

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Portfolio Area: Health and Community Activities

Date of Meeting: 24 April 2006

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: Theatre / Arts Centre Feasibility Study
Report of: Director of Community Services
Report reference: CS13/06

Summary: To update the Executive on the Theatre / Arts Centre Feasibility Study which is being led by the City Council, in partnership with the Arts Council for England.

Recommendations:

That the Executive:

1. Notes the tender arrangements and the timetable for the Feasibility Study
2. Approves the scope of the Study.

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

It was agreed at the Executive Committee of 20 Feb 2006 (CLS003/06) that officers should appoint consultants to carry out a Feasibility Study on an Theatre / Arts Centre for Carlisle. Prior to this work being put out for tender, a brief needs to be prepared in collaboration with the Arts Council for England who have indicated their support to the Council for the work.

The proposal for a Theatre / Arts Centre facility will need to be placed in the context of Carlisle Renaissance and the master planning currently underway. The work will link closely with the proposed university developments and the Cumbria Institute for the Arts and with the work to be undertaken on the Cultural Strategy and Tullie House.

1.1 The Feasibility Study

A project team will be established from within existing Council staff, which will be led by the Head of Culture and Community and utilise expertise from external consultants as well as using them to provide detailed work in relation to the scope of the study.

The development of a major Theatre and Arts Centre for the City has been an aspiration for some time. A centre that is flexible in terms of its use and accessible for Carlisle residents and visitors. This is a key element of Carlisle Renaissance and was commented by the ODPM as a “good thing” for the City to have during visits following the flood.

Consultation to-date on Carlisle Renaissance concurs with this vision for the City

Work was carried out several years ago regarding a proposal for a theatre based at the Sands Centre, which at the time did not receive lottery support. A similar exercise based on Theatre / Arts Centre, which the Council supported was led by the Lonsdale Theatre Trust Group, but this did not get further than an initial feasibility study.

Following discussions, The Arts Council England - North West are prepared to support the work on the Feasibility Study with a grant, providing match funding to enable the Council to undertake a major piece of work. Their support is both integral and encouraging, because of the expertise which they can provide to the Council in undertaking such a study, but also their access to grants which would be necessary if a facility were to be provided and operated in the City. Their involvement at this stage is to be applauded because of it is an indication of potential they see in the final outcome of the study whatever that may be. One

of the conditions of their support is that we draw up a brief in conjunction with an “enabler” appointed by CABA (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment).

The selected “enabler” is an architect-planner with a particular interest in the conservation, development and regeneration of the historic environment. The “enabler” will advise on the following issues: -

- Client team governance issues and establishing the client’s roles and responsibilities
- Establishing the client’s vision for their project and assisting them to translate this into a detailed design brief
- Appointing consultants to perform feasibility studies
- Selection and appointment of design teams , including European procurement procedures
- Working with development partners and/or within a wider masterplan project.

1.2 The Scope of the Feasibility Study

In consultation with the Arts Council for England North West, it has been determined that the most appropriate method of approaching the project will be through separating it in two stages. In the first stage it is essential that the purpose and need for a Theatre / Arts Centre is clearly defined and it meets the requirements of the City and takes account of the significant work being undertaken as part of Carlisle Renaissance. The two stages are:-

Stage 1 is defining the Purpose and assessing the Needs of a Theatre / Arts Centre and Stage2 is carrying out the Options Appraisal, Business Plan and the Outline Design.

Stage 1 and Stage 2 require the preparation of a brief in close consultation with the Arts Council and the appointed “enabler” from CABA. The Stage 1 defining the Purpose and Needs Analysis and Stage 2 Options Appraisal, Business Plan and Outline Design will need to be carried out by qualified consultants with relevant experience. The work will be put out to tender, following the Council procurement regulations. The tenders when returned will be assessed by the City Council and the CABA “enabler”. The applications will be shortlisted and interviews held as appropriate.

Stage 1

The Arts Council will provide a list of potential consultants, who have the relevant qualifications and experience to undertake the Stage 1 Needs Analysis. This list will be the list used for tendering the work. It is estimated that the Stage 1 work will cost £30,000. The work will include: -

- Establishing the artistic vision, aims and objectives for the Theatre / Arts Centre project
- Fitting the project into the strategic context - national, regional and local. Consultants will be instructed to make use of any previous reports on arts provision in Carlisle.
- Working in close consultation with current and potential stakeholders and partners , including Cumbria Institute for the Arts, University of Cumbria, the County Council and local and regional arts organisations

Stage1 will be followed by a two month consultation period with Members and key stakeholders, prior to moving on to Stage 2. Consultation will be carried out with relevant educational, leisure and arts organisations, including Cumbria Institute for the Arts, the Lonsdale Group, the Sands Centre, Prism and West Walls.

