



REGENERATING OUR CITY
SCRUTINY BOARD
1 December 2015

ITEM 9

Report of the Acting Strategic Director of
Communities and Place

Cultural Offer and Assembly Rooms Update

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Assembly Rooms has been closed since a major fire destroyed its plant rooms in March 2014.
- 1.2 In April 2015, a report was taken to the Regeneration and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Board to provide an update on the Assembly Rooms and cultural offer. This report provides a further update.
- 1.3 Since the last report Derby LIVE has continued to provide as vibrant a cultural offer as possible without the city's main dedicated arts and entertainment venue. Some examples of how this has been achieved are listed in paragraph 4.5 of the report.
- 1.4 Consultation on the draft City Centre Masterplan 2030 has been completed and a final version including an action plan is due to go to full Council in January 2016.
- 1.5 The Council has recently appointed a Strategic Property Advisor who will undertake a detailed feasibility study to define Derby's requirement, potential location and viability for a new performing arts venue.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For the Board to note the contents of this report and to provide comment for officers to consider during the development phase of this project.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Regenerating Our City Scrutiny Board has requested an update on the cultural offer and Assembly Rooms and feedback provided at the meeting could assist in the next steps for the development of the project.
- 3.2 The Council's vision is for Derby to be 'a safe, strong and ambitious city to live in,' the successful development of this project would demonstrate ambition and contribute to the quality of life and economy of the City.

- 3.3 This project will help to contribute significantly to one of the Derby Plan objectives of more people being more culturally active. The feedback from and input from the Board will assist in maximising the achievement of this objective.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Consultation on the draft City Centre Masterplan 2030 was open from 19 March to 29 May 2015. The written responses received strongly supported the redevelopment of the Assembly Rooms site, recognising the importance of this strategic location to the overall vibrancy of the city centre. The need for a cultural / performance venue also appeared in numerous responses, citing benefits both in terms of Derby's 'product offer' alongside the wider economic impact for leisure businesses in the vicinity. A final version of the Masterplan, plus an appended delivery plan describing the short, medium and long term projects and deliverables, will be taken to full Council in January 2016.
- 4.2 Consultation has taken place with cultural partners on what this cultural / performance venue should be, including the programme it should present and the audiences it should cater for. This information will be fed into the development of this project.
- 4.3 The Council has appointed Cushman and Wakefield as its Strategic Property Advisor and one of their priority projects will be to carry out a detailed feasibility study to define Derby's requirement, potential location and viability for a new performing arts venue. A scope of works has been drafted.
- 4.4 After initially investigating temporary venue options, the way forward that the Council has decided to progress is to explore further the ambition for a new performing arts venue. The Council has submitted an application to D2N2 for a substantial sum of Local Growth Fund money to contribute to the Masterplan delivery. A sum has been included in the bid for a performance / cultural venue and, whilst the detail of this needs to be worked up and the funding is not guaranteed, it puts a marker down for resource to realise the Council's ambition and intention for a new cultural venue in the city centre.

- 4.5 Since the last report, Derby LIVE has continued to work hard to provide a vibrant cultural offer without having access to a large-scale dedicated arts and entertainments venue. Additional programme activity has included:
- The development of the refurbished Markeaton Craft Village as an outdoor performance space with local theatre companies Oddsocks performing Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and Babbling Vagabonds running workshops and performances.
 - The weekly Tea Dances, formerly held in the Darwin Suite have been restarted at the Old Bell Hotel.
 - The Folk Festival expanded further with performances at the Cathedral.
 - The Derby Arena hosting its first live performances which have included Jimmy Carr and the BBC Symphony Orchestra.
 - Delivering Aladdin, the Council's Pantomime for 2015, in conjunction with Paul Holman Associates. The shows will start on 7 December and run until 3 January 2016.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 No other options relating to the recommendations of this report were considered.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Claire Davenport, Director of Leisure, Culture and Tourism.
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Peter Ireson, Head of Culture and Business Development 01332 255441 peter.ireson@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1 None arising from this report.

Legal

2.1 None arising from this report.

Personnel

3.1 None arising from this report.

IT

4.1 None arising from this report.

Equalities Impact

5.1 None arising from this report.

Health and Safety

6.1 None arising from this report.

Environmental Sustainability

7.1 None arising from this report.

Property and Asset Management

8.1 None arising from this report.

Risk Management

9.1 None arising from this report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The city's cultural programme and the potential provision of a new cultural venue in the City Centre will support the Council's pledge for Derby to be 'an ambitious and forward looking city with good prospects for everyone'. It will also support the core Council principle of 'celebrating diversity and creativity' and contribute to making Derby an 'attractive place for businesses and residents and creating jobs for our communities' as well as more people being more culturally active, which is an aspiration of the Derby Plan.