

HITCHIN AREA COMMITTEE
1 March 2016

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

11

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE MUSEUM AND COMMUNITY FACILITY AT HITCHIN TOWN HALL

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

This note provides a further update for Members on the North Hertfordshire Museum and Town Hall Project following the last update.

PROJECT UPDATE

The current status of the project is illustrated in the 'project plan' section of this report, tasks that have been completed are shaded in grey.

Town Hall fit out and mobilisation

Since Hitchin Town Hall Ltd have not been involved in the project, officers have been progressing the Town Hall fit out and mobilisation to ensure the facility is fit for purpose when it opens to the public.

Alcohol & Events Catering

It is envisaged that alcohol and events catering will be provided by external contractors, subject to them meeting acceptable quality and licensing criteria. A register of approved suppliers is being compiled and local firms are able to apply for inclusion on the following link:.

<https://in-tendhost.co.uk/supplyhertfordshire.aspx/ProjectManage/702>

Staffing

Interviews have taken place for the Catering Manager post and an offer of employment has been made. The aim is for the Catering Manager to be in place within the next 2 months to undertake the necessary preparatory work prior to the opening of the café and kitchen.

Licensing applications

The Valuation Officer attended site on Tuesday 2 February 2016 to undertake a site assessment to provide a rateable value of the property. Once a rateable value has been obtained, the Council will apply for a Premises Licence, to include the sale of alcohol. Based on current estimates all licences will be in place by the end of April 2016. Events before this date will require a Temporary Events Notice.

Town Hall basement

As reported to Cabinet at its meeting of 27 January 2015, the Council's intention was to deal with basement damp following the completion of the main construction contract. Cabinet further agreed a contingency sum of £30,000 at its meeting on 10 March 2015 to deal with this item and a financial adjustment was made to the capital budget at that point.

This approach is in keeping with the lead Architect's advice, that we give the problem further time to stabilise and do not 'cause harm' to the fabric of the building by acting too quickly.

The construction work was completed on site over six months ago, therefore, officers are currently in the process of appointing a company to investigate the damp in the building and to provide solutions to resolve this. The aim is for the findings to be reported back to the Council within the next 2-3 months, then the Council will decide how best to proceed.

This area is a designated storage area for the Museum, therefore, officers have temporary arrangements in place for Museum storage pending the resolution of this.

Mountford Hall floor

As part of the project the overhaul of the sprung floor in the Mountford Hall was not included in the agreed works, the only requirement was to sand and seal the floor, this work has been undertaken.

It was always envisaged that investigating this work further following completion of the building works would be scheduled and this has taken place. A specialist has undertaken a site visit and has inspected the floor and the tensioning mechanism.

Generally, the floor is exactly as it was prior to the refurbishment; however, based on this advice the Council will be undertaking a service of the floor and tension mechanisms before considering allowing the tension to be adjusted. The service will take place before the building is opened to the public. The floor in its existing form is capable of taking significant loading and will not impede the use of the hall.

Museum fit out

All the showcases are now in situ, on first and ground floor, including the large showcase near the museum entrance. The majority of the museum fit-out work (the structures which surround the showcases) has been completed, with the ground floor plinths and stands for the interactive displays almost all fitted in January.

The main counter from the chemist's shop from the old museum has been redisplayed at the new museum, and with its drawers and glass bottles will be a key part of the first floor gallery. The other cupboards and fittings (which belong to the Hitchin Historical Society) are shortly being moved out of the museum, to make a new display at the Hitchin Lavender farm, in Cadwell.

Although work has progressed in these areas, the contractor did not achieve their completion date of 23 December 2015, the Council has requested a revised programme from them to deliver to completion.

Audio-Visual

The Audio-Visual aspects of the museum are now almost complete, and staff are very pleased with this aspect of the new museum. As an overview, there are clips of Pathé newsreels showing life and work in the District on both ground and first floors (prefabs in Baldock, pigeon racing in Hitchin, Spirella corsets, the K & L Foundry, the Hitchin banner makers) as well as an interactive display based on figures in the Lucas painting of Hitchin Market Place.

