

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Panel:	Buildings, Land and Procurement Panel
Date:	20 July 2021
Title:	Winchester Discovery Centre
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

Contact Name: Emma Noyce and Bob Wallbridge

Tel: 03707 798373
03707 794084

Email: emma.noyce@hants.gov.uk
bob.wallbridge@hants.gov.uk

Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek spend approval for the Hampshire County Council elements of the project to refurbish and enhance Winchester Discovery Centre (WDC), as well as approval for key property and staffing arrangements linked to the transfer of operational responsibility with the building.

Recommendations

That the Panel make the following recommendations to the Executive Member for Commercial Strategy, Estates and Property:

2. That the Executive Member gives approval to the project proposals set out in this report at a total cost of £515,000.
3. That the Executive Member approves the property arrangements by which the operational responsibility for WDC is transferred to Hampshire Cultural Trust (HCT) (including the nature and duration of tenure).
4. That the Executive Member approves the proposals contained in the exempt Appendix.

Executive Summary

5. This project will transfer operational responsibility for the WDC building (including associated day-to-day running costs) and for cultural programming to HCT. The Library Service will continue to deliver a highly successful library service, free at the point of access, within WDC.
6. Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Cultural Trust are developing a new partnership model which will enhance and develop Winchester Discovery

Centre's position as a strategically important hub for culture and creativity in Hampshire. The overall strategy has been agreed by the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs.

7. This report sets out proposals to refurbish elements of WDC, including essential maintenance work, interior refurbishment and spatial reorganisation to enable the future strategy to be realised.
8. The HCC element of the project is to be funded from the CCBS Capital Programme 2021/22 and was approved by the County Council in February 2021 at a value of £500,000 with a further £15,000 allocated from CCBS Cost of Change funding.
9. In addition to the refurbishment project, the proposals include the transfer of operational responsibility for the building (including associated day-to-day running costs) and for cultural programming to HCT. The Library Service will continue to deliver a highly successful library offer, free at the point of access, within WDC.

Background

10. On 19 March 2021, the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs approved plans in principle for a new partnership model between Hampshire Library Service and Hampshire Cultural Trust at Winchester Discovery Centre. The plans were also approved in principle by HCT's Board of Trustees on 26/02/21.
11. The partnership will enhance and develop Winchester Discovery Centre's position as a strategically important hub for culture and creativity in Hampshire. In addition, the partnership will bring financial and non-financial benefits to both organisations and secure the long-term viability of the venue.
12. This proposal will transfer operational responsibility for the building (including associated day-to-day running costs) and for cultural programming to HCT. The Library Service will continue to deliver a highly successful library service, free at the point of access, within WDC. Hampshire County Council will retain the freehold ownership of the building and associated repair and maintenance responsibilities.
13. The proposals also include refurbishment of WDC, including essential maintenance work, interior refurbishment and spatial reorganisation.

Finance

14. The Capital Expenditure has already been approved. The scheme was included at a value of £500,000 in the 2021/22 CCBS capital programme approved by the County Council in February this year and a further £15,000 has been allocated from the CCBS Cost of Change funding. The table below outlines the breakdown of its distribution across the project:

Capital Expenditure	Current Estimate £	Capital Programme £
Buildings	469,900	469,900
Fees	45,100	45,100
Total	515,000	515,000

16. Sources of Funding

Financial Provision for Total Scheme	Buildings £	Fees £	Total Cost £
1. From Own Resources			
a) Capital Programme (as above)	456,214	43,786	500,000
B) CCBS Cost of Change	13,686	1,314	15,000
Total	469,900	45,100	515,000

17. In addition, there are other fit-out works that will be managed and delivered separately by HCT, outside of the HCC elements of this project.

Details of Site and Existing Infrastructure

15. WDC is a key destination in the heart of Winchester, conveniently situated between the railway station and High Street. It occupies a site on Jewry Street in a Grade II listed building and houses the County's busiest lending library; two public art galleries; a 180-seat performance space; and a café.

Scope of the Project

16. Achieving the shared vision, and the expected financial and non-financial benefits for both HCC and HCT will require improvements to the building including essential maintenance works, internal refurbishment and spatial reorganisation. These works will be designed to create a welcoming environment that encourages movement and exploration for customers, as well as maximising income-generating potential.

17. The building handover date to HCT is planned for Quarter 4 of the 2021-22 financial year.

Proposed Building Works

18. The proposed building works to be delivered by HCC comprise:

Café

- Refurbished and upgraded café, including servery equipment
- New decorations
- New feature lighting
- New loose fixtures, fittings and equipment (FFE)

Children's Library

- New decorations and loose furniture

City Space

- Creation of additional library and quiet study space in current City Space gallery on the ground floor, including redecoration and new loose furniture
- Relocation of City Space gallery to mezzanine, to occupy approximately half the space, with library book stock to remain on other half.

Railway Room

- New loose furniture and rebranding of space

Other internal works

- Toilet refurbishment (public and staff)
- Works to upgrade the lift as well as installation of emergency call points in designated refuge points throughout the building to bring fire safety up to the latest standards
- New floor finishes to the main public staircase
- Creation of 'heart space' including new welcome desk and retail area

External Works

19. The proposed external works comprise:

- Refresh of the external space including the terrace in front of the building.

Planning

20. Interventions are minimal and considered to be low impact and non-contentious. However, Listed Building Consent will be sought as required for some minor elements of the internal works.

Construction Management

21. The building works will be phased with some areas of the building being closed to the public to facilitate the works. Where areas remain in use during the refurbishment, local arrangements will be put in place to manage the health and safety impact to all users. A full building closure is planned in December 2021/January 2022 to enable the completion of the project including fit out works.

22. The works will be procured through the Hampshire Minor Works Construction Framework and are anticipated to commence in November 2021 and complete in February 2022.

Building Management

23. Under the proposed model, operational management of the building will be passed to HCT, including associated day-to-day running costs, through a formal leasehold agreement with a duration of up to 35 years (with a break clause at the end of the financial year 2024-25).
24. In parallel with other agreements with HCT, the lease will require that HCT will be responsible for payment of business rates and utilities. The costs associated with internal repairs and decoration are to be apportioned between the parties reflecting their use and occupation of the building. External and structural repairs will remain the County Council's responsibility. Alterations will be subject to the County Council's consent and assignment and subletting of the lease will not be permitted as a whole, with subletting of part permitted subject to HCC consent.
25. HCT will manage the venue and run the enhanced cultural programme, including continued operation of The Gallery and City Space. HCT will be recruiting to their 'Destination Winchester' team to facilitate this.
26. The County Council will retain the freehold ownership of the building and will enter into a licence or similar legal agreement with HCT to secure accommodation for the delivery of the continuing library service. This licence will align with the Service Level Agreement and existing Management and Funding Arrangement with HCT to ensure clarity between the parties in the occupation and shared use of accommodation within WDC.
27. Hampshire Library Service will continue to deliver a highly successful library service free at the point of access within WDC.

Professional Resources

28. Professional resources for the project are:

Architecture & Interior Design	HCC Property Services
Mechanical & Electrical	HCC Property Services
Structural Engineering	HCC Property Services
Quantity Surveying	HCC Property Services
Principal Designer	HCC Property Services
Fire and Access	HCC Property Services

Consultation and Equalities

29. In early 2020 the Library Service conducted a significant public consultation on the future strategy for the Service. This consultation elicited c28,000 responses and in July 2020 the Executive Member for Recreation and Heritage agreed to the proposals. This included proposals to generate additional income and deliver services differently. There was strong public support for partnering with other services to reduce costs.
30. Later in 2020 the Library Service ran a subsequent consultation on opening

hours. Specific feedback was received regarding the opening hours at Winchester Discovery Centre.

31. The information gleaned through both of these consultation exercises has been taken into account in the development of the future strategy.
32. The future strategy has been considered by both the Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage and Rural Affairs and the Culture and Communities Select Committee, who agreed the recommendations and expressed their support for the proposals.
33. The Local Member, Councillor Hiscock, is aware of the proposals and spoke positively at the Culture and Communities Select Committee at which the strategy was presented.
34. Winchester City Council invested in the original refurbishment of the Discovery Centre and, as a condition of this investment, maintains the right to operate City Space from the premises. Winchester City Council comments:

“Winchester City Council welcomes this new partnership between Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Cultural Trust which seeks to enhance the cultural and customer experience at the Winchester Discovery Centre. As a founding partner to the Trust and with a continued desire to support the District’s cultural and creative sectors, the council supports this new approach to how the centre is operated. It will provide an opportunity to build on the offer already available at the City Museum, The Westgate, and City Space which, under this proposal, will be enhanced and benefit from closer operational links with The Gallery. We look forward to working with both HCC and HCT as the plans progress over the coming year.”

35. Draft Equalities Impact Assessments for both staff and service users have been prepared. The proposals are intended to have an overall positive impact and advance equality for members of the public. Equalities impacts on staff have been assessed as low. The EIAs will be further developed and informed as the wider partnership develops.
36. The following stakeholders have been involved and consulted during the development of this project:
 - Local County Councillors
 - Members of the public
 - Hampshire Cultural Trust
 - Winchester City Council
 - Arts Council England
 - Hampshire County Council Planning Officer
 - HCC Staff and Unions

Risk and Impact Issues

Fire Risk Assessment

37. With respect to fire safety and property protection, the proposals have been risk assessed in line with the agreed Property Services procedures, the proposals will upgrade the lift to an evacuation standard and provide emergency call points in designated refuge points throughout the building to improve means of escape for the buildings occupants, no other changes to the buildings fire escape strategy or existing fire detection systems are required.
38. The proposals will meet the requirements of the Building Regulations and are consistent with current fire safety legislation, the partnership arrangement with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Services, and are in line with the County Council's policy to manage corporate risk.

Health and Safety

39. Design risk assessments, pre-construction health and safety information and a Health & Safety File will be produced in accordance with the Construction Design and Management Regulations for the proposed scheme.

