

Key Themes and Priorities from LTTA's Sector Conversations (Webinar Series Follow-ups)

1. Structural Strain and Sector Burnout

- Repeated references to **under-capacity, under-staffing and burnout** across organisations, especially smaller venues and independent producers.
- There's a growing **mismatch between the expectations placed on organisations and their current resourcing** – both human and financial.
- Many contributors expressed **urgency for new models of collaboration and support**, as current ways of working are unsustainable.

Implication for LTTA:

Advocate for and model ways to relieve pressure – through shared services, streamlined programming coordination, and resourcing sector infrastructure.

2. The Need for Smarter, Shared Planning

- Across all sessions, participants called for **more intelligent, transparent and collective approaches to scheduling**.
 - Shared planning horizons
 - Multi-year pencilling
 - “Anti-clash” diaries
 - Season previews or newsletters
- There is demand for a **national or regional coordination mechanism**, particularly for mid-scale venues and producers who feel disconnected from larger networks.

Implication for LTTA:

Facilitate tools or forums that allow venues and producers to **plan collaboratively, reduce friction, and share insight**. Explore low-cost digital solutions.

3. Audience Development Needs Collective Action

- Several sessions noted that **audience data isn't being shared effectively**, and marketing teams are often brought in **too late to build relationships**.
- There's a clear call to **coordinate long-term audience development**, particularly for artforms or genres (e.g. mid-scale drama, dance) that are struggling to find homes.

Implication for LTTA:

Work with data and audience insight partners to **map and share patterns of attendance**, support programming decisions, and build long-term strategies for audience growth.

4. A Strong Appetite for Regional and Thematic Consortia

- Regional models (East Anglia, South West, Wales) were frequently cited as **proof of concept** for how local theatres can collaborate on programming, marketing and audience engagement.
- There's also interest in **genre-specific collaborations**, e.g. mid-scale dance or musical theatre, to generate scale and confidence among bookers.

Implication for LTТА:

Be a **neutral convenor** of emerging or existing clusters. Offer light-touch coordination and raise the visibility of what works.

5. Brokerage Between Producers and Venues

- Multiple groups voiced **frustration at the disconnect between artists, producers and venues**, especially around:
 - Programming criteria
 - Touring readiness
 - Financial risk-sharing
- There's real interest in **'marketplace' or pitching models** – building on initiatives like House Pitch Up, Venues North, or a 'Dragons' Den'-style forum.

Implication for LTТА:

Pilot or prototype a **national pitching mechanism** for mid-scale work, with quality assurance. Help **broker new partnerships** through relationship-building and introductions.

6. New Operational and Business Models

- From shared services (marketing, fundraising, finance) to full **multi-venue mergers**, venues are actively exploring how to **combine forces** in ways that protect quality and identity but improve resilience.
- Participants were keen for **case studies, tools, and practical resources** – not theoretical reports.

Implication for LTТА:

Act as a **clearing house for models and examples**, and signpost where more formal guidance (e.g. Theatres Trust, ACE, local authorities) can support transitions.

7. LTТА's Role: Convenor, Catalyst, Connector

- There's clear enthusiasm for LTТА's potential as a **sector-wide facilitator** that helps:
 - Remove duplication of effort

- Amplify good practice
- Bridge gaps between funders, venues, and producers
- Speak up for **mid-scale touring**, which many feel is **under-supported and overlooked**
- But there's also a strong steer to **stay lightweight and responsive**, not become a gatekeeper or top-down body.

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