



WARDS AFFECTED: Castle

Leicester
City Council

CABINET

1st September 2008

REPLACEMENT FOR CITY GALLERY

Report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration and Culture

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek cabinet approval for the development of the old Workplace Nursery building at 50 New Walk as a new contemporary art gallery to replace City Gallery.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The present City Gallery site is a commercially rented shop space on Granby Street. It has been clear for sometime that the current site is unsuitable for both in terms of scale and facilities.
- 2.2 A site for a new contemporary art gallery has been identified at the old Workplace Nursery on New Walk. The position of this site, almost opposite New Walk Museum & Art Gallery also opens up the exciting possibility of the creation of a new visual arts 'campus' which would provide greater visual arts 'critical mass.'
- 2.3 Investing in an improved contemporary art gallery in the old workplace nursery will significantly increase the Arts and Museums Services' ability to deliver the One Leicester priorities.
- 2.4 Outline plans for development of a new gallery have been worked up and costed. Detailed survey work has not been carried out and the figures reflect a certain level of uncertainty and risk.
- 2.5 Arts Council East Midlands view this as a beacon project that will help deliver their 10 year strategy 'Turning Point'. This project is looked on as a possible exemplar for how contemporary and historic art venues can work together.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That approval be given for the conversion of the old Workplace Nursery into a new contemporary arts facility at an estimated cost of £984,850.

- 3.2 Authorise an addition to the capital programme 2008/09 of £1.1m to fund the conversion costs.

4. Report

Introduction

- 4.1 Investing in an improved City Gallery in the old workplace nursery in Museum Square, by New Walk Museum, will significantly increase the Arts and Museums Services' ability to deliver the One Leicester priorities. Not only will it provide a much better, "more modern, attractive and accessible environment" than the existing facilities, but it will also enhance the ability of New Walk Museum and the entire Arts and Museums Service to deliver across the One Leicester priorities. This is because it will enable us to build on existing synergies and links across the service and make much more of what we have to offer - to become "greater than the sum of our parts".

Investing in our children

- 4.2 As the One Leicester Strategy says, **culture is essential for health and well being of our children**. This project will enable children and young people to have much better access to Leicester's treasures and to share the heritages of their city through creativity and engagement with our outstanding collections.
- 4.3 The current City Gallery runs very good children's programmes but it does not have a dedicated education/activities room, is not in a child-friendly location, the numbers it can cope with are small, and its access and facilities are poor. The new location will create a superb environment for children and families, with child friendly facilities. It will significantly increase the number of children and families who can benefit from it. New Walk Museum is already a very popular destination for families, but the two facilities located together will be able to work in a more joined up way to create a wonderful facility. More families and children using Museum Square will reduce anti social behaviour and children's activities can be more safely developed there, linked to the museum and gallery programmes.
- 4.4 The Museum Education Service is amongst the best in the UK, and the merged service has benefited from this integration, but needs better facilities and more space to take full advantage. The new venue will bring a significant increase in the number of local children in school or family groups who can take part in its education programmes. The City Gallery holiday activities are already regularly used by Looked After Children and this will be developed too.
- 4.5 Recent research commissioned by Renaissance North West in Manchester has demonstrated that museum and gallery learning programmes support progress in schools. The new gallery will help provide local children with "**a quality education that is second to none**"
- 4.6 Leicester and Leicestershire have just been awarded £2.5 million over the next three years, as the regional pathfinder for Creative Partnerships "Find Your Talent Scheme". This supports the Children's Plan objective of providing five hours a week of quality arts and culture for every child. This reflects the

quality of our existing work, for example our leadership of Renaissance East Midlands Learning Strand, our own Learning Programmes, our Cultural and Creative Ambassadors Scheme, Creative Partnerships, and Leicestershire Arts in Education, our partnerships with the Tate gallery, the British Museum and the V&A. A new City Gallery will build on these achievements and support schools accreditation initiatives such as Arts Mark.

