

Cultural Quarter Update

Portfolio Holder:

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Summary

Following a branding exercise in late 2017/early 2018, the name of what was then known as Oldham Heritage and Arts Centre (OHAC) changed. OHAC became “OMA” – i.e. Oldham Museum and Arts/Archive. For the purposes of this report the abbreviations OMA will be used.

Reason for Decision

- Update Cabinet on the development of the project to date
- To approve progress of OMA into the next phase of contractor procurement
- To approve the development of feasibility options to consider delivery solutions for high quality sustainable performance space in the town centre

A further report which outlines the full details of the project – will be considered in the restricted part of this agenda and seeks approval for additional recommendations.

Recommendations

That Cabinet approves the recommendations as the preferred delivery strategy for the next phase for the Cultural Quarter capital programme as set out in Part B of the report.

Cultural Quarter update

1 Background

- 1.1 The cultural offer for Oldham will provide the widest possible participation and promote excellence in theatre, heritage and the arts. It will foster civic pride, act as a catalyst for economic growth and well-being and promote Oldham as a destination of choice for investors and cultural attenders.
- 1.2 The Council first published its plans for a Cultural Quarter in 1996. Following the completion of Phases 1 and 2 (Gallery Oldham and the Lifelong Learning Centre) in 2002 and 2006 respectively a feasibility study was undertaken to consider relocation of the museum, archives, local studies and stores to the vacant former Library and Art Gallery building on Union Street. In parallel the Coliseum Theatre Trust were exploring options.
- 1.3 The study concluded that substantial investment was required to improve the existing provisions and that significant opportunities existed for greater partnership working between Oldham Coliseum and the Arts and Heritage Service creating a more integrated approach to Oldham's Cultural Offer.
- 1.4 The options were appraised against the Council's Strategic Objectives and the development objectives of the Heritage Service and Oldham Coliseum.
- 1.5 The report concluded that:

A vibrant cultural complex will provide the widest possible cultural participation and promote excellence in theatre, heritage and the arts. It will foster civic pride, act as a catalyst for economic growth and well-being and promote Oldham as a destination of choice for investors and cultural attenders.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 The Outline Business Case (OBC) for OMA and OCT was first agreed in April 2013, and then subsequently revised and agreed by Cabinet in April 2017.
- 2.2 In August 2016, Gilbert Ash was awarded a pre-construction contract as part of a two stage procurement process for the construction of OCT and the refurbishment of OMA. This pre-construction activity has now been concluded.
- 2.3 The project architect Mecanoo, commissioned in 2014, closed its Manchester office at the end of 2017 and Ellis Williams Architects have now been engaged as a replacement.
- 2.4 OMA Design

Following from the completion of an extensive array of surveys and an internal strip-out of the building by GA, as part of a Pre-contract Services Agreement, the OMA designs have been further refined by the Councils Architect Ellis Williams (EWA).

The building has been secured and is now ready for the next phase of the project. Further development of the design and construction detailing is aimed at de-risking the project to assist in a preferred procurement option/route.

2.5 OMA project funding

In May 2016 the Council successfully secured £3,379,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) towards the costs of OMA. This was also been supplemented by a commitment from a private contributor in the sum of £3,934,809 (previously £4,034,809).

2.6 Off site storage

As reported at Cabinet in April 2017, an integral element of the OMA phase is to provide off-site storage and archiving facilities, to accommodate those archives and collections which cannot be accommodated within the refurbished and remodeled former library building and adjacent Gallery Oldham building. To facilitate this, a brief was produced on behalf of the Arts and Heritage Service setting out the key building and locational requirements. In order to identify the most appropriate site for this facility, the Council requested Unity Partnership to undertake an assessment of current Council assets capable of providing adequate floor area to accommodate an off-site storage solution as set out in the Brief. Key requisites are that the facility needs to be between 1500-2000sqm, have an allowance for shelving up to 6m in height, and be accessible to the public, being within 5 miles/20 minutes' drive of the Gallery Oldham. The location approved by Cabinet was Prince of Wales Units A & B.

Since this decision, officers have commissioned Kier to undertake a detailed feasibility study of these units.

2.7 OCT

Officers have continued to engage with the ACE and at a meeting in September 2018, whilst restated their commitment to the cultural vision of the Council, ACE:

- Recognised the increase cost of the project and value for money
- Acknowledged the need to revisit proposals and recognise a new vision for the long term sustainability of theatre production

2.7 In Autumn 2018, ACE and the Coliseum Theatre formally recognised a new vision for theatre production and performance in Oldham. Whilst working closely with the Council a vision statement has been developed that seeks to provide a foundation for a renewed approach.

The vision statement reads:

Building on the success of the Coliseum, we will ensure a vibrant programme of the highest artistic quality is produced and presented across theatre, live performance and digital entertainment and build upon recent work to become a hub for supporting new, emerging and established artists, introducing their work to new and

existing audiences. We remain unfailing in our commitment to supporting community cohesion and regeneration, and will deliver a wide range of trailblazing participatory opportunities, reaffirming our commitment to community engagement and growing participation. Working in partnership with Oldham Heritage and Arts Centre and Gallery Oldham, we will ensure delivery of a relevant and cohesive arts programme across the borough.

ACE have confirmed their continued support for a Town Centre arts and cultural performance offer.

Therefore, in order to progress the realisation of the cultural vision for the theatre, a feasibility exercise should be implemented with a focus on cultural and performance solutions that are sustainable and compliment current regional and national theatre ambitions. ACE are currently consulting on their new 10 year strategy which has a strong focus on diversity, collaboration and sustainability. Thus there is an opportunity now to align the theatre project and the cultural offer for Oldham closely to a strategic body for the arts and major funder.

HLF have affirmed their commitment to OMA and the project is recognised in creating a catalyst for growth and regeneration. The venue will bring new life to an important heritage building and help create a vibrant cultural complex – sitting alongside existing destinations, Gallery Oldham and Oldham Library and Lifelong Learning Centre.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

5 Consultation

5.1 Throughout the design phase external stakeholders such as access groups and user groups have been consulted. Extensive consultation has also taken place as part of the successful development of the funding applications for both Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England. In addition to this, detailed consultation has been undertaken through the planning approval process with both statutory and non-statutory bodies.

5.2 Furthermore, regular updates have been, and continue to be provided in accordance with the Cultural Quarter Governance arrangements, through the Cultural Quarter Programme Board, Project Boards, and the Cultural Quarter Steering Group.

The following Council departments have also been consulted:

- Legal
 - Finance
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- Procurement
 - Heritage, Libraries and Arts
 - Property
 - Corporate Governance

6 **Financial Implications**

6.1 Financial implications are covered in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

7 **Legal Services Comments**

7.1 Legal implications are covered in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

8 **Human Resources Comments**

8.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

9 **Risk Assessments**

9.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

10 **IT Implications**

10.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

11 **Property Implications**

11.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

12 **Procurement Implications**

12.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

13 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

13.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

14 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

14.1 At the heart of the projects is the desire to enhance to community cohesion and promote equality. Facilities will have an ongoing programme of events that reflects the rich social and cultural mix of Oldham. These inclusive programmes will be held in safe and secure buildings that will have security measures that will include unobtrusive CCTV cameras.

15 **Equality Impact Assessment Completed?**

15.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

16 **Key Decision**

16.1 Yes

17 **Background Papers**

17.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.

18 **Appendices**

18.1 As set out in the report in the restricted part of this agenda.