Climate Change

40. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.
41. The Adaptation Project Screening Tool identifies that in extreme circumstances, strong winds, storm events and heat waves arising from Climate Change in the future, could have the potential to affect the use of the building, but generally the scheme is considered to have low vulnerability to climate change.
42. The carbon mitigation tool does not calculate emissions for refurbishment projects so is not applicable. However, the project will incorporate the following features to reduce energy consumption and mitigate the impact of climate change:
- New lights will be energy efficient LED
 - Timber will be sustainably sourced
 - A site waste management plan will be developed to ensure the principles of minimising waste are maintained during construction.
43. The project is important for meeting Hampshire County Councils' strategic priorities, including economic growth and contributing towards strong, resilient and inclusive communities in the following ways:
44. Strategic Outcome 1: Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity.

- The partnership has the potential to attract external investment from funding streams not currently accessible to local authorities.
- Operational handover of the building to HCT will create new job opportunities in arts and creative programming, as well as new operational roles.
- The enhanced cultural programme delivered by HCT will offer new learning experiences focusing on life skills, literacy and creative practice, helping people to develop and maintain skills.
- The capital works will improve the quality and quantity of cultural experiences on offer and will improve the long-term financial sustainability of both organisations.

45. Strategic Outcome 2: People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives.

- The enhanced cultural offer will align with Hampshire Libraries' Strategy to 2025, which has a particular focus on supporting literacy in the Early Years (age 0-5).
- The capital works will provide more opportunities for engagement with local families by improving the dedicated area for younger children (ages 0-11) and creating a play gallery with children's books and space for facilitated activities.
- The capital works will also provide additional facilities for teenagers, students and young adults by creating a digital lab with computers and software for design, coding, animation, video and audio production and game design, alongside relevant library stock.
- The venue offers learning opportunities for school aged children and their families, and provides a range of resources to support young people outside of the classroom.
- WDC will continue to bring together broad cross sections of the Winchester community, and provide spaces and events that enable shared experiences.
- WDC will continue to provide free leisure and cultural experiences to residents and visitors.
- Both partners will engage with under-represented and hard-to-reach communities to improve opportunities for these groups to actively participate in all aspects of culture and learning in a familiar space.

46. Strategic Outcome 3: People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment.

- A significantly expanded cultural programme will meet visitors' needs and interests throughout their lifetime.
- WDC is a Grade-II listed building that was originally opened in 1838, originally

serving as the city's Corn Exchange. Proposed capital works will refresh and enhance the current space in a sympathetic way and in accordance with relevant listed building consents.

- The unique character of the county will be enhanced by this bold cross-organisational partnership, with the potential to act as an exemplar model of libraries working in partnership with cultural organisations.

47. Strategic Outcome 4: People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities.

- WDC is Hampshire's busiest library - it is the third most-visited library building of any English County Authority - and will remain an important community hub, providing a safe, accessible, and inclusive space for individuals and groups to meet, learn and discover.
- The venue will continue to provide meeting places for a range of community groups and services, such as Winchester Go LD, who support and connect disabled residents.
- The partnership with HCT will strengthen and evolve the relationship with Winchester City Council (WCC), who are key stakeholders in the building, having made a significant financial contribution to the refurbishment of the building in 2008, as well as developing City Space Gallery (now operated by HCT on behalf of WCC).
- Hampshire Libraries and HCT already offer extensive volunteering opportunities across the county; further voluntary opportunities are expected to be available at WDC as a result of this partnership.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL
INFORMATION:**

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
Culture and Communities Select Committee - Report	18 March 2021
Minutes of Select Committee	18 March 2021
Executive Member for Recreation, Heritage, Countryside and Rural Affairs Decision Day - Report	19 March 2021
Executive Decision Record	19 March 2021

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment

Draft Equalities Impact Assessments for both staff and service users have been prepared in relation to the proposed partnership.

For service users, impacts on age, disability and pregnancy and maternity have been assessed as positive, due to opportunities offered by the partnership, including an enhanced cultural offer that will align with Hampshire Libraries' Strategy to 2025, which has a particular focus on supporting literacy in the Early Years (age 0-5).

WDC already provides dedicated facilities for parents and carers of young children, including baby change areas and nappy disposal. A play gallery specifically designed for children under 5 years will be added to the current Children's Library.

The venue offers learning opportunities for school aged children and their families, and provides a range of resources to support young people outside of the classroom.

The venue will continue to bring together broad cross sections of the Winchester community, and provide spaces and events that enable shared experiences. It will continue to be accessible and to provide free leisure and cultural experiences to residents and visitors. Where paid opportunities are offered, free tickets will be available to carers. The venue will continue to provide meeting places for a range of community groups and services, such as Winchester Go LD, who support and connect disabled residents.

Improvements to facilities (including updates to the public toilets and Changing Spaces toilet), potential increases to the building opening hours, and the continued promotion of the building as a safe and welcoming community space will all impact positively on service users.

For staff, impacts on age, disability, gender and pregnancy and maternity have been assessed as low. A lower percentage of the workforce at WDC are over 55 compared to the wider Library Service. Reasonable adjustments will continue to be made for staff who have declared a disability, where appropriate. 76% of the workforce at WDC identify as female and 24% identify as male and impacts on gender, pregnancy and maternity have been assessed as low.