Stage 2

A brief will need to be prepared and the tendering process followed for continuing with Stage 2 of the Feasibility Study. The work required for Stage 2 includes: -

- Carrying out a thorough examination of the potential sites for a Theatre / Arts Centre. This could include the conversion of an existing building or a new build. This stage will include a comprehensive options appraisal.

A decision will then need to be made by the Council on the preferred option.

The consultants will follow this: -

- Working up an outline design of the preferred option. This will need to meet Design Stage B of RIBA.
- Preparing a Business Plan, which will provide a clear indication of the capital costs, the revenue costs and includes governance issues.
- Preparing a Fundraising strategy

At this stage Members will need to make the decision on taking the capital project forward.

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1.3 Proposed Timetable

The timetable gives a prudent view of the schedule of work to be undertaken. When the work is underway there may be opportunities to accelerate the process.

Brief for Stage 1 – the Needs Analysis is prepared - end April 2006

Stage1 – Tendering process complete – May 2006

Interviews, Selection and appointment of consultants – late May / early June 2006
Substantial completion stage – September 2006

Stage 2 - Prepare brief and Tender Stage 2 work – Nov 2006
Appointment of consultants – Dec/Jan 2007
Options Appraisal prepared – Feb 2007
Review of options – Feb / March 2007
Undertake outline Design and prepare Business Plan – May / June 2007

2. CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to Date.- A seminar was held on 1 Feb 2006 with a cross party group from Carlisle City Council, representatives from Cumbria Institute of the Arts, Arts Council England North West. Further consultation has been carried out with PFH, Member Group and SMT.

General Public - Questionnaires via Carlisle Renaissance Consultation Events

- "What would you prefer to happen in Rickergate?"
- 57% of the panel would prefer a theatre/concert hall as a development option in Rickergate" - the top answer
- 29% of the panel would prefer a hotel and conference venue

Primary school Results

"What do you do when you go into the city centre?" (more than 1 choice)

- 86% go into the city to go shopping
- 74% go into the city to go the cinema
- 53% go into the city to meet friends

Secondary School Results

"There are plenty of arts and music facilities and events in Carlisle"

- 31% of Young People agree
- 38% of Young People disagree
- 31% of Young People are unsure

"What would you prefer to happen in each of the following areas?"

- Rickergate
- 31% would prefer a Theatre and Concert hall

Questionnaire numbers for reference:

- Completed and Returned Questionnaires:
- 629 Citizens Panel
- 349 Consultation Events
- 17 Online
- 487 Primary Schools
- 862 Secondary Schools

Total received = 2344

- 2.2 Future Consultation - The work will be carried out in close collaboration with the Arts Council England North West and the “enabler”. PFH, Executive, Community O&S, current and potential stakeholders (e.g. Cumbria Inst of the Arts, West Walls, Lonsdale Group, Prism)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive:

1. Notes the tender arrangements and the timetable for the Feasibility Study
2. Approves the scope of the Study.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are based on the advice provided by the Arts Council and the “enabler” and facilitate this Council project to be moved forward as quickly as practicable.

5. IMPLICATIONS

- **Staffing/Resources** – Existing staff resources would be used to prepare the documentation for the feasibility study, which itself would be delivered by consultants. A Council project team would be established with input from Arts Council England
- **Financial** – The Feasibility Study can be funded from a budget of £26,000 which was allocated for a Theatre/Arts Review and carried forward from 2004/05 and match funded by the Arts Council England
- **Legal** – Not Applicable at this stage
- **Corporate** – The enhancement of the cultural offer in the City has been identified by the Council as important, linking to the Learning City priority and Carlisle Renaissance.
- **Risk Management** – The provision of a Feasibility Study will reduce any risk. The project will be subject to a full risk assessment
- **Equality Issues** – A full access audit would form part of the Feasibility Study.
- **Environmental** – Any building proposals, which may ultimately be suggested, will need to take into account energy efficiency and sustainable resources.
- **Crime and Disorder** – Performing Arts have been shown to engage young people as part of a wider programme to reduce social exclusion and links closer with the work being carried out by Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery under the Renaissance in the Regions programme.