

COMMUNITY EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

5 September 2019

- * Councillor John Redpath (Chairman)
- * Councillor Steven Lee (Vice-Chairman)

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| * Councillor Paul Abbey | * Councillor Ann McShee |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty |
| * Councillor Gillian Harwood | * Councillor George Potter |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | Councillor Jo Randall |
| * Councillor Ted Mayne | * Councillor Deborah Seabrook |

* Present

Councillors Pauline Searle and James Steel were also in attendance.

C9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jo Randall. There were no substitutes.

C10 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests.

C11 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board held on 4 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

C12 GUILDFORD MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT - PRESENTATION

The Director of Environment gave a presentation in respect of the Guildford Museum Development Project, which was being progressed with the assistance of an outside consultant and a dedicated working group. The presentation covered the work undertaken to date, the Museum vision, relevant Executive decisions taken on 19 March 2019, work pursued since March 2019, site layout and features, the fundraising strategy, timeline, risks to the project and recommendations to the Executive on 24 September 2019.

With regard to work undertaken to date, in 2016 the Executive considered the Museum survey documentation and analysis report and agreed that the development of the Museum as a vibrant visitor attraction was a corporate priority. Examination of the site and development of architectural options, liaison with Historic England, community engagement, a decision to develop on the existing site and the setting aside of £6.5 million in the capital programme took place in 2017/18. Development of the vision, content, interpretation, activity programme, business plan and indicative cost of £18 million followed in 2018/19.

The vision for the Museum sought to celebrate the story of Guildford and its regional, national and global impact on site, offsite and online; be a centre for community engagement and outreach into the Borough and County; be a place for learning and creativity; and be a cultural hub for Guildford and the Borough.

Executive decisions reached in March 2019 were agreement to progress the project to Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stage 4, for officers to explore external funding options, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), to appoint a fundraising officer, to

transfer £1,200,000 from the provisional budget to the approved budget to fund the required work, and to review the existing contracts for external consultants to either re-negotiate or re-procure them in order to ensure best value for money.

Work since March 2019 consisted of refining the scope of the project, commissioning fundraising and digital strategies, holding two public consultation events, and discussions with potential hub partners.

The site layout map showed the re-orientated entrance to the Castle Grounds from Quarry Street.

The fundraising strategy consisted of three phases of fundraising and sought to raise £4 million from NLHF, set a fundraising target of £2.5 - £3m and establish a fundraising charity.

There had been positive feedback from the public consultation which had taken place in the Castle Grounds and Farmers' Market and featured conversations with 111 people plus 52 browsers, voting on proposed storylines and activities, and commenting on the architectural proposals.

The project timeline completed with opening of the new Museum in April 2024. Risks to the project were the cost, match funding, Historic England requirements and town planning issues.

The numerous recommendations to the Executive in September 2019 included the revised project scope, funding strategy and registered fundraising charity, Museum Accreditation policies, asset disposal for Castle Cottage and 39 Castle Street, approval of a capital supplementary estimate of £11.8 million and underwriting the non-NLHF fundraising target of £7.8 million. The £18 million overall cost of the project included a high contingency sum of 15% owing to the risk and inflation.

Recent history, such as gaming in Guildford, would be included in the Museum displays and the aim was to tell stories in interesting ways.

Arising from related discussion and questions, the following points were made:

- The project work would be commenced in Quarry Street and undertaken in enclosed sections to avoid the appearance of a building site. The use of artists' impressions of the completed project on the site enclosures was suggested as a means to stimulate public interest during the works.
- As the University of the 3rd Age had received some interesting and informative lectures in respect of the project, it was suggested that lectures be delivered to other interest groups and forums to engage the public.
- The project development costs were relatively high as the refurbishment involved works to listed buildings and an ancient monument. Costs were based on an early stage RIBA 1 feasibility study. Spending would increase as professional fees and engineering and constructions costs were incurred as the project progressed.
- The Executive would be recommended to underwrite the outstanding funding gap and larger funders would be approached initially followed by smaller funders and then the public to fundraise. The establishment of a charitable trust would assist with fundraising. In the absence of sufficient funding, the project could be discontinued at any point prior to completion of the design stage in 2021.
- An activity plan had been produced to assist with promoting the new Museum.
- Town centre schemes involving Chapel Street and Castle Street created a circular route aiming to improve access to the Castle Grounds and increase connectivity.

- It was felt the small display at the Castle should be linked with the Museum displays to provide a joined up offering.
- Entry to the new Museum would be cost free and there would be open access to the Castle Grounds. It was hoped to attract exhibitions and charge for their display.

Attendance at the meeting included a public speaker, Honorary Freeman and member of the Friends of Guildford Museum Jen Powell, who spoke in favour of the Museum project and was appreciative of the presentation and grateful for work undertaken to date. Mrs Powell advised that funds of £34,000 raised by the Friends of Guildford Museum would be donated to the project.

C13 G LIVE CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

The Board received a presentation, accompanied by a briefing note, from the Leisure Services Manager concerning the procurement of an operator for G Live. The presentation outlined the current arrangements, the venue, the procurement process, how to procure a new operator, priorities and procurement timetable.

In terms of current arrangements, the Council had entered into a 10 year contract to operate and manage G Live with HQ Theatres Guildford Limited (HQT) on 12 August 2011 and this contract would expire on 30 September 2021. In the current contract agreement, HQT was required to optimise commercial and hospitality income in G Live in addition to providing different genres of entertainment.

