
To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

Date: 16th February 2022

Subject: Cultural Capital Investment Programme Update

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To update Members of the Board – with a detailed presentation on the progress of the Cultural Capital Investment Programme.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Co-Ordination Committee is recommended:

- 1) To consider the content of the briefing note and presentation at the meeting
- 2) To identify any further recommendations for the Cabinet Member

3 Information/Background

Cultural Capital Investment Programme

- 3.1 On 7th December 2017, Coventry was awarded the title of UK City of Culture 2021. The process of implementing and further developing planning for the title year (originally 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2021) commenced with immediate effect.
- 3.2 In June 2018, Coventry City Council commissioned the Coventry Cultural Capital Prioritisation Strategy. The strategy was developed by Coventry City Council in partnership with Coventry City of Culture Trust to provide a framework for capital investment prioritisation in the period leading up to and into UK City of Culture 2021. The strategy was based on a review of current and planned capital schemes across the cultural sector in the City and consultation with the relevant organisations.
- 3.3 The strategy identified key cultural assets that would be significant in contributing to the future resilience and sustainability of cultural organisations and the cultural sector in the City.
- 3.4 The strategy recommended key venues and production spaces that were considered relevant for the successful delivery and reputation of the city in hosting the UK City of Culture and in securing sustainable legacies.

3.5 The strategy assessed the appropriateness and readiness of capital scheme proposals against six strategic priorities:

- Developing and improving the Cathedral/Museum Quarter as a key, multi-faceted visitor destination
- Strengthening the City's creative sector economy through the provision of space for production, training and creative industries working
- Ensuring that the City's key venues are equipped to deliver programmes of the highest National quality and appeal
- Creating new space for dance, independent film and exhibition
- Creating and improving informal spaces for a wide range of indoor and outdoor events and performances.
- Addressing the City Centre public realm through coordinated initiatives to improve the creative environment

3.6 The initial investment from Coventry City of Council of £5m, has successfully levered £24.5m of direct external grant funding into the programme, £15.8m partner match funding. Currently, the total level of programme investment is £45.3m, which is still growing with the inclusion of the legacy stage projects. This investment is additional to the £44.83m programme of investment into the City Centre public realm.

The increased funding has allowed the programme to be more far-reaching, investing in broader range of production spaces, performance venues and heritage projects. It has also enabled some projects to develop into phases beyond their initial scope. This has resulted in more cultural organisations being supported and more capital assets receiving investment at such a critical time, as the local cultural and creative sectors have responded to the challenges of the global pandemic.

Programme Update

3.7 The Cultural Capital Investment Programme now includes 15 projects (excluding legacy stage projects).

3.8 The programme has been adapted to meet the challenges faced during the pandemic and the changes experienced across the construction industry following Brexit. Timelines have moved for several projects, but all project teams have responded positively to the challenges faced. No projects have fallen away from the programme during this time.

3.5 Currently, 12 projects have completed and are now operational, with the final projects completing across the coming months, up to summer 2022.

3.6 The twelve completed projects are:

- The Box at FarGo Village – multi-purpose arts venue and events space
- FarGo Village Remodel – imaginative permanent street food offer
- Daimler Powerhouse – purpose-built Creation Centre
- Herbert Art Gallery – refurbishment of several galleries and enhanced visitor experience
- HMV Empire – redevelopment of vacant shop unit to popular arts venue
- Drapers Hall – restoration of the previously vacant building providing a new headquarters to Coventry Music and a popular music venue
- Ancient and Exceptional Unique Visitor Stay Places – conversion of the Lychgate Cottages and two Gate Houses offering a unique overnight accommodation experience
- Visitor Information Provision – providing two striking visitor information points at our primary transport gateways – Coventry Rail Station and Pool Meadow Bus Station
- Anglican Chapel – London Road Cemetery – the Chapel has been restored as a sustainable venue
- Coventry Cathedral – the pavilion now provides dedicated educational space and improved visitor experience
- Belgrade Theatre – refurbishment of the auditorium, creation of ground floor café and first floor bar and conversion of former Jaguar pub into 5G digital space
- The Tin Music & Arts – improved layout and enhanced visitor experience

3.7 The Three remaining ‘live’ projects are:

- St Marys Guildhall – anticipated completion March 2022

This transformational project will deliver an improved and interactive visitor experience at the Guildhall, including interpretation; incorporation of new digital technology; restoration of the original medieval kitchen; and the improved showcasing and interpretation of the Tapestry.

This comprehensive project has been extended, beyond the original scope, to include additional rooms and spaces within the St. Mary’s Guildhall estate. The project has been supported by a number of specialist trades and its transformation will create a new visitor experience and facilitate a new education offer in a key heritage venue for the City. The programme of construction works is due to complete at the end of March 2022.

- Reel Store Digital Gallery – anticipated completion May 2022

The Reel Store, an immersive digital art gallery will be the first permanent digital gallery in the UK, based in the basement of the Telegraph Hotel.

Works are being completed to create an exhibition space with an 800m² fixed projection mapping canvas with 14 laser projectors accompanied by a spatially adaptive sound system.

The programme of works is due to facilitate the opening of the Reel Store in May 2022.

- Charterhouse Venue – anticipated completion Summer 2022

The Charterhouse, a nationally important heritage site, is being restored to provide a major tourist attraction set in a 70-acre Heritage Park, boosting the visitor economy, city image, investment and job creation. A new restaurant and conference venue at the site will become an exemplar place for business.

This complex project will create a new destination at a unique Scheduled Monument site.

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