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

21st November 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 development of St Mary's Guildhall into a premier heritage, function, events and conferencing venue in the centre of Coventry.
- 1.2 To seek the support and guidance of the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board in considering the business case for the development and next steps.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board is recommended:
 - 1) To continue to support the activity in relation to establishing the business case for the development of St Mary's Guildhall into a premier heritage, function, events and conferencing venue in the centre of Coventry, including all necessary governance regarding Council considering the proposals and whether to proceed with the scheme.

3 Background

- 3.1 In May 2018 Scrutiny Board were informed that work to consider the potential for St. Mary's Guildhall to be a high quality heritage, events and conferencing venue was underway. This report sets out progress of that work, and recommended next steps.

4 Introduction

- 4.1 It is recognised that a long term sustainable solution is required for St Mary's Guildhall that continues to offer residents and visitors to Coventry the opportunity to visit the Guildhall whilst achieving a commercial outcome that at least allows the Guildhall to recover its overheads.
- 4.2 In the future there is a desire for the Guildhall to provide a sustainable income stream to the Council. Investment in the Café (the Undercroft at St Mary's) was intended to prevent further decline in the income with ongoing growth, however it has always been noted that long term sustainability requires better levels of income from conferencing, corporate events, hospitality events and weddings in the Great Hall.
- 4.3 It is noted that the Guildhall currently does not offer a particularly engaging visitor experience, and neither does it adequately cater for the modern conferencing and event market. To this end, in collaboration with advisors from Coombe Abbey Hotel, specialist heritage architects and consultants have been engaged to review the Guildhall and provide advice and recommendations on works that would be necessary to deliver an exceptional visitor experience, whether it be for casual visitors wanting to engage with the heritage of the Guildhall, events attendees or hosting a conference.

5 Presentation

- 5.1 A slide deck is provided at Appendix 1 giving the progress of the scheme and the outcomes of the RIBA Stage 2 concept design and business case review.

6 Political Engagement

- 6.1 Scrutiny Board 3 has been previously briefed on the purpose of this project and advised on its development (May 2018).
- 6.2 The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - Councillor O'Boyle, has been kept informed of the project and its progress.
- 6.3 Further political engagement shall be undertaken as this RIBA Stage 2 is completed, to fully inform Council on the project outcomes to date, and to understand Council's support, or otherwise, to progress with the project to RIBA Stage 3.

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 This note and accompanying slide deck seeks to provide some high level information and 'direction of travel' for the project.
- 7.2 Next steps;
- Discuss and confirm willingness and approval, or otherwise, of the Council to proceed with the project to RIBA Stage 3, and the development of the detailed business case.
 - Agree a broader communication and engagement strategy to allow the design to be further developed to consider all heritage and other considerations
 - Generate a project programme that considers feedback from consultation and engagement, prior confirming a proposed scheme for planning and listed building consent
 - Conclude RIBA Stage 3 design and costing, before reconfirming the business case for the scheme

8 Officer Contacts

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Appendix 1 – St Mary's Guildhall Presentation