



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

Date: 18th March 2020

Subject: St Mary's Guildhall Transformation Project

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board regarding the progress and related activity to deliver the capital transformation project at St Mary's Guildhall.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board is recommended to:
- 1) Continue to support the activity in respect of the improvement works at St Mary's Guildhall to ensure a sustainable high-quality visitor experience and conferencing venue is created, whilst promoting the heritage asset of St Mary's Guildhall in context of the City of Culture 2021.

3 Background

- 3.1 In 2017, Coventry was awarded City of Culture 2021 and the transformation of St Mary's Guildhall will be an important part of the work to conserve and repair the Guildhall as part of this year long celebration.
- 3.2 In May 2018 and November 2018, Scrutiny Board were informed that work to consider the potential for St Mary's Guildhall to be a high-quality heritage and conferencing venue was underway.
- 3.3 It is recognised that despite the historical significance of St Mary's Guildhall, the visitor experience is not particularly engaging and there is minimal interpretation for visitors. The hospitality and events offer is dated and the venue does not adequately cater for the modern conferencing and events market.
- 3.4 To address these issues, 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 offering modern conferencing suite and facilities that allows the Guildhall to recover its overheads.

4 The St Mary's Guildhall Scheme

- 4.1 Specialist heritage architects and consultants were appointed in July 2019 to prepare a scheme of works that would allow St Mary's Guildhall to effectively function as a visitor attraction underpinned by commercial activity.
- 4.2 The proposed works will have both a heritage and commercial offer to deliver an exceptional visitor experience, open more of the Guildhall and provide a quality hospitality and events venue. The larger capital project would deliver the following outputs:

- Restored and conserved medieval kitchen with public access - which entails removal of the existing commercial kitchen;
- Extension to the rear of the Guildhall to provide a modern catering kitchen to support meetings, conferencing, civic and commercial events;
- Removal of inappropriate additions over time – to include removal of cumbersome stair riser apparatus from medieval stair rails, and restoration of original approach to Great Hall by relocation of late twentieth century bar;
- Introduction of improved access with a new lift to the first floor;
- Repair and conservation work to the structure of the building and the most significant historic spaces;
- Upgrading of mechanical and electrical systems including heating and lighting;
- Renovation work to spaces to support greater meeting and conferencing use;
- Improved visitor access to the Muniment Room;
- Creation of a viewing gallery over the courtyard space facilitated by the removal of the existing bar;
- Improved visitor welfare facilities;

4.3 The Council is also seeking funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund for the following:

- Enhanced visitor access and circulation, including a visible and welcoming entrance and reception area
- Enhancement works to the Courtyard and external signage;
- Repair and conservation work to the Coventry Tapestry;
- Improved environmental control, lighting and display of the Coventry Tapestry;
- Development and delivery of a multi-layered approach to interpretation, including digital interpretation which will repopulate spaces with people and activity;
- Renovation, upgrading and fit out of the Mercers Room (Ground Floor) and Drapers room (first Floor) as flexible spaces for learning and community use;
- Revenue funding to support a new staffing structure to engage with new audiences; programming to reach new audiences; to develop the organisational capability, capacity and resilience;
- New and improved Education offer, upgrading of rooms for multi-use learning spaces

5 Statutory Permissions and Programme of Work

5.1 The programme of works for the scheme is as follows:

January 2020	Closure of the Guildhall
January 2020	Commencement of enabling works
March 2020	Submission of full planning application
April 2020	Procurement of a main works contractor
June 2020	Planning approval and discharge of conditions
July 2020	Construction Commencement

March 2021 Commencement of phased opening
June 2021 St Mary's Guildhall full opening.

- 5.2 In November 2019, Listed Building Consent was approved to allow strip out / opening up works within the kitchen at St Mary's Guildhall. These works are required to enable the heritage architects and their team to assess what is present behind the modern kitchen, which will then inform the scheme design within this area. The enabling works are currently underway and completion is anticipated in early April 2020.
- 5.3 Planning permission and Listed Building consent for the main scheme due to submitted in March 2020
- 5.4 Historic England and Coventry City Council Planning and Conservation have been engaged with in developing the scheme proposals.

6 Financials / resources implications

- 6.1 In respect of project costs the full scheme is valued at £5.6 million. Of which £2.2million funding has been secured from DCMS, with £620,000 investment into heritage condition works. The project is seeking further funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) to the value of £1.7million. An Expression of Interest NLHF was approved in September 2019, followed by a Stage 1 Development Phase application submitted in November 2019 and we are currently awaiting the outcome.

7 Political Engagement

- 7.1 Scrutiny Board 3 has previously been briefed on the purpose of this project and advised on its development (May and November 2018).
- 7.2 The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities have been kept informed as the project progresses.
- 7.3 Briefings on the scheme took place with Members including the Leader and Deputy Leader in January 2020.
- 7.4 As part of the wider CCC budget report taken to Cabinet on the 25 February 2020, approval has been sought to commence the refurbishment of St Mary's Guildhall. A further detailed Cabinet Member report is due to be taken in March 2020.

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