The venue was designed to complement existing theatre facilities in Guildford and the main programme reflected this and was driven by a series of predominantly one night performances of music and comedy. The venue consisted of main concert space capacity of 1,031 people seated, 1,700 standing, and a second space for seating up to 100. There were also hospitality and meeting rooms. In 2017/18, the contract turnover had been £2,795,491 (before subsidy) and staffing costs in respect of the 31.50 full time equivalent employees had been £721,000. There were also 121 casual staff and 126 volunteers.

The procurement process was required to be undertaken well in advance as the touring product which comprised the core of the programme was often booked a year in advance and, if the Council opted for a different operator as a result of the procurement process, they would need to work with the existing operator to ensure a smooth transition to reduce the impact on the customer. In addition, the transfer of the venue operation, which would be a significant and complex process, would require the transfer of the employees under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) Regulations. Advance bookings, existing agreements and equipment would also need to be transferred. The potential purchase of stock and condition surveys of the building and plant etc. were also factors.

Procuring a new operator required a review of the Council's desired priorities and requirements (e.g. paying the Living Wage) for the venue, preparing the complex and detailed documentation around the desired priorities, going to the market, evaluating the bidders' submissions against the desired priorities and requirements, and awarding the tender for the operation of the venue.

In relation to priorities, automatic requirements included safe operation of the venue, suitable back of house operating structure (i.e. transparent business plan, management structure, staff training programme etc.) and asset management arrangements (replacement plan and pre-planned maintenance programme). Items to be prioritised included catering provision and hospitality offer, quality and diversity of programme, community access, financial arrangements (subsidy/management arrangements, night time economy contribution and

commercial access), customer service and accessibility, environmental impact, facility cleanliness and presentation, and creative learning programme.

The procurement timetable was of a duration of one year and could include negotiations with planned mobilisation of the contract on 1 September 2020.

The following points arose from related discussion and questions:

- The car park to the rear of G Live was currently operated by the Council and not the responsibility of the venue operator.
- Catering and hospitality were key factors to the success of an entertainment venue and it was the operator's decision whether an offering was provided in-house or through franchises although the latter could be more costly for the operator. There was scope to improve the existing catering provision, which was hampered by a small kitchen and therefore limited menu and capacity.
- Although community use of the venue was favoured, a balance needed to be struck between discounted use by community groups which might not attract large audiences (and therefore would not be suited to the venue's capacity) and more profitable commercial bookings. Take up by community groups under the existing contract provisions was not particularly high and there were many smaller, more suitable venues e.g. the Electric, Boiler Room, Mill Theatres etc. in Guildford that met the need of many community groups.
- The seating capacity and space at G Live lent itself to concerts and comedy shows. The venue did not attract major national touring productions or big acts as promoters would be looking for significantly larger venues, such as arenas. G Live had successfully hosted warm up events, which had sold out rapidly due to such high demand e.g. Michael McIntyre.
- Undertaking the procurement in an early and structured manner would mitigate some of the associated disruption. The existing operator was required to prepare an exit plan and all areas, such as the existing customer database, booking system, website, stock list etc. would be explored as part of the procurement process to ensure a smooth transition.
- As the TUPE Regulations applied, existing staff would be retained and transferred to the new operator which would mean that if a new operator took over the contract, the venue would still be largely operated by staff who had operated the building and made many of the bookings prior to transfer.
- Several bids from potential future operators were expected.
- Management of G Live in-house or via a Council-owned company were suggested as possible alternatives to procuring an external operator which could reduce the amount of subsidy required. However, establishing a company was a time consuming process and a reduced subsidy was not guaranteed i.e. it could cost more to operate in-house.
- Existing concessions such as free tickets for carers would benefit from increased publicity.

As part of their deliberations, the Board was advised of the automatic back of house requirements to underpin the successful operation of the venue and was invited to complete

individually a questionnaire ranking eight items in order of importance. The eight items were catering provision, diverse programme, community access, financial arrangements, customer service, environmental impact, cleanliness and presentation, and creative learning.

C14 JOINT EAB BUDGET TASK GROUP

Annually since September 2016, both Executive Advisory Boards (EABs) had established a Joint EAB Budget Task Group (JEABBTG), comprising four councillors appointed by each EAB. The terms of reference of the JEABBTG were approved as follows:

To consider and review for submission to the EABs, Executive and Council:

- (1) the draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account revenue budgets, and
- (2) the draft General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes, including growth bids to inform the evaluation process.

For 2019/20, each EAB was requested, once again, to appoint four councillors who, together, would comprise the JEABBTG. The Board agreed to continue with this arrangement and appoint two Liberal Democrat members and two R4GV members to a new Budget Task Group.

RESOLVED

That Councillors Diana Jones, Ted Mayne, George Potter and Deborah Seabrook be appointed to serve on the EAB Budget Task Group for the 2019/20 municipal year.

Reason for Recommendation:

To ensure backbench councillor involvement in the budget setting process.

C15 EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

Having considered the Executive Forward Plan dated 27 August 2019, the Board identified Chantry Wood Campsite as an item to be considered at the EAB meeting on 17 October 2019 and the Allocation of Community and Voluntary Grants 2020/21 at the meeting on 13 February 2020. Although there was some interest in looking at the Strategic Development Framework and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Documents, these fell more closely under the remit of the Place-making and Innovation EAB.

C16 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

The Executive Advisory Board's work programme was noted.

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman