by BBC first-come-first-served system) and were let in during set-up when Volunteers weren’t yet on site and briefed. * Having both public and school children at an event created safeguarding concerns. * Blazon workshop in the foyer clashed with the Woman’s Hour audience leaving – no opportunity to get refreshments and look at the exhibition. * Earlier (6.30/7am) get-in time would have been useful, but may not have been possible due to school hours. Alternatively, pre-setting material in advance. * Broadcast and workshops kept to schedule, but other elements started late or ran over, leading to a late finish and one school group leaving early. * Confusion in audience about whether to stay or leave when the schools left for their break as no general announcement. * Suggestions cards for WOW Satellite Q&A session weren’t distributed during break times, but this may have been overcomplicating a simple Q&A session. |
| **PROJECT MANAGEMENT** |  |  |
| Contracts & legal | * Suite of contracts now available that weren’t before. | * Not enough capacity to complete all freelancer contracts in advance, and now cannot pay until contacts are done. |
| Procurement |  |  |
| Risk management | * Risk assessments were completed. | * Complexity of myriad of different activities requiring risk assessment. |
| Timeline |  | * Do it all much sooner. * Be clearer from the outset the anticipated dates of key activity/milestones/deadlines, and stick to them. * Spent a long time waiting for people to come back to us, eg waiting for headliners before approaching others… Suggest putting out lots of offers then turning people down if necessary. * Run Think-Ins earlier to allow for wrap-up, distilling, making use of learnings etc. |
| Event Safety Management, RAMS, ESAG etc |  | * Whether or not an event warrants a full Event Safety Management Plan (determined by Tech & Ops), all events require a written document with roles & responsibilities, emergency procedures, nominated safeguarding lead, First Aiders etc, to ensure all staff are equipped with relevant information. |
| **AUDIENCES** |  |  |
| Facts & figures | Eg Viceroy’s House sold well, Funny Girls with Q&A…  Hit target overall; nearly 800 day passes overall. | One as low as 9, some no-shows. |
| Marketing | * Quality product: a lot of great material produced. * Printed schedule was useful, and allowed us to have something on the day that was up-to-date. | * Difficulty locking down key messages; only bedded in shortly before the festival took place. * Unsustainable drain on staff & designer time producing print. Agree deadlines mutually, make them achievable and stick to them. * Odd to do programme first and leaflet second – not as easy to convert one into the other as expected. Separate printed schedule caused confusion. * Consider delaying printed brochure until last-minute so it is up-to-date. Could use a few headliners as hook for earlier marketing instead of using the printed programme. * Amends to print were not funnelled so some get missed. * Too much for a single marketing representative. |
| PR | * Great spokespeople, eg Maddie, Lucy Beaumont & Maureen Lipman, Barbara Buttrick… * BBC bus on Sat & Sun worked well – stream of spokespeople talking about WOW throughout the day. * Lots of preview material, and a full page the following Monday (written in advance on the Friday). | * Could have got more traction if we announced our programme at the same time as SBC. * BFI wanted to do film-specific PR, but not clear who was leading, and local market was saturated. * A lot of media tend not to come out for events at weekends – the likes of Hull Daily Mail don’t often use freelancers, who could otherwise attend and write for them. Not much we can do about it, though worth an overall conversation with HDM. NB culture pages get laid to bed first, whereas news can be fresher. |
| Digital | * Broad range of output through hull2017.co.uk and social channels; extensive live coverage across the weekend. | * Need programme information earlier to build awareness, engage audiences and to sell tickets. * Way in which the festival was presented was complicated, generating a lot of customer enquiries. Need to ensure clear understanding of what we’re presenting, how and when including an agreed MarComms plan, before any on-sales or promotion. * Further digital output could have included more topical content that generated deeper conversation & further debate, as well as profiling and utilising participants. * Social media plan of filming & photography was changed at a few days’ notice; some areas remained unclear, eg whether to film To Hull and Back. |
