

CORPORATE SCRUTINY

THURSDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2019

PROGRESS UPDATE ON TAMWORTH ASSEMBLY ROOMS

**Report of the Executive Director, Organisation and Assistant Director,
Operations and Leisure**

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To provide members with a comprehensive update in respect of the Assembly Rooms project.

Background

On 20th December 2018, Cabinet considered a detailed update with regards to Tamworth Assembly Rooms. At that time:

- A design freeze had been achieved
- A gap in funding had been identified (the request was approved)
- The project plan was updated to account for previous delays and variations from the original bid
- Final costs from the Contractor (Novus) were awaited together with a revised completion programme
- At revised Comms Plan and Marketing Plan were underway
- A potential health and safety risk and effective treatment measures were being considered with regards to high level plastering
- We were also awaiting approval of the release of Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) contingency before we being able to progress any invoice payments
- Confirmation from SCC on Public Realm Works had not yet been received

Since the report was considered and approved:

- The current Arts & Entertainment Manager has resigned for a new position and will be leaving the authority on 7th February 2019
- An new organisational restructure was announced 29th January and as such, a new post of Theatre & Events Manager (Job Profile attached) has been created with the remit to co-ordinate all events across the authority (external and internal) and as well providing a commercial focus to the business development of the Assembly Rooms
- The provision of additional funding has meant that
 - HLF agreed the release of their contingency and processing of payments
 - The Councils commitment to completing the programme was declared

- The main Contract Project Manager has been transferred to another project within the company, resulting in 2 x Project Managers now being appointed to deliver the completion of the build project.
- The issue of the risk / safety of plaster (previously referred to) has now been resolved. A lime plaster expert has visited the site, assessed the plaster and provided TBC with a written report and method statement as to how the plaster can be stabilised. We are currently awaiting a revised costing for the work but it is anticipated the cost of this will reduce as per previous predictions
- Once the Plaster Contractor is able to confirm timeline for completion of this work Novus will then be in a position to provide TBC with a final completion date for building handover. We are currently working towards 2nd August 2019.
- Value re-engineering continues to ensure costs remain stable and/or reduced further where possible. Examples of where this has worked exceptionally well are: tiling to the toilet areas, reduced wainscoting and amendments to the curtains.
- With regards to the Public Realm Works, we are still awaiting confirmation of timelines, contractor appointments, etc from SCC. The situation is being closely monitored to minimise disruption/impact.
- With regards to plans for communication and marketing – both are well underway but more importantly these plans are developed as a ‘whole Council’ approach making use of skills and knowledge throughout the organisation.
- Programming is well underway with the aim to maximise sales, entrance fees and delivery of community and conference facilities. Acts are now being confirmed including ‘trial and tested’ old favourites
- The reorganisation announced on 29th January now provides a detailed structure for the management and operational aspects of the building
- Site visits and hard hat tours have commenced for Members, Theatre Ambassadors and Community Champions/Groups – all members will shortly be invited for their tour
- Operational procedures are being developed and will be finalised of the next few months prior to building handover
- IT Systems including:
 - Wi-Fi for staff and visitors
 - Facilities for conferencing
 - New EPOS system for Café and Bar area
 - On-line booking for tickets
- The Food & Beverage provision is currently being developed in order to ensure the “offer” meets all needs

Summary

- The Project in its entirety is progressing well and in line with overall Project deadlines. An internal and external Project Team meet regularly to ensure progress continues

- A further update to Cabinet is scheduled for 21st March 2019 and it is hoped at that time the Project will be in the early stage of the build completion process
- HLF continue to support the Project with regular project meetings. The next meeting with HLF on site is scheduled for 18th March 2019
- Plans for the soft launch opening together with the Official Opening are underway but not yet confirmed

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