- 4.7 Our service already has a strong track record of working with young people from priority groups, including through the Renaissance Programme and outstanding local organisations, e.g. Youth Voice, Hathi Arts, CAPTA, Soft Touch, and Leicester Comedy Festival, as well as through our outreach team and Fosse Arts. The new venue will enable us to further develop positive activities for young people.

Creating thriving, safe communities

- 4.8 Although good work is done at the City Gallery, its impact is limited by its size and location. In addition the lack of a dedicated activity room makes it difficult to prioritise work to widen audiences, engage more of Leicester's diverse communities in order to help people build confidence and realise their potential. A new gallery linked to New Walk Museum would build on the work done there with new communities, for instance ESOL courses, and make the most of a gallery's ability to be a neutral space where many communities can come together and still feel at home. The Arts and Museums service already has a thriving consultation panel representing well over 30 diverse organisations and consults with the Cultural Strategy Partnership of 50 organisations, both of which would help shape future programmes to maximise their appeal to local people.

- 4.9 The new venue would help people to become more confident in and proud of their city, and see it as a good place to live, and it would help to create a more vibrant city centre. The City Gallery in its current location is often passed by. In a better location it would have a great deal more potential to be part of a welcoming cultural life of the city, for example it would lend itself to extended evening opening hours.

- 4.10 New Walk and Museum Square are acknowledged assets for Leicester, but problems with drinking, drug taking and violence continue. We have been advised by the police that more general activity on New Walk would reduce this problem, so the new venue would help our zero tolerance policy towards anti social and threatening behaviour.

Improving well being and health

- 4.11 The new venue would provide us with the facilities to better support this priority - not only providing better DDA access so that people with disabilities could access the venue and take part in activities there, but also we could programme art therapy activities, and build on the work we are already doing at Fosse Arts.

Talking up Leicester

- 4.12 The new venue, and the higher profile we could give to contemporary arts through it, would be an integral part of talking up Leicester as an ambitious and innovative place with a buzzing city centre.
- 4.13 The new facility would be something local people feel proud of, A new City Gallery will help create a strong regional and national identity for Leicester, complementing Curve and the Digital Media Centre and putting Leicester on the map as a major cultural destination. The Arts Council “Capitalise” programme across the rest of the East Midlands has prioritised visual arts venues, and Leicester is the only city without a new contemporary arts venue. ACE are very supportive of the project and have allocated £120k to it, in principle, in this financial year.
- 4.14 An integral feature is joint programming with New Walk Museum. This would enable the major touring contemporary art shows, like the British Art show, to be hosted in Leicester. In its current site, the City Gallery is not in the premier league in terms of gallery facilities so cannot secure top contemporary art exhibitions and major national tours or compete with Derby, Lincoln and Nottingham.

Investing in skills and enterprise

- 4.15 It will attract people to Leicester - visitors to the city, businesses thinking of locating here, people applying for jobs, and new graduates will see Leicester as progressive, confident and vibrant. The government’s ‘quality of place’ agenda was developed out of recognition that good cultural facilities are significant factors in encouraging people to move to and stay in a locality.

Reducing our carbon footprint

- 4.16 The proposed gallery will make adaptive re-use of an existing building. Due to the extent of the structural works significant improvements to the environmental sustainability of the building would be possible.

Planning for people not cars

- 4.17 It makes the most of New Walk as a traffic free environment for people, create an exciting location and will help to reduce problems of crime and disorder.
- 4.18 The location makes it easy to access from the city centre and outlying areas as well as from the station and get from one place to another without using a car.

