



To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

Date: 15th May 2018

Subject: St. Mary's Guildhall

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board of current activity in relation to the development of the St. Mary's Guildhall offer and the establishment of shared office space in the Council House.
- 1.2 To seek the support and guidance of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board in considering further options in relation to the St. Mary's Guildhall offer.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board is recommended:
 - 1) To consider the content of the presentation concerning developments in the St. Mary's Guildhall offer and the establishment of shared office space in the Council House.
 - 2) That, following current work, the Board consider a future report outlining potential opportunities to further enhance the St. Mary's Guildhall offer.

3 Background

- 3.1 In January 2018, the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board received an update on plans to review and enhance the St. Mary's Guildhall offer. It was recommended by officers that a specialist consultancy be procured to provide advice on how the Guildhall and Council House offers could be developed to provide an improved visitor experience whilst retaining and potentially enhancing their heritage and tourism profile. The update also included a briefing on plans to improve the café offering in the Undercroft. Scrutiny Board members were further updated on proposals to establish a shared office space, through engagement with an external provider.
- 3.2 Further to the update received, Scrutiny Board requested that officers explore any learning that may be gained through engagement with Coombe Abbey Hotel and asked officers to consider the development of wider commercial opportunities within the Council House.

4 Information and Update

- 4.1 In January 2018, the café in the Undercroft at St. Mary's closed to enable works to take place to improve the physical environment and customer experience. Works were carried out to the staircase, bar area and lighting of the café.

- 4.2 In March 'The Undercroft at St. Mary's' was relaunched, offering an improved café experience, a new menu and re-focused promotional campaign. Customer numbers at the café have improved in the period since the relaunch and the performance of the café is being closely monitored to support its ongoing success.
- 4.3 Coombe Abbey Hotel has also been engaged around providing insight and/or advice around the customer offering and experience across the wider St. Mary's complex, and have visited the site to more fully understand the current customer offering.
- 4.4 As part of work on implementing Coventry's Cultural Strategy and to support the city's preparations for being UK City of Culture 2021, a review of potential cultural capital projects has commenced. This will examine cultural capital opportunities in the city and explore the capacity of respective projects to contribute to widening access to the city's cultural offerings and growing cultural and leisure tourism.
- 4.5 The above work will further support ongoing work on the development of a new Coventry Destination Management Plan. Following Phase 1 of data analysis and initial stakeholder engagement, work has now commenced on developing options and recommendations for the environment, structure and delivery framework for destination management in Coventry.
- 4.6 With regards to wider commercial opportunities at St. Mary's Guildhall and the Council House, in March 2018, initial proposals for The Wheelhouse to open a partnership co-working community space were progressed into a preferred option for delivering the opportunity within the Council House. The Wheelhouse (Coventry) opened in April 2018, within the former Communications Team offices converted to offer:
- Dedicated desk spaces
 - Co-working desk spaces
 - Relaxed working spaces
 - Meeting room spaces
- 4.7 The Wheelhouse report that they are on course for achieving targets in membership growth.

5 Officer Contacts

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