A screen on the Terrace Gallery will show illustrated films of three different local folk tales, which can be enjoyed while sitting on cinema seats from the old Town Hall balcony.

Access to museum

Two reports were presented to Council (part one and two) at its meeting on 21 January 2016 to present the latest position regarding 14 & 15 Brand Street and the opportunity for the Council to acquire this land. Below is an extract of the part one report which provides an overview of the report:-

- 1.2 *The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Council for the acquisition of 14 & 15 Brand Street following the appointment of a Receiver by Hitchin Town Hall Ltd.'s (HTH Ltd) funder, the Social Invest Business (SIB) acting for the Adventure Capital Fund (ACF). Such an acquisition would allow the building to operate in an integrated way for the local community although the facility could operate without the Brand Street premises with limited alterations.*
- 1.3 *The report outlines the current situation, the issues to be addressed and seeks delegated authority to implement such action as may be required to obtain title of the premises within the financial limits and circumstances described more fully in the report and in the corresponding Part 2 report.*
- 1.4 *The Proper Officer is satisfied that, in accordance with Section 15 (paras 15.5.1 and 15.5.2 of the Council's Constitution) the report is genuinely urgent and cannot be delayed until a later meeting because of the need to secure ownership of the properties and safeguard the Council's substantial investment.*

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

Following consideration of the part two report, Council resolved:

RESOLVED:

- (1) *That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director Customer Services to submit an offer for the acquisition of 14 and 15 Brand Street and associated costs, in accordance with Paragraph 5 of the report;*
- (2) *That the existing delegations in the Constitution which authorise officers to take any other action necessary to protect the Council's position be noted; and*
- (3) *That the Strategic Director of Finance, Policy and Governance be authorised to make the necessary adjustment to the Capital Programme, subject to receipt of a satisfactory formal valuation and confirmation that the acquisition provides best consideration to the Council.*

REASON FOR DECISION: *To enable the Council to complete the development of the North Hertfordshire Museum/Hitchin Town Hall project and operate the facility for the benefit of the local community; and to protect the Council's interests and obtain best return from the Council's existing investment and to secure projected income from the facility to offset operational and fixed costs.*

SIB and their appointed Receiver undertook a site visit on 3 February 2016, and dialogue in respect of the short and long-term access for the premises is ongoing.

A fire strategy has been undertaken to investigate if the building could be opened without the use of 14 & 15 Brand Street. It has been concluded and demonstrates that the Council would be able to open the building without the use of this area with minimal adjustments to the building; however this would impact to the total capacity of the building and also affect the user experience.

Project Board have met to consider the items that have been raised in this report.

PROJECT PLAN

The project plan provides an overview of the entire project and the key tasks that have or need to be undertaken.

Table 1

Tasks	Duration	Start	Finish
Council & Trust to agree 15 Brand Street	14 days	Thu 04/04/13	Tue 23/04/13
Negotiate new DA and legal approval	14 days	Thu 04/04/13	Tue 23/04/13
ACF to agree to extension and conditions	1 wk	Wed 24/04/13	Tue 30/04/13
BFAW lead in time	3 wks	Wed 01/05/13	Tue 21/05/13
2 weeks contingency	2 wks	Wed 22/05/13	Tue 04/06/13
Design	38 days	Wed 05/06/13	Fri 26/07/13
Review existing scheme for statutory compliance	0.5 wks	Wed 05/06/13	Fri 07/06/13
Develop revised areas to stage E	4.5 wks	Fri 07/06/13	Tue 09/07/13
Redevelop affected adjoining areas to stage E	0.5 wks	Fri 21/06/13	Tue 25/06/13
Develop revised areas to stage F	2 wks	Mon 15/07/13	Fri 26/07/13
Redevelop affected adjoining areas to stage F	0.5 wks	Wed 10/07/13	Fri 12/07/13
Revise Bills of Quantities	2 wks	Mon 29/07/13	Fri 09/08/13
Negotiate with preferred contractor	3 wks	Mon 12/08/13	Fri 30/08/13
Project Board	1 day	Wed 04/09/13	Wed 04/09/13
Award Contract	1 day	Thu 05/09/13	Thu 05/09/13
Sign DA & OA	1 day	Mon 09/09/13	Mon 09/09/13
10 working days for purchase of 14 & 15 Brand Street	10 days	Tue 10/09/13	Mon 23/09/13
Asbestos removal	12 days	Thu 14/11/13	Fri 29/11/13

