

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

PROGRESS REPORT – NEW ENTERTAINMENTS VENUE FOR SCUNTHORPE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 To update the Cabinet on progress on the redevelopment of the Baths Hall site to provide a new entertainments venue for Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 In September 2007 Cabinet agreed to redevelop the Baths Hall site to provide a new entertainments venue. In February 2008 Council resolved to create a venue for audiences of up to 1200 seated and 2000 standing.

2.2 **Project Governance and Management** – a Steering Group has been set up to co-ordinate the project chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive. Members include the Leader and Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Member for Leisure Arts and Culture, the Service Directors for Finance and Asset Management and Culture and supporting officers. A project team has been set up and an interim Project Director has been appointed to add strategic capacity.

2.3 **Progress on Site** – the demolition of the Youth Centre was completed some time ago. Redevelopment of the site incorporating the retention of the 1930s frontage is continuing. A contract has been awarded for the decontamination of the site – work will begin shortly and will be completed by mid/late November 2008.

2.4 **Business Plan** - a business plan has been prepared. As previously reported (Council 20 February) it is based on likely costs under council management and income forecasts based on a programme including contemporary music, theatrical entertainment, exhibitions, conferencing, catering and community use and a range of usage and attendance levels. The plan has been critically evaluated by a specialist consultant and been used to inform the design. The plan contains commercially sensitive data and has not been published. Options for management include engagement with both the public and private sector. It would be inappropriate to release information at this stage that could disadvantage the council in a commercial negotiation.

2.5 **Design** – the project will create a landmark building in the form of a 21st century multi-use entertainments venue. A council architect, supported by specialist consultants, has developed the design. Consultation has taken place with statutory stakeholders, with residents and others (see below). This has informed the development of the design from the initial drawings. There may well be further changes in the design arising from consultation comments. A planning application is likely to be submitted at the end of October 2008.

2.6 Management Options – there are four principal options– operation by the council, operation by a private sector organisation, a joint venture with the private sector, or a non-profit community based council supported vehicle (perhaps involving the private sector for operating services). Until this is decided the full business plan is likely to remain confidential.

2.7 Future decisions – it is expected that the December Cabinet meeting will be asked to consider the business proposition in detail and decide the management model to be adopted.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 There are no options for consideration within this report.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 Revenue - the revenue implications associated with providing a new venue are considered in the business plan. No specific provision for revenue subsidy currently exists in the council's 2008/9 or 2009/10 revenue budgets, but some funding remains unallocated which could be used for that purpose.

4.1.2 Capital - the capital programme includes provision of £10m towards the estimated £15m capital cost of the scheme. Officers are exploring potential external funding, including a formal approach to Yorkshire Forward. The possibility that a private sector organisation might work in partnership with the council to part fund and operate the facility remains an option for consideration.

4.2 Staffing

5.2.1 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. Future staffing implications will depend on the chosen management vehicle for the new venue.

4.3 Property

4.3.1 The project will replace a building in poor condition that is unfit for use with a modern entertainment/community venue in a landmark building. The project will also deal land contamination arising from former use as a gas works.

4.4 Information Technology

4.4.1 The proposals for the new venue are based on utilising and developing the councils existing IT infrastructure.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

5.1 Providing a venue with events for all age groups could have a positive impact on crime and disorder via diversionary activity. The project removes a derelict and vacant building that suffered vandalism and trespass after its closure.

5.2 The Project Steering Group has commissioned a risk register, which will be closely monitored and updated as required.

5.3 Police, Fire, Licensing, Highways Authority, Education Welfare (Child Protection) Practitioners and Building Control are aware of these proposals and all bodies support the proposals fully.

6. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

6.1 The closure of the Baths Hall was opposed by some members of the public and there was a campaign to retain the venue. Concern was expressed at the loss of the 1931 frontage. The council's proposals address these concerns.

6.2 The Scunthorpe Town Team was informed of the proposals for the site some time ago and supported the project. Further briefing is planned. Outcomes will be taken into consideration in the development of the design.

6.3 Around 1,100 respondents completed a web-based survey. The outcomes were reported to the 20 February Council meeting. The comments and observations made have played a key role in the development of the project proposal.

6.4 Further consultation is planned including a drop in event for local residents and the public in general on 12 September and a further opportunity for the members of public to see and comment on the designs on 26 and 27 September. A design briefing for Members of the council has been scheduled for 11 September. In addition the council's website will provide information about the design and the opportunity for interested parties to comment. Media briefing will support these activities. A verbal report will be provided at the Cabinet meeting on the outcome of events taking place prior to 17 September.

6.5 As noted above, various statutory bodies have been consulted and all relevant comments have been incorporated into the current design (i.e. car parking arrangements, natural and CCTV surveillance, universally accessible and devisable changing room facilities etc.).

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that cabinet receives and notes the contents of this report.

DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Pittwood House
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Richard Stiff
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report - Nil