Background

- 4.19 Founded in 1988, The City Gallery is the main contemporary art gallery in Leicester committed to the presentation and interpretation of contemporary visual art and craft. Through its exhibition and events programmes the Gallery seeks to present challenging and inspirational works by national, international and regional artists to diverse audiences, with a particular focus on the communities of Leicester.
- 4.20 Its four essential purposes are:

- To actively engage with broad and diverse audiences from Leicester, the East Midlands region and beyond. To create a sense of community and to provide a place for enjoyment, enquiry and discussion about contemporary art and culture.
- To present and commission new work and show work from major contemporary art collections.
- To provide formal and informal learning programmes that involve audiences actively in engaging with works of art and encourage participation, enquiry, discovery and play. To support the national curriculum and local learning agendas.
- To function as a lively centre and forum for artistic activity through partnerships with cultural organisations and provision of cultural activities and events and support for creative businesses in Leicestershire and to contribute to the creative economy of the city through provision of high quality shop space selling contemporary arts and crafts.

Proposals

- 4.21 The present City Gallery site is a commercially rented shop space on Granby Street. It has been clear for sometime that the current site is unsuitable for both in terms of scale and facilities. It's position means it is also isolated from other cultural institutions in the city and lacks synergies with surrounding businesses. This will still be the case when the Cultural Quarter is fully developed. The lease was recently extended and comes to an end in February 2009.
- 4.22 The need to develop a contemporary arts venue for Leicester has long been recognised. This was initially recommended by Arts Business Limited in the Capital Options Summary Report of May 2000, which identified that a new contemporary arts facility in the cultural quarter would cost £9.9 million.
- 4.23 Reviewing external funding opportunities it is obvious that a £10 million scheme as proposed in the Capital Options Summary Report of May 2000 is unfeasible. After discussion with arts consultants and other Arts bodies, it is recommended that a modest scale contemporary arts facility be pursued. This does not mean modest in ambition but nimble, responsive, approachable and highly creative. The space will be able to accommodate an ambitious exhibition programme but not be overwhelmed by the need to run large and expensive blockbuster shows.
- 4.24 A number of sites across the city were considered for a new gallery. These included the old HSBC bank site on Granby Street and the old music hall on Colton Street. These were rejected primarily on grounds of size - too small or too large, or architecturally – spaces were unsuitable for gallery spaces or work needed to convert to gallery spaces would have destroyed or covered up the architectural features that made the building important or interesting.
- 4.25 A suitable site was identified at the old Workplace Nursery at 69 Wellington Street/ 50 New Walk. The site was of appropriate size, was a relatively simple conversion and almost uniquely has sufficient land to enable expansion in the future, able to almost double the amount of gallery space available.

- 4.26 The position of this site, almost opposite New Walk Museum & Art Gallery also opens up the exciting possibility of the creation of a new visual arts 'campus' which would provide greater visual arts 'critical mass'. It would also help the public develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between contemporary and historic art.
- 4.27 The positioning would enable both sites to benefit from crossover of audiences, joint promotion, shared facilities and economies of scale.
- 4.28 An outline design and architectural brief was produced and Architects carried out some basic costings for development of the property. These are approximate plans and costings as this was essentially a desk top exercise. Detailed structural survey work necessary to confirm the proposals has not been carried out.

4.29 Outline of new gallery brief

- Two purpose built gallery spaces designed to meet national and international museum and gallery standards which will enable audiences to see important contemporary works from national and international collections as well as commissioned works by national, international and regional artists and makers.
- An education studio for artist-led workshops and a broad spectrum of educational and informal learning activities.
- A drop-in facility and project space that will provide a changing programme of interactive resources and exhibitions to involve and engage diverse audiences of all ages in the exploration of contemporary art.
- Enhanced visitor facilities including an improved foyer and orientation area, a contemporary craft shop, seating and refreshments, and improved disability access.
- Facilities for on-site storage of artworks to designed to national museum and gallery standards.