| Ticketing (inc on-site box office) | * Targets were achieved – and decent sales across most of the shows we particularly wanted to push. * Certain shows were in high demand, eg Friday night. * Vue worked as expected. * Intention of wristbands to demonstrate added value was clear once in the space, but not so clear in advance. * On-site box offices functioned as expected. * Great value for money. | * Overcomplicated mixture of wristbands and individual tickets – process of booking when you already had a wristband was not clear. * On-sale was later than hoped, and quite last-minute: needed a full MarComms plan in advance. * Difficulty communicating the value of wristbands: the fuller programme rather than just individual events. * Confusion re events showing as ‘FREE’ that required wristbands. * Some over-holding for wristbands – turned people away from events that then weren’t full. * Do not repeat split box office: frustrating user experience (NB it’s a contractual requirement with HC&L). Also means we can only email survey to those who booked through us (day pass or film), which could create bias in responses. * Consider whether mobile box office is cost-effective (did not sell many walk-up tickets). NB We are planning a pool of freelancers to deploy for this function. * Must bring venue staff on board (as part of venue hire deal) much earlier – prepare & deliver briefings etc. * Some FOH staff weren’t fully briefed, meaning our BO staff took on more of this function; in future, to ensure quality and consistency of service, consider an in-person box office service and thorough FOH briefings. |
| Audience information (inc programmes) |  | * Conflicting information between online, programme and on-the-day schedule. |
| Participant briefings |  | * Issues about access, timekeeping and communication. Email briefings not always sufficient. * Panellists did not have single point of contact within Hull 2017, leading to redundant work and confusion. |
| Travel & accommodation |  | * Confusion over who was responsible for what; would be easier if centralised through one person (JH). |
| Artist liaison | * Great to have additional support for Lucy Beaumont. | * Need more advance notice of requirements, eg dressing room space… * Nobody was available to meet Maureen Lipman. |
| Resident engagement |  |  |
| Business engagement |  |  |
| Community engagement | * Relationships built during Think-Ins were crucial – lists of people who otherwise were unknown to us. * Good opportunities for young people. | * May have put too much emphasis on what would come out of Think-Ins. * Took up a lot of internal resource that could otherwise have been planning – consider outsourcing. |
| Partner liaison & recognition |  | * Need early conversation about method of partner recognition with Partnerships team; assume nothing. * Confusion over expectation that every show in City Hall requires partner banners, which affects the aesthetic. * Lots of partner tickets for Sunday night not picked up. |
| **EVENTS & VENUES** |  |  |
| Venues & sites |  |  |
| -City Hall | * City Hall was transformed. Good use of screens, signage, and site dressing. Range of activities worked as did change-over between events. | * Challenges with venue staff resulting from different messages from different members of Hull 2017 team. Clarify roles & responsibilities including FOH briefings. |
| -Ferens Studio | * Theatre space worked well. | * Could have had more visible signage from the outside for the Ethel Leginska exhibition and concert. |
| -Vue Cinema |  | * Mobile box office operators providing FOH services. * Quite removed from ‘main event’. |
| -Hull Cheese | * Good dressing of the space. | * Arranged at last minute – a few selling points could have gone down well on social media in advance if known. * No signage to go upstairs. |
| -Goodwin workshop space | * Getting in and out of space was efficient. Good space overall. | * Too much extraneous noise from traffic due to location - and unusual electric boiler pipework. |
| Licensing (inc music) |  |  |
| Event dressing, wayfinding & interpretation | * JZ Flowers material was beautiful. * Site dressing really transformed City Hall. | * Our event dressing was delayed by suppliers’ dressing overrunning and leaving mess behind. * Need to share teams’ separate schedules, so that Production Manager can centralise and coordinate. |
| Accreditation |  | * Too last-minute, as a result of confirming guests late, and lack of clarity re roles & responsibilities. |
| Guest list management | * Nice to be able to offer complimentary entry to relevant stakeholders/ groups. * All guests were accommodated. | * Guest list management was not centrally coordinated; Partnerships thought they had the only list, but others were discovered. Centralise guest list management. * Complimentary tickets for stakeholders/ groups need to be allocated further in advance. |