Tasks	Duration	Start	Finish
Contractor Mobilisation	10 days	Mon 18/11/13	Fri 29/11/13
Start on site	0 days	Mon 02/12/13	Mon 02/12/13
Construction period (includes 2 wks closure during x-mas)	59 wks	Mon 02/12/13	Fri 16/01/15
Extension of time (12 weeks)	12 wks	Mon 19/01/15	Fri 10/03/15
fit out works (community) currently on hold			
Museum on site fit out, installation, testing and object install	116 days	Original date Mon 13/04/15	Original date Mon 11/10/15
	183 days	Revised date Mon 13/04/15	Revised date Awaiting updated programme from contractor
Public opening / TBC			TBC
Procurement of Architect for fit out	766 days	Mon 29/10/12	Mon 05/10/15
Develop brief for exhibition design	10 days	Mon 29/10/12	Fri 09/11/12
OJEU Notice for Exhibition Design	0 days	Thu 15/11/12	Thu 15/11/12
Response Period - PQQ returns (30 calendar days)	22 days	Thu 15/11/12	Fri 14/12/12
Closing Date for PQQ responses	0 days	Fri 14/12/12	Fri 14/12/12
Evaluate expressions of interest	20 days	Mon 17/12/12	Fri 11/01/13
Moderation meeting for PQQ's	1 day	Tue 08/01/13	Tue 08/01/13
Confirm tender list	0 days	Fri 11/01/13	Fri 11/01/13
Prepare Tender Documents	10 days	Mon 14/01/13	Fri 25/01/13
Dispatch Tender Documents	0 days	Wed 30/01/13	Wed 30/01/13
Tender Period for designer (40 calendar days)	29 days	Wed 30/01/13	Mon 11/03/13
Evaluation/Review tenders	10 days	Tue 12/03/13	Mon 25/03/13
Moderation meeting for tender documents	1 day	Tue 26/03/13	Tue 26/03/13
Amalgamating all the evaluation sheets	3 days	Wed 27/03/13	Fri 29/03/13
Project Executive sign off	5 days	Mon 01/04/13	Fri 05/04/13
Stand still period (10 days)	8 days	Mon 08/04/13	Wed 17/04/13
Partial ward	0 days	Fri 07/06/13	Fri 07/06/13
Content Development	52 days	Fri 07/06/13	Mon 19/08/13
Collections Meeting (1)	0 days	Tue 11/06/13	Tue 11/06/13
Review Collections	52 days	Fri 07/06/13	Mon 19/08/13
Theming and narrative development	52 days	Fri 07/06/13	Mon 19/08/13
Collections Meeting (2)	0 days	Tue 16/07/13	Tue 16/07/13
Stage C - Design	48 days	Thu 27/06/13	Mon 02/09/13
Concept Design work	38 days	Thu 27/06/13	Mon 19/08/13
Interface with architect development	38 days	Thu 27/06/13	Mon 19/08/13