Benefits Expected

- 4.30 The new art gallery would strongly support the One Leicester Strategy through its programming, education and outreach activities, position on New Walk and through greater cross site working with New Walk Museum and Arts Gallery. Specific reference to how the proposed new facility will engage and promote the One Leicester Strategy is given in Section 1.
- 4.31 The position of this site, almost opposite New Walk Museum & Art gallery opens up the exciting possibility of the creation of a new visual arts 'campus'.and increase Leicester's profile.
- 4.32 It would enable greater linkages, joint working and programming between the two buildings and through this help develop for the public a deeper understanding of the relationship between contemporary and historic art.
- 4.33 Both sites would see an increase both in visitor figures and increasing diversity of visitors, particularly BME (in the Gallery) and younger visitors (at New Walk Museum), due to greater crossover of audiences,. Increased visitor

figures will also generate more income from the shop and opportunities for greater cross promotion of retail activities are also opened up.

- 4.34 Arts Council Strategy - The proposed new venue directly supports the Arts Council's Turning Point Strategy for contemporary visual arts in England. This sets out the Arts Council vision for the next 10 years. To quote directly from the report:

'The main emphasis is on linking contemporary art with art from the past and with the heritage. This is to be achieved through appropriate cross-sectoral partnerships strengthened by formal memoranda of understanding, regional development strategies and joint programmes.'

- 4.35 Turning Point has 6 key priorities for the arts and cultural sector, all of which contribute directly to the One Leicester Strategy. These are

- taking part in the arts
- children and young people
- the creative economy
- vibrant communities
- internationalism
- celebrating diversity

- 4.36 Arts Council East Midlands strongly support this project as they see it

- Complements the cultural offer in Leicester and is appropriate to the cultural led regeneration programme
- A way of redressing the current focus on performance art with a high quality visual arts project
- Meets the key objectives of the Turning Point strategy demonstrating very strong links between contemporary and historic art and heritage
- Provides a useful pilot model for close working of contemporary and historic art
- Major benefits of joint marketing and promotion

- 4.37 In early 2008 the Arts Council conducted a major survey of users and non-users entitled 'What People Want from the Arts'. The three key themes that emerged closely match many of the themes and aspirations of One Leicester. The survey found people wanted

- Capacity – the arts helped them understand and navigate the world. The arts enabled expression and communication across boundaries and showed different perspectives
- Experience – the arts enrich peoples experiences of life. It helps people to understand something new about the world or enriches their life in some way
- Applications – the arts bring people together, create links between different communities and produce a sense of local pride and belonging

- 4.38 East Midlands Tourism Strategy - The new gallery and combined with the major local and regional draw of New Walk Museum & Art Gallery would

create a significant critical mass as a major regional tourist attraction. This combined with joint marketing initiatives would create a significant cultural attraction for the visual arts.

- 4.39 Crime & Disorder - The work place nursery is currently a derelict building and has been unused for sometime. It is on a main pedestrian thoroughfare for the City and well away from the main retail core. Most businesses on New Walk are offices. By bring the building back into use as a major public facility would increase footfall on New Walk, give an increased public profile to the area which would contribute to a reduction in disorderly behaviour.

Costs

- 4.40 In the current financial climate for the arts it is no longer feasible to develop a business case predicated on significant external funding as the major financial tool. If a replacement gallery is to be created then Leicester City Council needs to be the main contributory funder.
- 4.41 The Arts Council have indicated they are willing to offer funding in the region of £120,000, subject to a successful grant application. A successful grant application will be contingent on the design being for a high quality, purpose built gallery space designed to meet national and museum and gallery standards. They have also indicated that they would contribute towards initial marketing and promotion of the new venue.
- 4.42 The breakdown of costings for the proposed development of the Workplace Nursery are shown below. These figures are based on desk top work only and no detailed structural surveys have been carried out. The figures have been calculated to reflect this element of risk and a significant amount for contingency has been included.