| Catering |  | * Very poor catering offer. * Stopped serving before the end of the event, so some Volunteers could not get food at c17.00 on Saturday. * No obvious records of actual spend rather than voucher value – and expensive. * No provision for gluten-free or dairy-free, despite having had the conversation with venue in advance. * No provision of healthy options. * Signposting of food offer was very poor. * Avoid in-house catering for City Hall events. |
| Access | * Access was generally good. * Costs that will show in the budget are discounted – in future these will be higher. | * StageText teething problems on Friday night. * Must allow resource for liaison with StageText and BSL interpreters – briefing, updates, unusual spelling etc. Not enough to take dictation only. * Some films not captioned, inc Viceroy’s House. * Fundamental access issues in City Hall: eg no wheelchair accessible dressing rooms; not clear what happens for an artist with access issues when the Mortimer Suite is not available as a green room. |
| Technical presentation | * Presentation was uniformly good – intended to show people how good City Hall can look. | * Realised very last-minute (20mins’ notice) that Blazing Trails video was not ready. Production are responsible for ensuring video is ready. |
| Production/event management | * Everything happened, even with a reschedule on the Sunday plus a last-minute pop up. | * Consider a daily morning briefing for all staff. * Confusion between BOH and FOH responsibilities; need clarity of who is roles & responsibilities. Consider a basic template for all events. * Desired standards of team management weren’t necessarily achieved. |
| VIP & stakeholder receptions |  |  |
| -Friday night |  | * Issues of timing and who was supposed to speak when. |
| -Sunday red carpet | * Red carpet added a certain ‘special’ feeling. | * Advance communications around red carpet aspect were not consistent. |
| **RESOURCES** |  |  |
| Project team & Hull 2017 staff | * Good group of individuals who made the event happen. | * Very few of the project team were working exclusively on this project, with the vast majority also committed to other projects. Need to recognise this when asking for last-minute or additional resource. * Marketing and Tech & Ops were particularly stretched. * Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities. Large element of ‘mucking in’ across the board. * Tensions arose as a result of ill-defined roles & responsibilities, inconsistent communication and lack of agreed processes (eg for sign-offs). Address lack of clarity as soon as it is acknowledged to maintain goodwill and good working relationships. * Freelance FOH person drafted in at last minute. |
| Contractors & suppliers |  |  |
| Volunteering | * Good group of happy volunteers. | * No volunteers at Ferens and too many at City Hall. |
| Artist Liaison | * Lots of support. |  |
| Photography & filming/ archive | * Broad range of activity covered with a limited amount of resource. | * Plans for upcoming activity (eg capture) must be read and feedback provided consistently and in a timely manner to ensure expectations are managed. |
| Budget | * Under budget on panels. | * Insufficient budget allocated for some resources, eg film/photography/animation/AV production, Monitoring & Evaluation (for anything more than post-event online survey, eg vox pops, focus groups). |
| Finance ops | * Payment planning to suppliers ran smoothly with no last-minute requests, with the exception of Bond, which was resolved. | * Last-minute cash requirements for remote box offices and emergency cash – plan cash operations earlier. |
| **REPORTING & POST-EVENT** |  |  |
| Monitoring & evaluation | * LH met EU to discuss audience questionnaire for both Think-Ins and Post-Festival: we need a clear idea of the measures of success for the creative team (in addition to what we are measuring for the overall evaluation). | * Include M&E in discussions much earlier in the process – integrate it into the planning stages like marketing or technical. * Share details of event set-up/ invite M&E to site visits, to determine best places to station M&E activity. * Day passes meant audience counts for individual events was not being undertaken; discuss with M&E in advance. * Missed the opportunity to use usherette trays at cinema screenings; when requesting Volunteers, speak to M&E about whether additional Volunteers are needed for M&E. Only survey work requires specially trained volunteers. |
| Accidents/near misses | * No incidents. | * No Accident/Near Miss Reporting forms brought to site. Prepare packs of these and other forms for future events. |
| Safeguarding issues |  | * One Safeguarding incident, where two c11-year-old girls were given access to the weekend activities, without tickets or adult accompaniment. * No appointed Safeguarding lead, no Safeguarding Incident Reporting forms on site, and no written process taking into account venue and Hull 2017 procedures. |
| Volunteer concerns |  |  |
| Show reports |  | * Not yet completed. |
| Audience feedback |  |  |