Tasks	Duration	Start	Finish
Compile Stage C Report	6 days	Mon 12/08/13	Mon 19/08/13
Design Award of Contract	0 days	Mon 19/08/13	Mon 19/08/13
Stage C - Internal Review and Approvals	10 days	Tue 20/08/13	Mon 02/09/13
HLF Presentation - Stage C	0 days	Wed 28/08/13	Wed 28/08/13
Evaluation and Audience Consultation	10 days	Tue 03/09/13	Mon 16/09/13
Stage D - Design	30 days	Tue 03/09/13	Mon 14/10/13
Detailed Design	30 days	Tue 03/09/13	Mon 14/10/13
Content Development work	30 days	Tue 03/09/13	Mon 14/10/13
Mid-Stage Presentation	0 days	Mon 23/09/13	Mon 23/09/13
Stage D - Internal Review and Approvals	14 days	Tue 15/10/13	Fri 01/11/13
HLF Presentation - Stage D	0 days	Wed 23/10/13	Wed 23/10/13
Final revisions to Stage D submission	5 days	Mon 04/11/13	Fri 08/11/13
HLF Stage 2 Submission	0 days	Mon 11/11/13	Mon 11/11/13
HLF Response and Grant Award	91 days	Mon 11/11/13	Mon 17/03/14
HLF Mobilisation	20 days	Tue 18/03/14	Mon 14/04/14
PQQ Notice period	29 days	Tue 19/08/14	Fri 26/09/14
Issue of PQQ notice	0 days	Tue 19/08/14	Tue 19/08/14
Period of notice (30 calendar days)	23 days	Tue 19/08/14	Thu 18/09/14
End of notice period	0 days	Thu 18/09/14	Thu 18/09/14
PQQ assessment by client & design team	6 days	Thu 18/09/14	Thu 25/09/14
Conclusion of assessment period	0 days	Fri 26/09/14	Fri 26/09/14
List of tenderers notified	0 days	Fri 26/09/14	Fri 26/09/14
Stage E & Preparation of Tender documentation	135 days	Mon 24/03/14	Fri 26/09/14
Preparation of tender documentation	120 days	Mon 24/03/14	Fri 05/09/14
Deadline for object lists & dimensions	0 days	Wed 30/04/14	Wed 30/04/14
Tender documentation issue	0 days	Fri 05/09/14	Fri 05/09/14
Client sign off of tender documentation & amends	16 days	Sat 06/09/14	Fri 26/09/14
Tender period	107 days	Fri 26/09/14	Mon 23/02/15
Tender documents issued	1 day	Fri 26/09/14	Fri 26/09/14
Tender period (35 calendar days)	25 days	Fri 26/09/14	Thu 30/10/14
Tenders returned	0 days	Fri 31/10/14	Fri 31/10/14
Tender assessment by client & design team	10 days	Mon 03/11/14	Fri 14/11/14
Approval of recommended contractors	0 days	Fri 14/11/14	Fri 14/11/14
Retender documents issued	1 day	Fri 19/12/14	Fri 19/12/14
Retender period (35 calendar days)	28 days	Mon 22/12/14	Wed 28/01/15

Tasks	Duration	Start	Finish
Tenders returned	0 days	Wed 28/01/15	Wed 28/01/15
Tender assessment by client & design team	8 days	Thu 29/01/15	Mon 09/02/15
Client approval	3 days	Tue 10/02/15	Thu 12/02/15
Notify successful contractors	0 days	Fri 13/02/15	Fri 13/02/15
Standstill period (10 calendar days)	7 days	Fri 13/02/15	Mon 23/02/15
Project Delivery Stage	160 days	Tue 24/02/15	Mon 05/10/15
Off Site development & manufacture	80 days	Tue 24/02/15	Mon 15/06/15
On site installation, testing and object install	116 days	Original date Mon 13/04/15	Original date Mon 11/10/15
	183 days	Revised date Mon 13/04/15	Revised date Awaiting updated programme from contractor
AV Software install	36 days	Original date Mon 27/08/15	Original date Mon 15/10/15
	74 days	Revised date Mon 27/08/15	Revised date Awaiting updated programme from contractor
Opening to public / TBC			TBC

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Council's website provides information on the background and progress on this project at http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/leisure_and_culture/museums.htm

A dedicated Museum Service Blog is available at <http://www.northhertsmuseum.org/>

Updates on the significant events in the project are provided on the Council's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/northhertsmuseums> Twitter feed <https://twitter.com/NorthHertsDC> and Flickr pages <http://www.flickr.com/photos/northhertfordshire/sets/>

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