Breakdown of estimate	Cost
Structural Works	210,000
Fixtures & fitting	147,000
Wall, floor & ceiling finishes	72,000
Mechanical & electrical	192,000
External works	59,000
Design risk contingency	37,200
Contractor preliminaries	97,650
Fees and direct costs	100,000
Project Management Costs	90,000
Total approximate cost	£1,004,850
Contingency @ 10%	£100,000
Less Arts Council Grant	(£120,000)
Capital Required	£984,850

Timescales

4.43 The total project time is estimated at 18 months from initial survey work to opening. Survey, design, tendering and build is estimated at 12 months, fit out 3 months and transfer from existing site and first exhibition installations 3 months. Projected opening of the new gallery would be March/April 2010.

4.44 The current lease on the City Gallery expires in February 2009. There are two options for the City Gallery over this period:

Option 1 – close City Gallery at end of current lease and use intervening year for offsite projects and outreach work to build new audiences for the new venue.

Option 2 – extend lease on existing venue for 1 year.

4.45 Option 1 is the preferred option. The move to a new venue would involve considerable workload for the staff. Closing the existing gallery a year before the new venue opens would free staff up to work on the development of the new gallery and to engage in substantial audience development work. Space would be provided at New Walk Museum & Art Gallery in the intervening period, which will be helpful in establishing new working relationships between City Gallery and New Walk Museum & Art Gallery Staff.

5. Financial, Legal and Other Implications

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 The proposed development will require an additional £1.1m to be added to the current capital programme, of which an Arts Council contribution of £120,000 will be applied for. It will also lead to the loss of a potential capital receipt from the sale of the former workplace nursery.

5.1.2 The capital programme was approved in March, 2008. At that time, significant resources were left uncommitted, with the intention of subsequent review based on the “One Leicester” priorities. Based on resource estimates **made at that time**, there would currently be £7.5m remaining uncommitted.

5.1.3 Since then, the economic downturn has severely constrained our ability to raise capital receipts. Receipts underpin the corporate capital programme to the tune of some £5m per annum. A review of the programme is therefore required to ensure that only the most essential schemes progress in 2008/09 and 2009/10.

5.1.4 There is currently net budget provision of £140,500 per annum for the City Gallery which will be transferred to the new premises. Since the current City Gallery lease expires in February 2009, there will be no associated exit costs.

5.1.5 Existing budget provision will be supplemented by additional Regeneration and Culture departmental resources to cover additional running costs etc. The full revenue implications will be incorporated in the budget proposals from 2009/10. It is estimated that, due to the increased size of the premises compared to the present facility, this will cost an extra £20,000 to £30,000 per annum, and the department will find compensating savings.

Mark Noble, Chief Finance Officer (Ext.297401)

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The Report Author is advised to consult with Legal Services to ensure that the conditions of the funding from the Arts Council are reasonable and that the requirements concerning the current lease of the City Gallery are adhered to. Legal and Procurement advice will also be needed to ensure compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and to draft and conclude the necessary contract documents.

Rebecca Jenkyn, Senior Solicitor/Team Leader, Commercial and General Legal Services (Ext.296378)

6. Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph references within the report
Equal Opportunities	Yes	4.7, 4.8, 4.32
Policy	Yes	2.3, 4.1, 4.8, 4.11
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	4.16, 4.17
Crime and Disorder	Yes	4.10, 4.39
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	

7. Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk		Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
1	The project is at an early stage and risks exist that the legal, funding and physical issues may not be overcome.	L	H	A detailed risk assessment will be undertaken as a full programme for the project is developed.
2	Significant structural problems with the building and costs increase	L	H	These could be quickly ascertained by a detailed site survey at the first stage of the project and would allow time to consider solutions. Initial inspections of the site do not reveal any major problems and it is anticipated there will be minimal structural issues.
3	Arts Council grant withdrawn	M	M	New venue needs to be approved and work start this financial year or grant will be withdrawn

L – Low

M – Medium

H - High

L – Low

M – Medium

H - High

8. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

None.

9. Consultations

Sarah Levitt – Head of Arts and Museums

Liz Blyth – Cultural and Strategy Improvement Manager

Nick Gordon – Managing Curator Collections and Interpretation

Richard Watson – Service Director Culture

10. Report Author

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Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	N/A
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)